



# CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH RESOURCE BOOKLET

*April 2022*

*Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection*



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April is designated National Child Abuse Protection Month. We are called through scripture and teaching to protect the life and dignity of the human person. Throughout the year, but especially in the month of April, all are asked to increase awareness, to educate ourselves and the community, and to seek healing for those who have been so tragically impacted this horror. The Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection created this resource booklet in the hope that all will find opportunity to promote this mission and protect those who are in need.

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# VIRTUAL OR IN-PERSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

...for youth

**Pinwheels are a symbol for innocence and joy. The color blue is a symbol of hope and heavenly grace. Incorporate a blue pinwheel into craft or other activities.**

Ideas: Create a pinwheel with sculpting clay, construction paper or paint. Variation: on each blade write a message of affirmation to a child. Make pinwheel cookies or decorate cupcakes with blue icing.

...for community

**Host a speaker event** in-person or virtually. Possible Topics: identification of signs of abuse, tips for parents, invite a speaker from a local shelter or youth service organization.

**Host a prayer service**  
samples are provided in this booklet.

**Launch a messaging campaign** - interview local prevention specialist for diocesan/parish print or web-based recordings, post messages on social media, include contact information for hotlines and other assistance services.

...for CYP leaders

**Meet with diocesan staff**  
to collaborate on protection efforts in every department.

**Educate yourself** by becoming familiar with the Resource Toolbox, access recent podcasts and webinars posted by SCYP.

**Review and update safety policies and protocols**

**Meet with your bishop:** Review the Bishops Readiness Resource and the most recent audit management letter.



For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

We have been called to walk together in synodality.  
Explore the path the Spirit has invited us to take in order to grow in our walk together.  
Actively reach out to those who have been impacted by child abuse.

**Listen to their voices.**

**Learn from their experiences.**

[USCCB Synod on Synodality](#)

# MEDIA POSTS

...for print media



## Sample Bulletin Blurbs

**Week 1** *Did you know...* Child abuse comes in many forms. Most people identify child abuse as physically hitting a child. Neglect is also a form of abuse. Failing to provide a child with proper nutrition, housing and supervision can cause irreparable harm. Expectations that a child be an active participant in the care of home and family, or even age-appropriate jobs is a part of healthy development. But excessive demands can cross into a form of servitude that is beyond the societal norms. Child pornography is a form of sexual abuse, with real victims in every image. The viewing of these images is an offence against the human dignity.

**Week 2** *Did you know...* Child abuse can occur in every culture and every socio-economic demographic. Peer reviewed research, especially that of the past 30 years, repeatedly shows this to be true. This same research indicates that the vast majority of child abuse occurs at the hands of someone known to the victim. Those who seek to do harm to children will pursue opportunities that provide access to children and may even ingratiate themselves into the home. You can protect children by respecting the safe environment protocols established at youth serving organizations. More importantly, you can implement many of these protocols in your home and be ever observant and vigilant in all public and private settings.

**Week 3** *Did you know...* Hope is rising. Throughout scripture there is evidence that we are called to be ambassadors of hope and healing. Did you know children of abuse long to hear this message of hope. Victims of crime, their family and loved ones need to know that their voices are heard. Organizations throughout the nation are striving to share the message that He has risen and there is hope. Each of us has a unique ability to support individuals who are hurting, to promote healthy relationships, and to build communities that are safe from those who may want to do harm. How has He called you to be an ambassador of hope and healing?

**Week 4** *Did you know...*The Catholic Church is deeply committed to protecting children from abuse and holding people accountable for inflicting such pain. In December 2021, the revised *Book VI of the Code of Canon Law* went into effect. This is the most recent of several documents that specifically address the issue of the abuse of children. Other documents include *Vos estis lux mundi* and *Vademecum*. These documents expand the acts which are considered abusive, clarify the manner in which the cases are processed, and hold people accountable for their action or inaction with regard to processing of a case. Of significant importance is attention given to the care of victim survivors and all who have been harmed. Bishops in the US lead the way for these changes with the implementation of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* 20 years ago. Today every diocese and eparchy must have in place systems for tending to those who have been harmed, protecting those in our care and seeking restorative justice.

**Week 5** *Did you know...*What is happening in the diocese to protect children?

- Training is provided for all adults and youth to identify warning signs and develop strategies for maintaining a safe environment for all.
- A designated Victim Assistance Coordinator is available to receive reports and accompany victims through their journey.
- A volunteer independent Review Board assists the bishop in the review of cases and makes recommendations for moving forward.
- A Safe Environment Coordinator assists parish and school personnel with training and background screenings for anyone who may have access to children.
- An audit is conducted by an independent firm to evaluate implementation of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Findings are incorporated with those of other dioceses and made available in an Annual Report.

### Inserts, Flyers and Brochures

Designs are available for use by diocesan entities and can be found on the [Resource](#) webpage for the USCCB Secretariat for Child and Youth Protection. Bulk purchases are available through the [USCCB Store](#).

**Pamphlets**

**PROMESA de Proteger**  
**Compromiso de SANAR**

SECRETARIADO PARA LA PROTECCIÓN DE NIÑOS Y JÓVENES  
3211 FOURTH STREET NE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20017  
202-541-5413  
scyp@usccb.org | www.usccb.org

English Spanish

**Prayer cards**

**A PRAYER FOR HEALING**  
VICTIMS OF ABUSE

God of endless love,  
ever caring, ever strong,  
always present, always just:  
You gave your only Son  
to save us by his blood on the cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,  
join to your own suffering  
the pain of all who have been  
in body, mind, and spirit  
by those who have not  
been placed in them.

Hear the cries of our brothers and sisters  
who have been gravely harmed,  
and those of those who love them:  
soothe their restless hearts with hope,  
lash their shaken spirits with faith,  
Grant them justice for their cause,  
enlightened by your truth.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,  
heal your people's wounds  
and transform brokenness into wholeness.  
Grant us the courage and wisdom,  
humility and grace, to act with justice.  
Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labors.  
Grant that all harmed by abuse may find peace in justice.  
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Bilingual

**Fact Sheet**

**Summary of the 2020 Annual Report**  
**Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People**

<b>OUTREACH</b> (extended to victim survivors and families, including spiritual direction and other services)	572
Nearly identical cases reviewed and finalized	1,880
Continued support for individuals identified by previous years	
<b>PROTECTION</b>	
Training Children	3,100,151
Training Adults	2,238,413
Background Checks	2,557,058
<b>ALLEGATIONS</b>	
Current minors	22
Historical reports	423
Total allegations	450
<b>COSTS</b>	
\$44,814,529 (including legal fees) (in January 2020)	
\$515,980,666 (including legal fees, current system, other resources)	
<b>\$356,396,755 Total</b>	

English

**Posters**

**PROMISE TO PROTECT**

**PLEDGE TO HEAL**

**BELIEVE IN THE POSSIBILITY OF HELP AND HEALING. THERE IS HOPE.**

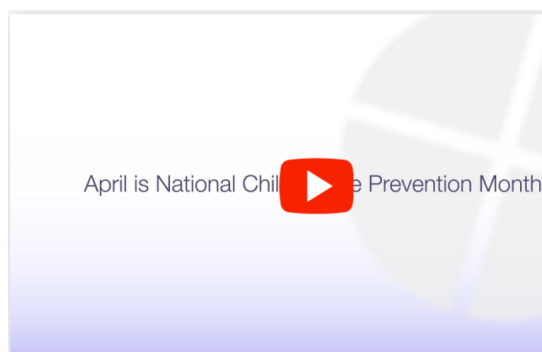
Your local Victim Assistance Coordinator is available to help you or anyone who has been abused or harmed by someone representing the Catholic Church. We will listen to your needs and we will help you make a formal complaint and arrange a personal meeting with the bishop, or his delegate, if desired. We encourage you to come forward and speak out.

The Victim Assistance Coordinator in your [diocese/eparchy](#) is:

English Spanish

## ...for social media

**Videos** Share videos the SCYP has developed to promote child abuse prevention. All are found on the SCYP webpage under Resources.



**Podcasts** Share podcasts on your social media platforms. They are found on the SCYP website and via Soundcloud and Apple Podcasts. Episode #9 is an interview with the co-founder of Blue Sunday



### Sample Posts

- Research estimates 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18. Take safe environment training to learn how to identify and prevent abuse!
- "It is essential that we, as a Church, be able to acknowledge and condemn, with sorrow and shame, the atrocities perpetrated by consecrated persons, clerics, and all those entrusted with the mission of watching over and caring for those most vulnerable." - Pope Francis
- According to the CDC, 1 in seven children have experienced child abuse or neglect in the past year. If you or someone you know is being abused call 911 or contact your state child protective services.
- It is the responsibility of all persons to protect children and the vulnerable among us, "whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me." Mathew 18:5
- post the contact information for the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator and Safe Environment Coordinator
- Additional resources can be found on the USCCB Communications webpage.



# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

**Office of Justice** [www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov) Programs provide a wealth of resources about the prevalence of abuse, how to prevent abuse, and ways to respond.

**Department of Health and Human Services** - [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov) includes media graphics, conversation starters, publications and facts including National Child Abuse Prevention Month resources.

**Child Help USA** [www.childhelp.org](http://www.childhelp.org) -provides resources for children, teens and youth

**National Center for Missing and Exploited Children** [www.missingkids.org](http://www.missingkids.org) includes victim resources, educational programs ([Netsmartz](#) and [Kisdsmartz](#)), professional training,

**National Child Advocacy Center** [www.nationalcac.org](http://www.nationalcac.org)  
Provides advocacy for youth and families as they navigate the legal system and seek healing, guidance for community service providers, training for professionals, promotes research in the prevention of abuse.

**Prevent Child Abuse America** [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)  
Chapters throughout the nation provide services to families and resources for the community.

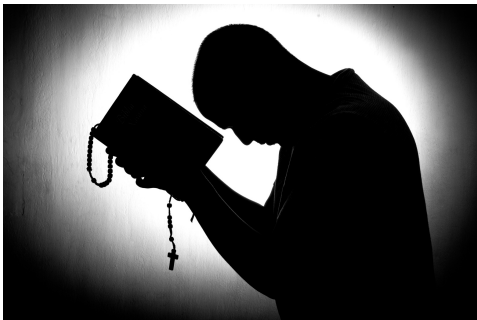




# LITURGICAL AIDS

## Petitions

- For the children who are wounded and tearful, that they may find comfort and healing, we pray to the Lord.
- For those who are living in fear, that they may find safety, we pray to the Lord.
- For those who have had their innocence stolen, may they overcome the darkness and find the light of your heavenly kingdom, we pray to the Lord.
- For those affected by abuse, in all of it's forms, that they may find the courage and strength and continue to grow and trust in the love of our Lord, we pray to the Lord.
- For civic leaders entrusted with upholding the common good and justice, that they may act with wisdom grounded in faith, we pray to the Lord.
- The those who provide accompaniment, that they continue their work with grace and compassion imbued with the Holy Spirit, we pray to the Lord.
- For the Universal Church to recognize and acknowledge our failings, and diligently work to repair past injustices, we pray to the Lord.



## Scripture

Ezekiel 34:11-16 Shepher the Flock

Isaiah 40:27-31 Hope in the Lord

Job 14:7-9

Lamentations 3:1-24 I Am The One Who Knows Affliction

Lamentations 3:49-59 When I Called

Luke 10:25-37 The Good Samaritan

Matthew 5:1-10 The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:43-48 Love your enemies

Matthew 10:28-33 Do Not Fear

Psalms 130 A Song of Ascent

Rosary Guide for Healing and Protection

[English](#) [Spanish](#)

[Novena for Protection of Healing from Abuse](#)

## Music



- All are Welcome
- Amazing Grace
- Balm in Gilead
- Blessed Are They
- Gifts of Finest Wheat
- Hear I am Lord
- I Am Healed
- O Christ the Healer
- O Jesus Healer of Wounded Souls
- On Eagles Wings
- Prayer of St Francis
- Shelter Me, Oh God
- Sweet Spirit
- We Have Come This Far By Faith

## Homily Help

...concepts to incorporate into homilies

In a society that emphasizes productivity, pleasure, and independence, it is all the more important to accompany those in need of care and compassion. When a person is in pain and in need, we are called to remind them that they are not alone. When a person has been beaten down and feeling insignificant, we are called to remind them of their worth and the unconditional love that is bestowed upon them.

Reaffirm the gift of childhood. Acknowledge the joy of innocence. As the Lord watches over all of us, so too must we watch over each other. Impress upon each person the moral obligation to care for one another, to respect each other. As a parent nurtures and protects a child, we are also called to protect each other, and intervene if we observe wrongdoing.

Blue Sunday (the last Sunday in April) we are united with the world in praying for the victim survivors of child abuse. Pray they will be rescued. Pray they are placed with caring people. Pray their minds and bodies can heal. Pray they find hope. Pray for those who rescue them. Pray for the witnesses to find courage. Pray for the community to be educated and find ways to support the efforts that will put an end to violence.

Pope Francis has called upon all people to reflect on synodality. We are being asked to journey together, to listen and learn from each other, to discern together what is the will of the Holy Spirit. During this Child Abuse Prevention Month, let us listen carefully to the words of the wounded. Let us walk together on this journey of healing and building trust. The Holy Spirit will light the way through the darkness of evil. But we must take the time to listen, to heed the guidance as we draw the map of our journey to wholeness.