

I, TOD D. BROWN, BISHOP OF
ORANGE, CA AND MY BROTHER BISHOPS
OF THE DIOCESE PLEDGE

THE COVENANT WITH THE FAITHFUL

consisting of seven theses

1. We will continue to do everything possible to help the healing process of the victims of sexual abuse.
2. We will implement in every respect the American Catholic Bishops' The National Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and our own diocesan policies for the prevention of the abuse of children and young people.
3. We will endeavor to heal the hurt among the clergy, religious and laity, who have been humiliated, scorned and disgraced by the actions of those priests who sexually abused children and young people and the leaders who failed to respond appropriately.
4. We will work collaboratively with all members of the Diocese to promote an atmosphere of openness and trust, and empower them as partners in parochial affairs and thereby create a new era for our Church in Orange County.
5. We will be open, honest and forthright in our public statements to the media, and consistent and transparent in our communications with the Catholics of our Diocese.
6. We will restore confidence in our role as Bishops.
7. We will lead the rededication of the Diocese of Orange as an Ambassador of God's Love that cares about the welfare of the entire county, especially the disenfranchised and poor.



Basic Safety Rules for Children

Check First: Children should always check first with the adult in charge before doing anything, going anywhere or making any change in plans. This rule properly puts decision-making responsibility on adult caregivers.

Go With Friends: Children are safer when they are not alone, and generally have more fun as well.

It's My Body: This message empowers children to set personal limits. They learn that no one has the right to touch the parts of their body that are covered by a bathing suit, except parents when they are helping them bathe, or a doctor or nurse when they are sick. They have the right to resist inappropriate touching.

Tell A Trusted Adult: Children should be encouraged to ask a trusted adult for help anytime they feel threatened. Some examples of trusted adults could be mothers with children and store clerks with a name badge.

Adapted from:

"KIDS AND COMPANY: Safety Education Program"
The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
www.missingkids.com



Creating a
SAFE
ENVIRONMENT



Diocese of Orange
Office of Faith Formation

Safe Environment

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THE CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People is a landmark document drafted and passed unanimously by the bishops of the United States at their June meeting in Dallas in 2002.

The document is a response to the sexual abuse crisis in the church and is their "Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal."

There are four focus areas:

- To promote healing and reconciliation with victim survivors of sexual abuse.
- To guarantee an effective response to allegations of sexual abuse of minors.
- To ensure the accountability of our procedures.
- To protect the faithful in the future.

In order to protect the faithful in the future, Article 12 of the Charter states:

"Dioceses/eparchies will establish 'Safe Environment' programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children. Dioceses/eparchies will make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse."

This guideline, which mandates that all dioceses create a safe environment for children and young people who pray, study and worship in our schools and churches, is the basis for our diocesan safe environment programs.



THE COVENANT WITH THE FAITHFUL

In addition, the Bishops of the Diocese of Orange have made The Covenant With the Faithful in which they pledge, among other things, that they "will implement in every respect the American Catholic Bishops' The National Charter for the Protection Of Children and Young People and our own diocesan policies for the prevention of the abuse of children and young people." (Thesis 2).

This pledge reinforces the commitment of our bishops to do everything possible so that the sexual abuse of minors will never happen again.



CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

As part of its ongoing response to the Crisis, the Diocese of Orange:

- ◆ Has established a written code of conduct for employees and volunteers who work with children and youth as outlined in:
 - The Policy Against Sexual Misconduct for Lay Employees and Volunteers
 - The Policy Against Sexual Misconduct for Clergy and Religious Personnel
 - The brochure *Respecting the Boundaries: Keeping Ministerial Relationships Healthy and Holy*.
- ◆ Provides training programs (workshops and in-services) for all adults who work with minors: priests, ministers, educators, church personnel, parents and volunteers. The aim is to educate them on preventing, identifying, responding and reporting child abuse. It also provides resources on the diocesan website www.rcbo.org.
- ◆ Has established an ongoing training program, *Kids and Company: Safety Education Program* from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, for all children of elementary school age.
- ◆ Developed criteria for Catholic high school safe environment curricula; produced an interactive DVD, *Breaking the Silence*, for teens, discussing the issue of the sexual abuse of minors. The DVD is being used in high school classrooms and youth groups throughout the diocese.
- ◆ Conducts background checks on all adults who have regular and consistent contact with minors.
- ◆ Pledges to incorporate safe environment programs into the ongoing mission of the Church by establishing the office of a Safe Environment Coordinator for the diocese.