

Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

Principles for Child/Youth Protection Catechesis

- † Each person is uniquely made in the image and likeness of God. God is love, therefore, each person is made in the image of love and created to act in love.
- † God lives in a family or a community that we call the Blessed Trinity. Persons are created to live in community, the smallest and most intimate of which is family. Family, in God's image, respects and cherishes the uniqueness and life of each of its members. The Church, school and parish are partners with the family in educating, nurturing and protecting children.
- † Each person has dignity and must be treated with respect. We show our respect for each other in our language, behavior, and interactions with each other. Caring, concern and empathy for each other must be a hallmark of our lives as followers of Jesus. Because of the dignity of each person, our right to respect includes the right to the respect of our own bodies.
- † Touch is an integral part of being human. Touch can be safe, unsafe or unwanted. Safe touch, appropriate physical affection, is that kind of touch which is good for the person's body, makes one feel cared for, loved and important. Unsafe and unwanted touch makes a person feel uncomfortable and unhappy.
- † God has blessed every person with the gift of choice. Some bad choices affect a number of people negatively. Suffering, which is not willed by God and is not the fault of innocent persons, is the result of those bad choices.
- † Some actions or behaviors are wrong or sinful. Some actions or behaviors between adults, between adults and children, and between children are wrong. Behavior that harms self or others physically, psychologically, emotionally, or spiritually is wrong.
- † There are good secrets and bad secrets. There is good play and bad play. We can share good secrets and good play experiences and we must avoid bad secrets and bad play experiences.
- † Good and loving human relationships and friendships can help us understand ourselves, God and others. Some people misuse friendships and harm others.
- † Every person has the right to be safe. Children have the right to be protected from anything and anyone who may harm them. Adults have the responsibility to make the environment in which children live as safe as possible. That includes teaching children and young people proper, adequate coping and safety skills which will enable them to be safe and healthy.
- † Parents, teachers and catechists have the responsibility to assist children to identify a number of people in their lives to whom they can talk openly and honestly. Children must be taught that if help is not received, to keep telling other trusted adults until someone helps them.