



## ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON

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### Safe Environment Training for Youth: Teaching Guidelines

February 12, 2021

The Office of Safe Environment Programs has received several comments and concerns regarding teaching Safe Environment Training for Youth with the ongoing challenges surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. This communication is intended to offer some clarification and guidelines.

1. Safe Environment training is NOT an elective.

All parishes and schools associated with the Diocese of Burlington are asked to ensure that all students/youth taking part in religious education or standard education include Safe Environment training for youth as part of the curricula. This Safe Environment training cannot be an elective; it must be provided for all enrolled youth. However, please be aware that the parents of enrolled youth do have the option to opt-out of having their individual children attend the Safe Environment training portion of the curricula.

2. Remote teaching is encouraged to the best of your parish/school's ability.

If your location has proceeded with other education using a remote format, such as Zoom, conference calls, or any other option to prevent the spread of COVID-19, you are encouraged to use this format for the Safe Environment training portion as well, even if the training materials are not specifically targeted towards this format.

3. Adapt the materials as necessary.

Our office has always put its faith in all educators across the Diocese to adapt the Safe Environment training to the unique circumstances of their location. We understand that strict adherence to the exact instructions of any course is not always possible. The curricula offered by any of the approved programs frequently expects a different situation, such as a much larger class for break-out discussions, that is not possible with the smaller classes common across Vermont. All educators are encouraged to use their best judgement to teach the essence of the Safe Environment curricula. This includes adapting the Safe Environment training to a remote format over Zoom or any other remote method due to COVID-19.

4. Use the approved course that works best for you.

The Diocese of Burlington provides the Circle of Grace program, by the Archdiocese of Omaha, on our website at: [VermontCatholic.org/training](https://VermontCatholic.org/training) (accessed by clicking the "Circle of Grace Login" button and using the password "CHILDOFGOD" all caps, no quotes.) However, if a different approved course is a better fit for your class, your location is free to pursue and purchase any of the other courses. Below is a list of the Safe Environment trainings for youth approved in Bishop Coyne's promulgation letter (the full letter can be read here: [VermontCatholic.org/safe-audit](https://VermontCatholic.org/safe-audit) )

- Circle of Grace, Archdiocese of Omaha.
- Circles of Care, Diocese of Manchester.
- Theology of the Body, Ascension Press.
- Child Lures and Teen Lures Prevention Programs.

If your entire religious education class has been suspended due to COVID-19, along with the Safe Environment portion, please reach out to us. Please also contact us if you have any questions or concerns:

- John Pfeifer, Manager: (802) 846-5848, [jpfeifer@vermontcatholic.org](mailto:jpfeifer@vermontcatholic.org)
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Thank you for everything that you do.