

Circles of Grace

Safe Environment Training

In 2002, the United States Bishops approved *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* in an effort to protect children and youth from sexual abuse at all levels of church life and to restore trust in a Church scarred by the scandal of clergy sexual abuse. Article 12 of the charter directs all dioceses to create programs and processes to teach children and youth about sexual abuse and its prevention. In the diocese of Albany, this training will take place in all parishes each year in age-appropriate ways.

The Office of Catholic Faith Formation and Education for the Diocese of Albany has implemented a new safe environment program for children and youth. The *Circle of Grace* curriculum replaces the programs used each fall to educate our children on personal safety issues.

The letter sent to parishes by Father Bob Longobucco (Vicar General) states:

“Within a faith context, *Circles of Grace*, helps children and young people in all grades strengthen their relationship with God, and learn the skills and tools to build those trusted relationships within the faith community and beyond. At the same time, it also helps them become aware of the schemes, tricks, and tactics that may be used by people who should not be trusted. Even among the unexpected challenges that we face due to the pandemic, we believe that implementing this program during the catechetical year will bear good fruit for our parish faith formation programs and our Catholic schools.”

Circles of Grace will take place in a full classroom period. The schedule is as follows;

- December 5: 9:00am elementary program (K-5th grade)
- November 14: 11:10am middle school (6th, 7th, 8th grades)
- December 5: 11:10am high school (9th & 10th grades)