

# KNIGHTS *of* COLUMBUS

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM



Grand Knight and Faithful Navigator Handbook



**KNIGHTS**  
**OF COLUMBUS®**

# Daily Devotion to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, I ask of you the gift of **wisdom** for a better understanding of you and of your divine perfection.

I ask of you the gift of **intellect** for a better understanding of the essence of the mysteries of the Holy Faith.

Give me the gift of **knowledge** so that I may know how to orient my life in accordance with the principles of faith.

Give me the gift of **counsel** so that in all things I can seek counsel from you and can always find it in you.

Give me the gift of **strength** so that no fear or earthly motivations can take me away from you.

Give me the gift of **piety** so that I can always serve your majesty with filial love.

Give me the gift of the **fear of God** so that no fear or earthly motivations can take me away from you.

Amen.

*This prayer to the Holy Spirit was given to St. John Paul II by his father as a child. St. John Paul II remained faithful to his father's prayer until the last days of his life, praying it each day.*

# Foreword

Throughout its history, Knights of Columbus has promoted Christian family life in all its initiatives and programs, including those serving children and youth. Recognizing that children are a precious gift and “the living reflection” of familial love, their safety and well-being is the greatest priority in Knights of Columbus youth programs and activities.<sup>1</sup>

The Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program protects young people against risks of abuse and neglect. The Safe Environment Program consists of a thorough youth leader screening process, child abuse awareness training, and a robust reporting procedure in the event of possible misconduct.

All of us understand that our public and private conduct can inspire and motivate, as well as scandalize and undermine, young people’s faith. Today, it is not enough to “evangelize ... only by word”; it is also imperative to evangelize “ in the strength of living love.”<sup>2</sup> Only then can we be assured that the family — the “domestic church” — and our parish communities can grow in God’s love. The Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program helps provide such assurances. Knights of Columbus strongly encourages all those who are committed to the social, intellectual, civil and spiritual growth of young people to complete Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program requirements.

Fraternally,



Carl A. Anderson, Supreme Knight

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<sup>1</sup> Pope John Paul II, *On the Family: Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris Consortio, of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Episcopate, to the Clergy and to the Faithful of the Whole Catholic Church Regarding the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, 14, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_19811122\\_familiaris-consortio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio_en.html) (last visited October 28, 2014)  
Pope Benedict XVI, *Homily of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI at 7th World Meeting of Families*, 2, 2012. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/homilies/2012/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20120603\\_milano\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20120603_milano_en.html) (last visited October 28, 2014)

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# 1. Introduction

Abuse and neglect are significant dangers to young people. In response to these dangers, Knights of Columbus has implemented a Safe Environment Program for the protection of young people participating in Knights of Columbus programs. The safety and well-being of all youth served through Knights of Columbus programs is of the highest importance to the Order.

Grand Knights and Faithful Navigators have a special role in protecting youth participating in Knights of Columbus programs. Grand Knights and Faithful Navigators should take time to familiarize themselves with the important policies, procedures and best practices regarding child abuse prevention and detection, and the procedures to report suspected abuse that are presented in this handbook.

## Best Practices for Child Abuse Prevention and Detection

Best practices for prevention and detection of child abuse help prevent instances of misconduct and promote awareness of the signs of child abuse. All fraternal leaders, including those working with a Squire circle, must be trained in Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program policies and procedures. Online training and this Grand Knight and Faithful Navigator Handbook are the tools Knights of Columbus uses to train fraternal leaders and others for their work with young people.

## Youth Leader Selection

The procedures by which Knights of Columbus Youth Leaders are selected ensure that only those Knights best suited to work with young people do so. Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program policies and procedures prepare fraternal leaders for the important responsibilities that come with their role. Background checks, in-person applicant interviews and telephone interviews with references form a robust youth leader screening process.

## Reporting Obligations

All fraternal leaders are required to report all suspected instances of abuse or misconduct. All members of Knights of Columbus who have a reasonable basis to believe that there may be abuse taking place in a Knights of Columbus program should always report such information to local law enforcement.

**If you suspect or know of abuse,  
immediately notify local law enforcement  
and call the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Hotline  
at 1-844-KOFC-SAFE (1-844-563-2723)**

# 2. Best Practices for Child Abuse Prevention and Detection

All fraternal leaders must have a clear understanding of the responsibilities that come with their important roles, including their part in guarding against the risks and dangers of child abuse and neglect.

Best practices for child abuse prevention and detection help to explain this complicated issue and present ways to protect against it during all Knights of Columbus programs and activities.

## 2.1 Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse is a complicated issue with many facets. Child abuse is a serious moral and criminal offense that, although sometimes difficult to detect, is a real and pervasive problem in all parts of the world. Among all forms of child abuse, sexual abuse may be the most easily hidden and yet be in plain sight. Here are some sobering statistics:

- One in four girls and one in six boys are abused sexually before age 18.<sup>3</sup>
- Three out of four adolescents that were abused knew their abuser well.<sup>4</sup>
- Parents, family members, friends of the parents and other caretakers can all be abusers.<sup>5</sup>
- Thirty-two percent of perpetrators who were returned to the streets abused again.<sup>6</sup>
- In 2012 alone, 3.8 million reports of child abuse were made in the United States.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.2 Important Definitions

**2.2.1 Child Physical Abuse** — Purposeful infliction of physical injury caused by hitting, throwing, burning, choking or otherwise harming a child by use of force.

**2.2.2 Child Emotional Abuse** — Non-physical infliction of emotional harm upon a child that includes constant threats, criticism, rejection and withheld love and support that impedes a child's development.

**2.2.3 Neglect** — The failure of parents or caregivers to provide for a child's basic needs, including food, shelter, medical treatment, and personal safety.

**2.2.4 Child Sexual Abuse** — Any act that exploits a minor (person under 18 years of age) for the sexual gratification of another. These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

### Non-Touching

- **Inappropriate Speech:** innuendo, vulgar or obscene language, sexually graphic stories and jokes, etc.
- **Pornography:** immodest, sexually graphic or obscene printed images, photos or text, videos, video games, CDs, DVDs, movies, TV shows, web pages, song lyrics, etc.
- **Child Pornography:** pornography featuring children under the age of 18.

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization, *World report on violence and health: summary*, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention, *Adverse Childhood Experiences Study: Data and Statistics*, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, *Child Maltreatment 2005*, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, *Child Sexual Molestation: Research Issues*, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Children's Bureau, *Child Maltreatment 2012*, 2013.

- **Voyeurism:** observing unsuspecting persons in private settings for sexual gratification.
- **Exhibitionism:** indecent exposure.

## Touching

- Unwanted or forced displays of affection.
- Inappropriate touching of the genital area, groin, anus, inner thighs, buttocks or breasts, or other areas of the body.
- A request for or forced touching of the adult's intimate parts.
- Sexual relations with a person under 18 years of age.

**2.2.5 Mandatory Reporter** — A person who, because his or her work involves regular contact with children, is mandated by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Most states designate educators, professional caregivers, clergy, medical workers, etc. as mandatory reporters.

## All Knights of Columbus Youth Leaders and Officers are Mandatory Reporters

**2.2.6 Youth Participant** — Any person under the age of 18 years present at or participating in Knights of Columbus sponsored programming.

**2.2.7 Youth Leader** — Any knight who has substantial and sustained contact with youth through a council sponsored youth group, Squire Circle or Boy Scout Troop.

## 2.3 Detecting Signs of Abuse and Neglect

There are many signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect. A victim of abuse may display one or many of these signs. One of these symptoms on its own does not necessarily point to child abuse and neglect. A child who shows a few or many of these symptoms is more likely to be a victim of abuse.

### 2.3.1 Physical Signs of Abuse or Neglect in a Child

- ◆ Loss of appetite, trouble eating or swallowing.
- ◆ Chronic stomach illness with no identifiable cause.
- ◆ Cutting, burning or otherwise hurting oneself.
- ◆ Bruises, rashes, cuts, limping, multiple or unexplained injuries.
- ◆ Complaining of hunger.
- ◆ Constantly being dressed in dirty, old or inadequate clothing for the season.
- ◆ Displaying obvious signs of poor hygiene.
- ◆ Pain, itching, bleeding, fluid or rawness of the private body part.
- ◆ Trouble sitting.

### 2.3.2 Behavioral Signs of Abuse or Neglect in a Child

- ◆ Changes in toileting habits.
- ◆ Older child acting like a younger child or infant: thumb sucking, clinging, etc.
- ◆ Nightmares, fear of going to bed or other sleep disturbances, such as bed wetting.
- ◆ Fear of certain people or activities.
- ◆ Talking about a new older youth or adult friend.
- ◆ Suddenly having money or new toys, games, clothing or electronics.
- ◆ Refusing to talk about a secret he/she has with an older youth or adult.
- ◆ Inappropriate sexual activity, an unusual interest in sexual matters or knowledge of sexuality beyond a child's maturity.



- ◆ New words for private body parts.
- ◆ Sudden academic and/or behavioral problems at school.
- ◆ Significant behavioral changes, extreme mood swings, withdrawal, fearfulness or aggressive acting out.
- ◆ Difficulty paying attention.

## 2.4 Policies for Prevention and Detection of Child Abuse

Grand knights and faithful navigators should make it clear to youth leader applicants that during all youth programs, youth leaders take on important responsibilities for the proper care of young people. Each young person’s well-being is always the top priority during youth programs. Grand knights and faithful navigators must impress upon youth leaders that they must always guard against even the appearance of any impropriety. To ensure youth leaders hold themselves to the highest standard of care, Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program policies and procedures should be followed at all times.

### 2.4.1 General Policies

- Youth leaders should never supervise youth participants alone. At least two youth leaders should be present at every program and activity.
- Youth leaders, when counseling a youth participant, should always be in the same room as others or visible to others.
- Youth leaders should not give gifts to youth participants without approval from their grand knight or faithful navigator, as well as notification of the parent(s).
- Youth leaders should always be aware of other adults present at Knights of Columbus youth programs and they must be alert for signs of possible misconduct.
- Youth leaders should notify their grand knight or faithful navigator and/or call the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Hotline at 1-844-KOFC-SAFE when they recognize a policy violation or other possible misconduct that may impact child safety.
- Youth leaders should make all programs and activities open to parents and guardians.
- Youth leaders should not initiate, encourage or engage in one-on-one contact with youth participants outside of sanctioned Knights of Columbus programs and activities.

### 2.4.2 Policies for Youth Leader-Participant Interaction

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Side hugs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Handshakes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Verbal praise</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Touching hands, shoulders and arms</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Arms around shoulders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Full-frontal hugs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kisses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Showing affection in isolated area</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lap sitting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wrestling</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Piggyback rides</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tickling</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Any type of massage given by or to a youth</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or staff or volunteer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Compliments relating to physique or body development</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Touching bottom, chest or genital areas</li> </ul>

Appropriate Verbal Interactions	Inappropriate Verbal Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Positive reinforcement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate jokes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encouragement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Praise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Name-calling</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youths in the personal problems or issues of staff and volunteers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Secrets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cursing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Off-color or sexual jokes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shaming</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Belittling</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Derogatory remarks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youths</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family</li> </ul>

### 2.4.3 Policies for Travel and Overnight Programs

- Youth leaders should make all programs and activities open to parents and guardians.
- Youth leaders, other than the youth participant’s parent or guardian, should not share a sleeping area with a youth participant.
- All off-site and overnight activities must be pre-approved by a grand knight or faithful navigator, and the parents.
- Youth leaders should always protect their own privacy while showering, dressing, sleeping and toileting.
- Youth leaders should always respect youth participants’ privacy while showering, dressing, sleeping and toileting. Youth leaders should not enter rest room, dressing or sleeping facilities when in use by youth participants, except in cases of a dire safety or health concern.
- Youth leaders should enforce curfews with a room check conducted by two youth leaders, both male or both female, as appropriate.
- Youth leaders should not allow youth participants to have members of the opposite sex, except a parent, in their sleeping area at any time.

### 2.4.4 Policies for Monitoring Restrooms

- Youth leaders should be aware that most incidents of youth-to-youth abuse occur in restrooms, and they should conduct frequent restroom checks.
- Youth leaders should scan restrooms before allowing youth to enter.
- Youth leaders should never allow fewer than three youth participants to travel to a restroom facility together.
- Youth leaders should allow only as many youth as there are restroom stalls to use the restroom at the same time.
- Youth leaders should avoid sending youth of different ages into restrooms at the same time.
- Youth leaders should remain within earshot of restrooms while in use by youth.
- Youth leaders should require youth to ask permission before using a single-stall restroom or restroom out of earshot of the group.
- Youth leaders should not use restrooms at the same time as youth.

### 2.4.5 Policies for Monitoring Free Time

- Youth leaders should require youth to remain within their line of sight.
- At least two youth leaders should supervise youth at all times.
- Youth leaders should conduct periodic check-ins and sweeps of entire activity area.

### 2.4.6 Policies for Social Media and the Internet

- Youth leaders should only communicate via email or home (not cell) phone with youth participants.
- Youth leaders should limit all communication with youth participants to Knights of Columbus youth programs-related topics.
- Youth leaders should copy parents or guardians on all email and phone communications with youth participants.
- Youth leaders should never encourage youth participants to contact them via text message or on any other social media platform.
- Youth leaders should never send inappropriate, vulgar or pornographic material to youth participants via email, text message, chat, bulletin board or other social media platform.

### 2.4.7 Policies for Preventing Youth-to-Youth Abuse

- Youth leaders should always supervise youth in order to mitigate risk of youth-to-youth abuse.
- Youth leaders should not leave an older youth alone and in charge of younger youth.
- Youth leaders should strictly prohibit hazing inside or outside of youth programs and activities.
- Youth leaders should strictly prohibit bullying, including but not limited to, derogatory name calling, singling out one youth for different treatment, ridicule or humiliation.
- Youth leaders should strictly prohibit games such as “Truth or Dare.”
- Youth leaders should consistently document and report all instances of bullying, hazing, inappropriate sexualized behavior and suspected abuse between youth.

### 2.4.8 Policies for Outside Contact with Youth Participants

Many cases of organizational abuse occur off-site and outside of regularly scheduled activities. This contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put everyone at increased risk. Knights of Columbus strongly recommends that youth leaders do not have outside contact with youth participants. However, if off-site contacts are unavoidable, Knights of Columbus has determined that the following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate:

Appropriate Outside Contact	Inappropriate Outside Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Taking groups of youths on an outing</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Attending sporting activities with groups of youths</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Attending functions at a youth’s home, with parents present</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Taking one youth on an outing without the parents’ written permission</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Visiting one youth in the youth’s home, without a parent present</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Entertaining one youth in the home of staff or volunteers</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> A lone youth spending the night with staff or volunteers</li></ul>

# 3. Procedures for Selecting Youth Leaders

## 3.1 Knights of Columbus Youth Leader Prerequisites

- Be a practical Catholic in union with the Holy See.
- Be a member in good standing of a Knights of Columbus council or assembly.
- Be at least 21 years of age.

## 3.2 Qualities of a Good Youth Leader

As well as meeting Knights of Columbus Youth Leader prerequisites, all youth leader applicants should exhibit the following qualities to ensure they are well suited to work with youth:

- Youth leaders should be strongly formed in the Catholic faith and exhibit such formation in their words and actions.
- Youth leaders must recognize that their personal conduct can inspire and motivate young people, as well as scandalize and undermine young people's faith.
- Youth leaders must respect the trust that youth, parents and the Knights place in them.
- Youth leaders must always place the safety and well-being of young people above all else during programs and activities.

## 3.3 Becoming a Youth Leader

Grand knights and faithful navigators should direct all members who are elected or appointed to become youth leaders to complete the following application procedure:

1. Complete a *Youth Leader Application* #4348 found online at:  
[http://www.kofc.org/un/en/forms/circle/youthleader4348\\_p.pdf](http://www.kofc.org/un/en/forms/circle/youthleader4348_p.pdf)
2. For state level youth leader positions, complete the *State Council Youth Leader Application* form #4369 found online at:  
[http://www.kofc.org/un/en/forms/circle/state\\_youth\\_leader4369\\_p.pdf](http://www.kofc.org/un/en/forms/circle/state_youth_leader4369_p.pdf)
3. Obtain three references from two unrelated persons and one familial relation of applicant.

Once an applicant has submitted his complete application, grand knights or faithful navigators should do the following:

1. Schedule and complete in-person interview with applicant.
2. Interview applicant references.
3. Upon completion of in-person interview and reference interviews, sign application and submit directly to [youthleader@kofc.org](mailto:youthleader@kofc.org)
4. Once approved, the supreme office will mail a youth leader certificate to the new youth leader.

### 3.4 Youth Leader Applicant Interview

Grand knights and faithful navigators are responsible for conducting an in-person interview of all youth leader applicants and completing phone interviews of each applicant's three references. In order to ensure a thorough screening of all applicants, Knights of Columbus has devised a set of standard questions to use during the in-person interview of the applicant and during reference interviews, along with a list of "red flags" to watch out for during the screening process. During interviews, ask open-ended questions that allow the applicant and/or his references to answer in more than just a few words. If an answer is too short or vague, ask follow-up questions or ask the applicant or his reference to explain.

#### 3.4.1 Youth Leader In-Person Interview Questions

- Tell me about your involvement in the Knights of Columbus. Why did you become a Knight? Name several council activities you have been involved in.
- Why are you interested in becoming a youth leader?
- What do you know about the Columbian Squires program?
- What experience do you have working with children?
- What is it in your background that qualifies you to be a Knights of Columbus Youth Leader?
- Under what kind of supervisor do you function best? Do you work well within rules and policies?
- What are some questions/concerns you have about being a Knights of Columbus Youth Leader?
- Please tell me about a time when you were responsible for disciplining a child other than
- Have you completed the diocese's Safe Environment background check and training? Would you be willing to?
- What would you do if a child who is normally very active and friendly comes to a youth program one day unusually upset and doesn't want to interact with anyone? What would you do if you noticed a strange bruise on his arm?

#### 3.4.2 Red Flags to Watch For During Youth Leader In-Person Interviews

- ◆ An unusually strong identification with children.
- ◆ Lack of mature relationships with adults.
- ◆ A belief that children are much better/easier to work with than adults.
- ◆ Answers that signal an applicant is extremely withdrawn or antisocial.
- ◆ Instances of corporal or harsh verbal punishment of a child.
- ◆ A strong preference for working with a particular sex or age of children.
- ◆ A strong preference for working alone or without supervision.
- ◆ A strong reluctance to follow rules and guidelines.
- ◆ A lack of involvement with local council or assembly.
- ◆ A lack of knowledge about Knights of Columbus, especially of its youth programs and Columbian Squires.
- ◆ Answers that signal a lack of understanding of Catholic moral and ethical teachings.

### 3.4.3 Reference Interview Questions: Professional Relationships

The questions below should be used when interviewing references with whom an applicant has a professional relationship, such as a colleague or employer.

- How long has the applicant worked with you? What is the nature of your professional relationship? If the applicant has left this job, what was his reason for leaving?
- Have you ever observed the applicant working with children? If so, tell me about those interactions.
- Does the applicant follow the rules of your workplace? Does he value rules or like to challenge company regulations and policies?
- What skills does the applicant demonstrate that pertain to working with youth?
- Does the applicant communicate well with colleagues and superiors?
- How does the applicant respond to criticism and frustration on the job?
- Does this applicant show interest in training or improving his skills in his job?
- Would you recommend the applicant to work with youth?
- To your knowledge, has the applicant ever been convicted of a crime? Disciplined for sexual misconduct?

### 3.4.4 Reference Interview Questions: Personal Relationships

The questions below should be used when interviewing references with whom an applicant has a personal relationship, such as a friend, fellow Knight, family member or clergy member.

- How long have you known the applicant? What is your relationship to him?
- To the best of your knowledge, is the applicant a practical (practicing) Catholic in communion with the Holy See? Does he live his Catholic faith in his day-to-day life?
- Have you ever observed the applicant working with children? If so, tell me about those interactions.
- What skills does the applicant demonstrate that pertain to working with youth?
- How does the applicant respond/interact with authority figures? Does the applicant value rules or like to challenge regulations and policies?
- How does the applicant respond to stressful situations?
- Would you recommend the applicant for a position working with youth? Why/why not?
- To your knowledge, has the candidate ever been arrested or convicted of a crime? Has he ever been disciplined for sexual misconduct?

### 3.4.5 Red Flags to Watch For During Reference Interviews

As you interview each reference, be sure to look for these red flags in the answers:

- ◆ Indications that applicant responds immaturely or defensively to criticism.
- ◆ Indications that applicant does not respect authority figures or comply with company/civil rules and laws.
- ◆ Indications that applicant has unusually close relationships with children, or has disciplined a child inappropriately in the past.
- ◆ Indications that applicant is extremely antisocial, has few adult friendships.
- ◆ Indications that applicant does not demonstrate strong Catholic morals and ethics.
- ◆ Knowledge that applicant has been arrested or convicted of a crime, or accused of sexual misconduct.

### **3.5 Background Checks**

The Supreme Office conducts background checks on each applicant for youth leader positions that may include, among other things, the following:

- State and federal criminal background check.
- National Sex Offender Registry check.
- Social Security number trace.
- Alias search.

Youth leaders must complete their background check authorization within 30 days of appointment.

**If a Knights of Columbus background check reveals any form of child abuse, sexual misconduct or other violent crime, the grand knight or faithful navigator and the applicant will be notified and the applicant be given the opportunity to respond. If the applicant responds, his response will be taken under review pending a final decision. If there is no response, the application will be rejected**

### **3.6 Safe Environment Training**

All youth leaders are required to complete online training to prevent and detect signs of child physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect, as well as how to report suspected child abuse. This training must be completed within 30 days of receiving email confirmation of appointment to a youth leader position. Grand knights and faithful navigators must ensure that youth leaders complete all training within the 30 days.

**Youth leaders are ineligible to serve if the background check authorization and online training are not completed within 30 days of appointment**

#### **3.6.1 Youth Leaders Must Comply With Diocesan Requirements**

Youth leaders must comply with any and all safe environment/youth protection training and background check requirements for the diocese and parish in which they volunteer.

#### **3.6.2 Youth Leaders Must Re-Train Every Two Years**

Youth leaders are required to renew their Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program online training and background check every two years from date of their initial training. Youth leaders will receive an email reminder of this re-training requirement.

#### **3.6.3 Grand Knight And Faithful Navigator to Monitor Youth Leaders**

Grand knights and faithful navigators will receive specific administrative privileges on the Knights of Columbus online training “dashboard” website. Tools will be available to grand knights and faithful navigators to track each youth leader in his council or assembly to ensure that the youth leader has completed all background check and training requirements. Grand knights and faithful navigators are responsible for making sure that youth leaders complete background check authorization and complete all training within 30 days of receiving email confirmation of appointment to a youth leader position.

## 4. Reporting Obligations

Grand knights and faithful navigators must be prepared to address reports of actual or suspected abuse or misconduct. Members of Knights of Columbus who have a reasonable basis to believe that there may be abuse taking place in a Knights of Columbus program a moral obligation to report their information to law enforcement.

### 4.1 Addressing Suspected Misconduct

Grand knights and faithful navigators must respond swiftly to any policy violations or other red-flag behaviors or concerns. Reporting policy violations and other concerns regarding child safety can prevent abuse from taking place.

#### 4.1.1 Red Flag Behaviors

- ◆ Constantly trying to be alone with youth.
- ◆ Constantly speaking negatively about a youth.
- ◆ Bending or breaking rules and policies or allowing youth to bend or break the rules.
- ◆ Complaining that adults are more difficult to work with than youth.
- ◆ Speaking about youth in an inappropriate, romantic or sexual manner.
- ◆ Giving gifts or money to youth.

#### 4.1.2 Responding to Red Flag Behavior

- Interrupt the behavior.
- Report the behavior to the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Hotline at 1-844-KOFC-SAFE.
- Reports against a district deputy should be made to state deputies.
- Document the report but DO NOT conduct an investigation personally.
- Keep reporting until appropriate action is taken.

### 4.2 Addressing Suspected Abuse

Grand knights and faithful navigators who are confronted by a youth participant with allegations of actual abuse should immediately report the incident and take steps to protect the youth.

#### 4.2.1 Responding to Reports of Abuse

- Don't panic or overreact.
- Don't blame the youth for the incident.
- Don't criticize the youth.
- Let the youth know that you believe what he/she is saying.
- Support the youth and his/her decision to tell you.
- Let the youth know that he/she can continue to confide in you.



- Avoid repeated interviews about the abuse.
- If the youth appears to have been, or be, injured, seek immediate medical attention.

### 4.3 Procedure for Reporting Allegations of Abuse

Every Knights of Columbus Youth Leader and officer, including grand knights and faithful navigators, are required to report all suspected instances abuse or misconduct.

#### 4.3.1 Grand Knights and Faithful Navigators Are Mandatory Reporters

**Grand knights and faithful navigators are deemed mandatory reporters under this policy.**

1. Grand knights and faithful navigators must immediately report any and all suspected child physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect to law enforcement.
2. After reporting to law enforcement, grand knights and faithful navigators must immediately notify Knights of Columbus via the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Hotline directly at: 1-844-KOFC-SAFE. (1-844-563-2723)
3. If the alleged perpetrator is a member of the clergy, diocesan personnel or frequent volunteer in your parish, grand knights and faithful navigators should also contact their Diocesan Director of Safe Environments.

#### 4.3.2 Protection from Retaliation

If a youth leader has seen or heard of suspected child abuse or misconduct in a council or assembly, he must report it immediately. By reporting any information he has, a youth leader is following Knights of Columbus procedure. His report will be taken seriously, and he will not be subject to any adverse action as long as his report is made in good faith, even if his allegations prove false.

### 4.4 Contact Information for Additional Reporting Agencies

Grand knights and faithful navigators are also strongly encouraged to report cases of suspected child abuse to any and all relevant child protection agency. These agencies may provide social services for victims of child abuse and their families.

#### **United States, U.S. Territories, Canada**

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: 1-800-843-5678  
 Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-422-4453

#### **Mexico**

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: 001-800-843-5678

#### **Philippines**

Child Health and Intervention and Protective Service: +632-734-4216

#### **World Wide**

Cyber Tipline online reporting: [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com)

# Appendix A: Further Reading

After reading through this handbook, you may want to learn more about maintaining a safe environment for youth participating in Knights of Columbus programs. Below are some resources that complement the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program and can help you understand how to strengthen your parish community and protect youth as they grow in God's love.

## From the Church

**The Vatican's** collection of papal documents on the family offers spiritual and practical guidance for those wishing to educate themselves and their children on the body, marriage, familial relationships and human sexuality. Public access to these documents is available at:

[http://www.vatican.va/themes/famiglia\\_test/santopadre\\_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/themes/famiglia_test/santopadre_en.htm)

*Useful Web Pages:*

***Familiaris Consortio* (St. John Paul II)**

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_19811122\\_familiaris-consortio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio_en.html)

***Letter to Families* (St. John Paul II)**

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_let\\_02021994\\_families\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_02021994_families_en.html)

***Lumen Fidei* (Pope Francis)**

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130629\\_enciclica-lumen-fidei.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_enciclica-lumen-fidei.html)

## From The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

**The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops** has devoted a special section of its website to child and youth protection. Access to research on child abuse and youth protection, best practices for prevention and detection, and the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* is available at:

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/index.cfm>

**The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc.** has created its own safe environment training program for the Church, *VIRTUS*, that is in use today by many local dioceses. Resources for parents, educators and children, as well as online training, can be accessed at: [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org)

**The Arlington Diocese**, under the leadership of Bishop Paul S. Loverde, has made education about human sexuality and the threats posed to the family and youth today its mission. Many good resources for practical Catholics can be found at: <http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/>

*Useful Web Pages:*

**Catholic Parenting Resources**

<http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/purity/parents.aspx>

**Bought with a Price: Every Man's Duty to Protect Himself and his Family from A Pornographic Culture (Pastoral Letter from Bishop Loverde)**

[http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/uploadedFiles/Library/docs/Communications/Letters\\_from\\_Bishop\\_Loverde/Bought\\_with\\_a\\_Price.pdf](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/uploadedFiles/Library/docs/Communications/Letters_from_Bishop_Loverde/Bought_with_a_Price.pdf)

## From the Knights of Columbus

**Fathers for Good** is a web-based initiative of Knights of Columbus that supports parents as they raise their children in the Catholic faith. Articles addressing the challenges of child-rearing in today's world and tools for strengthening the family can be found here: [www.fathersforgood.org](http://www.fathersforgood.org)

*Useful Web Pages:*

**Digital Vigilance for Parents**

[http://www.fathersforgood.org/ffg/en/big\\_four/digital\\_vigilance.html](http://www.fathersforgood.org/ffg/en/big_four/digital_vigilance.html)

**Protecting Children from Abuse**

[http://www.fathersforgood.org/ffg/en/big\\_four/protecting\\_children.html](http://www.fathersforgood.org/ffg/en/big_four/protecting_children.html)

**Warning Kids about Porn**

[http://www.fathersforgood.org/ffg/en/big\\_four/protect\\_them.html](http://www.fathersforgood.org/ffg/en/big_four/protect_them.html)

**Catholic Information Service** was started by Knights of Columbus in 1948 to provide low-cost Catholic publications for evangelization and education. Literature on human sexuality, the family and the challenges Catholics face in today's world are available here: [www.kofc.org/cis](http://www.kofc.org/cis)

*Useful Web Pages:*

**The Family in the Modern World**

<http://www.kofc.org/un/en/resources/cis/cis318.pdf>

**In the Image of Love: Marriage, the Family and the New Evangelization**

<http://www.kofc.org/un/en/resources/cis/cis407.pdf>

**Blessed are the Pure in Heart: A Pastoral Letter on the Dignity of the Human Person and the Dangers of Pornography**

<http://www.kofc.org/un/en/resources/cis/cis323.pdf>

## From Youth Serving Organizations

**Boy Scouts of America** is a national leader in youth protection policy and training. Its website offers printer-friendly resources for parents and their children, a comprehensive Internet-safety program, and web-based training, all of which is available regardless of an affiliation with the Boy Scouts of America. Find it all here:

<http://www.scouting.org/Training/youthprotection.aspx>

**Darkness to Light** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending child sexual abuse in the United States. In addition to providing support for other youth-serving organizations, Darkness to Light offers awareness training for parents and individuals and resources for starting initiatives in the local community. These tools can be accessed at:

<http://www.d2l.org/site/c.4dICIJOkGcISE/b.6069275/k.31EB/Prevention.htm>

**Childhelp** offers social services to survivors of child abuse and their families in the United States, U.S. territories and Canada through their child abuse hotline. Parents, educators and youth can also join a local chapter of Childhelp to empower their community against child abuse. Resources can be found at: [www.childhelp.org](http://www.childhelp.org)

## From Government Agencies

**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** has drafted a handbook specifically for youth-serving organizations to help prevent and respond to child sexual abuse. This, and other helpful resources, can be found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/index.html>

**The Children's Bureau**, a branch of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, offers information on state- and federal-run prevention programs, social services for survivors of child abuse, and reporting systems dedicated to child physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect. Access these resources at:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/focus-areas/child-abuse-neglect>

**The National Institute of Justice** has compiled resources for survivors of child abuse who are taking legal action against perpetrators, as well as research on the effects of child abuse and best practices for communities. Find these important resources at: <http://www.nij.gov/topics/crime/child-abuse/pages/welcome.aspx>

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# Sub Tuum Præsidium

*We Fly to Thy Protection*

We fly to thy protection,  
O holy Mother of God;  
Despise not our petitions  
In our necessities,  
But deliver us always  
From all dangers,  
O glorious and Blessed Virgin.  
Amen.



*Immaculate Conception, Sister Marie de l'Eucharistie  
Notre-Dame de Quèbec Cathedral-Basilica*



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[www.kofc.org](http://www.kofc.org)