

Instructions for Volunteer Background Screening

There are four steps to complete to be a volunteer at SMV/Archdiocese of Chicago.

1. Complete a background check
2. Attend Virtus Training and complete 10 on- line lessons
3. Sign the Code of Conduct
4. Submit a CANTS form

Information for all of these can be found on the Archdiocesan website:

www.archchicago.org. If you do not have a computer with internet access, call the Parish Office so we can arrange for you to use the office computers or to fill out the application in paper form.

On the left side of the screen scroll down to the Protecting Children section.

1. Background screening – complete the on-line volunteer application. The access code is: **protection**.
2. Virtus Training – you must register on-line to attend a session at St. Mary of Vernon or another site that is convenient for you. If you are asked for a registration password it is: **trust**. (Detailed instructions are included.)
3. Once you attend the Virtus training session you will receive a certificate that needs to be return to the parish. You will receive training updates via email for you to complete at your own pace. You are only required to complete ten lessons.
4. Read and sign the Code of Conduct. Return the signed page to the Parish Office.
5. Complete the CANTS form and return to the Parish Office. We will mail it to the State for you.

AUTHORIZATION FOR BACKGROUND CHECK
Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS)

For Programs NOT Licensed by DCFS

NOTE: Do not use this form if you are an applicant for licensure or an employee/volunteer of a licensed child care facility. Please contact your licensing representative.

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Date of Birth: _____ Gender (circle): Male Female Race: _____

Current Address: _____
Street/Apt #

City State Zip Code

If you currently reside in Illinois, please list all previous addresses for the past five years. OR If you currently reside out-of-state, please provide ALL Illinois addresses in which you did reside while living in Illinois.

List maiden name and/or all other names by which you have been known: (last, first, middle)

I hereby authorize the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to conduct a search of the Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking system (CANTS) to determine whether I have been a perpetrator of an indicated incident of child abuse and/or neglect or involved in a pending investigation. I further consent to the release of this information to the agency listed below.

Mail this request to:
Department of Children and Family Services
406 E. Monroe – Station # 30
Springfield, IL 62701

Signed Date

Please type, use bold letters or label:

(Agency Name)
(Contact Person)
(Address)
(City/State/Zip)
(Submitting Agency Fax Number)



Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. As a volunteer, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Volunteer's Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth of our *[parish, school, facility, diocese, etc.]*.

As a volunteer, I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth at Church activities.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from children and/or youth or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator.
- Refrain from giving expensive gifts to children and/or youth without prior written approval from the parents or guardian and the pastor or administrator.
- Report suspected abuse to the pastor, administrator, or appropriate supervisor and *[the local Child Protection Services agency]*. I understand that failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities is, according to the law, a misdemeanor.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.

As a volunteer, I will not:

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while volunteering.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Pose any health risk to children and/or youth (i.e., no fevers or other contagious situations).
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap children and/or youth.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade children and/or youth.
- Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and/or youth.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.

I understand that as a volunteer working with children and/or youth, I am subject to a thorough background check including criminal history. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in my removal as a volunteer with children and/or youth.

Volunteer's Printed Name

Volunteer's Signature

Date

Welcome to this Protecting God's Children[®] awareness session:

This handout is designed to answer many of your questions up-front, to help create a context for this session, and to give you the information you'll need to maximize the value of today's experience.

Why am I here?

You are here because you are a part of the solution to the problem of child sexual abuse in our homes, parishes, and communities. You did not cause this problem. But, when caring adults have a "healthy suspicion" about something in their surroundings, they *can* identify the risks to children early enough to prevent child sexual abuse from occurring.

What are the VIRTUS[®] programs?

VIRTUS is the brand name that identifies best practices programs designed to help prevent wrongdoing and promote "rightdoing" within religious organizations. The VIRTUS programs empower organizations and people to better control risk and improve the lives of all those who interact with the Church.

Who created the VIRTUS programs?

The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc. (National Catholic) created the programs. Monsignor Kevin McCoy, past board chairman of National Catholic, asked whether child sexual abuse could be prevented and, if so, how? In March of 1998, National Catholic invited prominent national experts—experts in many disciplines—to discuss these questions at a forum in Washington, D.C. From those discussions, the initiative for the VIRTUS programs was created. The National Catholic Board of Directors selected an Ad Hoc Committee to oversee development of the programs. The Ad Hoc Committee was assisted by a steering committee of nationally known experts and program and service providers.

Why did National Catholic select VIRTUS as the brand name for the programs?

The word *virtus* derives from Latin, and means valor, moral strength, excellence, and worth. In ancient times, *virtus* denoted a way of life and manner of behavior that always aspired to the highest, most positive attributes of people and aspects of human interaction.

What is the Protecting God's Children[®] program?

The Protecting God's Children program is the VIRTUS program for protecting children from child sexual abuse. The seminar you are currently attending is the Protecting God's Children awareness session—the initial program component for adults in the faith community. Those in the faith community who interact with minors will have access to additional training and risk prevention tools.

How does the Protecting God's Children program prevent child sexual abuse?

The Protecting God's Children program consists of many components. The education component helps prevent child sexual abuse by first making every adult employee and volunteer aware of the issues surrounding child sexual abuse. This includes awareness of the many ways that sexual abuse harms its victims, their families, the parish, and the community. The awareness session also helps adults learn to recognize the warning signs of abuse, and shows them the appropriate way to respond to suspicious behavior. Finally, the awareness session empowers each person with five steps to help prevent child sexual abuse. A trained facilitator leads these awareness sessions. **You are currently participating in this interactive awareness session, which is part one of our education component.**

But, community awareness—by itself—is not enough to prevent child sexual abuse. A parish or community needs a core group of trained specialists—people within the parish and schools—who have additional knowledge and training on how to prevent harm to children.

Those who interact most with children become the core of the prevention effort within each parish. They receive an added benefit by completing a certification course on the prevention of child sexual abuse. The certification course takes approximately three to six hours a year to complete, and the entire certification process takes place on the Internet—via the VIRTUS *Online*[™] system. For more information on VIRTUS *Online* and our continuing education programs, refer to the attached VIRTUS *Online* information sheet.

Finally, some local individuals will be selected to lead the awareness session—we call these people “facilitators.” In addition to being certified to prevent child sexual abuse, the facilitators receive additional training on how to lead an effective session.

What is my role in the Protecting God's Children program?

All adults are protectors of children. That's why you are a part of this awareness session. As an adult, it is your role in the faith community, to keep your eyes and ears open, and to report any suspicious activity to appropriate authorities and church officials.

We provide a wealth of information to assist you in this quest. Visit our website, www.virtus.org, for new information each week designed to help educate adults about a wide range of risks to children—from child sexual abuse, to camp safety, to school violence. If you are fortunate to be selected to complete one of our certification courses via VIRTUS *Online* (each diocese has a different strategy regarding the selection of trainees) then you will become a knowledge center for protecting children within your parish or school. If you'd like to complete the certification course, or you wish to complete the certification and become a trained facilitator, you should contact the VIRTUS Coordinator in your diocese. The facilitator for today's session can give you the name and contact information for your VIRTUS Coordinator.

What can I do to help?

First—make sure that you have registered to use the VIRTUS *Online* system. If you haven't already visited the website to complete your registration, you should do so as soon as possible. For those who have not registered, please refer to the attached VIRTUS *Online* registration instructions. Please keep in mind the importance of registering through the online system. If you have not registered, we have no way to certify your attendance at today's session. Signing the sign-in sheet is not adequate. If you need help registering online, you should contact your diocese's VIRTUS Coordinator or your local VIRTUS Coordinator. Again, today's facilitator can give you those names and contact information.

Second—behave consistent with what you learn in today's session. Learn more about child sexual abuse by visiting our website each week (www.virtus.org). Make a conscious effort each day to protect children.

Third—if you are selected to complete one of our continuing education courses, use this benefit to your advantage and help your parish become a safe haven for children.

Finally—if you want to volunteer as a facilitator, contact your diocese's VIRTUS Coordinator and begin the process.

What is VIRTUS Online™?

VIRTUS Online™ is the brand name that identifies a state-of-the-art, web-based platform that provides best practice resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our system provides a comprehensive menu of functions for churches, religious organizations, and facilities from one convenient web-based resource. Through these functions we can help church organizations prevent wrongdoing, manage risk and improve service to the community through education, training, and best practices. The home page is provided free of charge to anyone in the world with access to the Internet. The subscriber pages (pages requiring a user name and a password) are intended for users from organizations that subscribe to the VIRTUS® programs.

How does VIRTUS Online support ongoing training?

Most programs (seminars, instructor-led sessions, videos) establish awareness, but few change behavior. The Protecting God's Children® session you are attending was designed as an *awareness* session. The VIRTUS programs provide training via the VIRTUS Online system to empower trainees to modify their own behavior. Every training program, in addition to instructor-led and video awareness sessions, includes ongoing web-based training. These regularly scheduled online bulletins and web-based training courses reinforce the knowledge points made during the awareness sessions. Moreover, every training program is tracked so the organization knows who has or has not trained. Plus, most of the online training bulletins and modules are interactive allowing trainees to contact and interact with a trainer.

Specifically, how does VIRTUS Online help in the fight to prevent child sexual abuse?

- **VIRTUS Online provides:**
 - A cost effective, non-intrusive method for providing training to individuals and for tracking each individual's compliance with their individual training requirements.
 - Free information about preventing child sexual abuse.
 - Continuing education through regular monthly (or more frequent) training.
 - Continuous tracking to ensure compliance.
 - Interactive training tools 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
 - Interaction with other peer participants across the nation.

Why is VIRTUS continuing education conducted online?

- **Greater retention of information for trainees**
 - Studies show that people retain 70 percent more information through online training than through training conducted by a "live" trainer. One reason for this is that online training is interactive—a "hot" medium—and allows the trainee to learn at his or her optimum individual pace, without the distraction and confusion frequently present in a "live" training environment.
- **More efficiency, ease and flexibility for trainees**
 - Your time is valuable. When we ask for your time, we want to get the most out of it, and so should you. Studies show that trainees learn more in less time using the Internet.
 - All of us are busy. We don't always have time to do things when others want us to do them. Web-based training allows you to train whenever it's convenient for you—24 hours a day, seven days a week. You get to choose the time and the place. You can train in the comfort of your office or your home ... rain or shine ... day or night.
 - VIRTUS Online allows you to complete your training without having to meet at *someone else's* convenience.
 - You also get to ask the questions *you* want to ask and have the answers directed to you in private.
 - If you need to stop during the middle of your online training to handle another matter, there's no problem. The training will be waiting for you upon your return—or the next time you log into the VIRTUS Online system.
- **Consistency for all trainees**
 - With live training, training quality varies depending on the knowledge, experience, and methodology of the trainer. The material presented via VIRTUS Online is presented in the same way to everyone—all across the nation. *You read what everybody else* reads. This allows the VIRTUS programs to maintain a high quality of excellence, and provides you with the best possible opportunity to learn.
- **Tracking and measurability as required by the Church**
 - The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops wants to know if people in your diocese are trained to prevent child sexual abuse. VIRTUS Online tracks not only who is expected to complete the training, but also whether those individuals have completed their training. Plus, VIRTUS Online tracks training results—to identify whether

the training is working. Isn't it important to you to know that your efforts are contributing to a safer environment—for children, yourself, and everyone else?

- **High turnover of Church employees and volunteers**
 - It is estimated that a diocese turns over between 30 and 60 percent of its employees and volunteers each year. Hypothetically, if you were to train all the employees and volunteers at once, in approximately two to three years you would have to train all of them again. VIRTUS *Online* eliminates this problem by allowing all new employees and volunteers to receive training on their first day of service. So, beginning on “day one,” everybody is aware of the importance of preventing child sexual abuse in your parish.
- **Good stewardship for the Church**
 - Conventional “live” training is expensive—and not just the cost of the materials and trainers. There are travel expenses, overnight accommodations, and meals to purchase. Plus, there’s the lost work productivity of every trainee.
 - Christian stewardship requires that we use our resources wisely. It’s hard to argue with the stewardship of online training versus “live” training. Studies show that online training results in 70 percent more information being retained, at a cost of only 10 cents on the dollar—as compared to “live” training.
 - Dioceses that use VIRTUS *Online* are committed to making every parish a safe environment but, like everyone else, they have limited people resources. Through its automated tracking features, VIRTUS *Online* eliminates the need to hire a department of people to conduct and monitor “live” training.
- **Long-term value**
 - Its affordability makes VIRTUS *Online* a powerful asset for dioceses that are focused on results and willing to make the long-term commitment needed to *really* change community-wide behavior in the fight to prevent child sexual abuse.
- **Availability and convenience**
 - Sixty percent or more of Americans have computers with Internet access.
 - An even larger percentage has access to a computer with a connection to the Internet. For example, public libraries and many workplaces, such as schools, provide Internet access to employees at no cost.
 - “Live” training creates costly logistical and accounting problems. There are staggering costs associated with using expensive printed materials and scarce people resources—not to mention the nightmarish effort needed to track (by hand) everyone’s “live” training participation and results. With the broad availability of computers and Internet access, “live” training alone is simply not a viable option.
 - VIRTUS *Online* training access is not restricted to a particular computer. Participants can use someone else’s computer and Internet connection to access their own, secured link to the VIRTUS *Online* training resources.
 - All you need is an email address. Email is available at no cost from a variety of sources. Two of the most popular free email services are:
 - o Yahoo! Mail—Go to <http://mail.yahoo.com> to sign up.
 - o MSN Hotmail—Go to <http://login.passport.net/ui/login.srf?id=2> to sign up.
 - o Hundreds of other free email services are available. Enter the keywords “free email” into any major search engine, and you’ll be deluged with choices.

How much time and effort is required to use VIRTUS *Online*?

- **VIRTUS *Online* is fast and easy!** For most people, it takes between three and six hours spread over an entire year—about 15 to 30 minutes per month. A few minutes a month is a small price to pay to empower yourself to *really* help prevent child sexual abuse.

What if a participant doesn’t have access to the Internet?

- **They need to call their diocese’s VIRTUS Coordinator or the local VIRTUS Coordinator at their parish.** There are other non-Internet mechanisms for completing the training. The diocese will be happy to provide those resources to those who genuinely do not have Internet access.
- **A quick word of caution:** The non-Internet resources are a very costly staff burden to the diocese. Only those without Internet access should call.

Where can I learn more about VIRTUS *Online*?

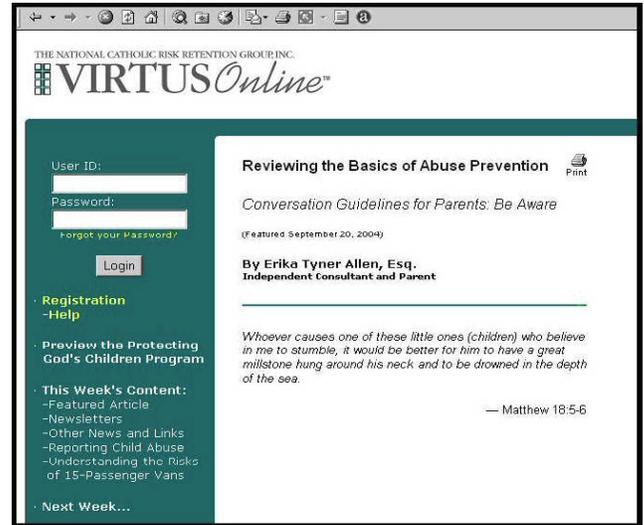
- **For more information, please refer to the VIRTUS *Online* registration information sheet in your packet.**

Registration Instructions

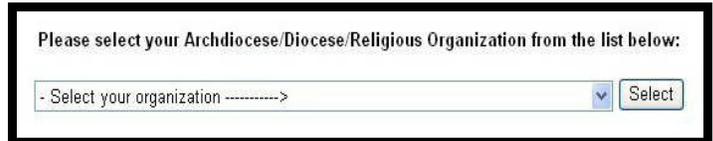
Before or after your first Protecting God's Children session (*but not both*), you will need to register with the VIRTUS Program. This is required of all participants. If you do not have Internet access, and cannot temporarily gain Internet access via school, university, library, work, home or other means, please register with your Facilitator or your VIRTUS Coordinator.

Go to <http://www.virtusonline.org>

On the left-hand side of the page, click the yellow link labeled "Registration."



Choose the name of your organization from the pull-down menu by clicking the downward arrow and highlighting your organization. Once your organization is selected, click "Select."

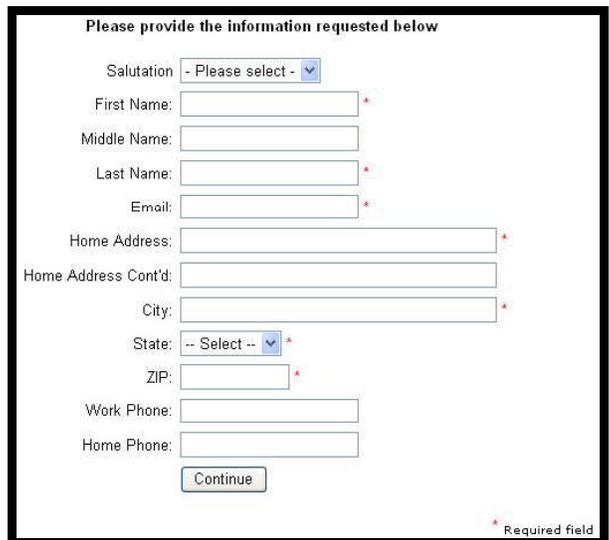


Create a user ID and a password you can easily remember. This is necessary for all participants. This establishes your account within your Diocese and the VIRTUS program. If your preferred user ID is already taken, please choose another ID. We recommend the use of email addresses as user names. Click Continue to proceed.



Provide the information requested on the following page. Several fields are required, such as name, address, phone number and e-mail address. Click Continue to proceed.

- **If you do not have an email address, consider obtaining a free email account at mail.yahoo.com, or any other free service. This is necessary for your VIRTUS Coordinator to communicate with you. If you cannot obtain an email address, enter: noaddress@virtus.org. This will notify your VIRTUS Coordinator that you do not have an email address.**
- **If you do not have personal Internet access, and you are not able to obtain temporary Internet access for one hour per month, complete the registration process and your VIRTUS Programs Coordinator will contact you. Other options are available for your continued training.**



Select the PRIMARY location where you work, volunteer or worship. You will be able to select additional locations later if you serve at multiple locations within your organization. Click Continue to proceed.



Registration Instructions

Your current list of locations is displayed. If you need to add an additional location, choose YES. Otherwise, choose NO.

This is the list of locations with which you are associated:

St. Josephs Parish (Tulsa)

Do you need to add another location?

Select the role(s) that you serve within your organization. Please check all roles that apply. Additionally, if you have a title within your diocese, enter it in the box. I.e. Teacher, DRE, Catechist, etc. Click Continue to proceed.

Please select the roles that you play within your diocese

Please check all that apply.

Candidate for ordination Parent
 Deacon Priest
 Educator Volunteer
 Employee

If you have a title within your diocese, please enter it here:

Answer three YES/NO questions and then click Continue.

Are you a parent or guardian of a child under 18?

Yes
 No
 I choose not to answer this question

If you have already attended a Protecting God's Children Session, click YES, otherwise click NO.

Have you already attended a Protecting God's Children Session?

If you chose **NO** during the previous step, you will be presented with a list of all upcoming sessions within your organization. When you find the session you would like to attend, click the circle next to the title.

If you chose YES during the previous step, skip this step.

Please select the session you wish to attend

Unless otherwise noted all sessions are conducted in English.

Protecting God's Children for Adults

Where: Test Site (Tulsa)
When: Monday, October 25, 2004
6:00 PM
Estimated time: 3 hrs
Spaces remaining: 7 of 25

If you chose **YES**, you will be presented with a list of all sessions that have been held within your organization. Choose the session you attended by clicking the downward arrow and highlighting the session, and then click Complete Registration.

Please select the session you attended

-- Please select --

You will see a message on your screen confirming that you have completed the registration process. If you correctly entered your email address during the process, you will receive an email confirming your information. Additionally, your Virtus Coordinator may contact you via e-mail with information regarding your continuing training status.

If you have additional questions about the registration process, please contact your session's facilitator, your Virtus Coordinator, or the VIRTUS Help Desk at 1-888-847-8870.

Thank you for completing the registration process.

Thank you for registering for a Protecting God's Children session and with VIRTUS Online. You will receive an email confirming your registration for the session you selected.

After you attend your session, your account request will be reviewed by your Coordinator.

You will be notified via email when your VIRTUS Online account is activated.