



### VIRTUS TRAINING

This weekend (5/6 April), you will see blue pinwheels around the church. The pinwheels are a part of a wider program, Pinwheels for Prevention, established in 2008 to raise awareness of childhood abuse. April is designated as a month to raise awareness of this problem.

The VIRTUS, Protecting God's Children® for Adults, program is an awareness program. It elevates an adult's awareness about the nature and scope of childhood sexual abuse and is designed to bring what we currently know about this issue to the consciousness of adult participants. The program emphasizes the behavioral characteristics of potential adult offenders and establishes guidelines for putting in place the programs, policies, and procedures necessary to promote a safe environment for all God's children. Its purpose is to lay the groundwork to create safer environments for individuals, parishes, schools, and dioceses.

Awareness is just the start. VIRTUS training goes beyond awareness and educates people to use the information presented in an effective and productive way. It is a necessary part of the process of creating a safe environment. Recognizing and paying attention to the behavioral characteristics of adults who interact with children as a matter of course is necessary to prevent child sexual abuse in our environments.

All adult diocesan employees (lay and religious), and all volunteers who regularly or routinely work with children/youth, or those who have highly responsible volunteer roles are required to complete the Protecting God's Children for Adults training. However, all concerned adults will benefit from this awareness and training. The next VIRTUS session at Our Lady of the Rosary will be held on Sunday 1 June from 12:00 to 3:00 PM. There will be a pizza lunch provided. Although the limit of attendees is set at 15, no one from Our Lady will be turned away.

Instructions on how to sign up and establish a VIRTUS account can be found at the doors of the church or you can go to <https://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/> and click the green rectangle “first time registrant” on the left hand side of the page. If you have any questions or trouble registering, or the session is indicated as full contact me, Dave McKinnon at [d1m98jk3@gmail.com](mailto:d1m98jk3@gmail.com).

## **Protecting God’s Children for Adults Program**

In accordance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop’s *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* **all** adult diocesan employees (lay and religious), and all volunteers who regularly or routinely work with children/youth or those who have highly responsible volunteer roles, are required to complete the *Protecting God’s Children for Adults* training.

The Protecting God’s Children for Adults training is a research-based training program that educates adults on how to become better protectors of children from child sexual abuse. Participants will learn how to become safer adults who are a part of the solution to prevent, and respond to, child sexual abuse.

Participants will learn:

- The reality and context of child sexual abuse, as well as victim/survivor advocacy.
- How to identify problematic behavior that adults exhibit.
- How abuse affects survivors, their families, and their communities.
- The importance of maintaining healthy boundaries with children and youth.
- Empowering action items and five comprehensive research-based steps to prevent and effectively respond to child sexual abuse, including: identifying warning signs of adult behavior, screening and selecting employees and volunteers, using technology appropriately when interacting with minors, responding to disclosures from children and youth, communicating concerns about inappropriate behavior and reporting suspected abuse.

The Protecting God’s Children for Adults training features an in-person or live virtual sessions. The link below connects to the Virtus website listing of currently scheduled training sessions within the Diocese of Richmond. To register for one of the sessions, click the Start Registration button. You will be prompted to create a user id and password. Follow the prompts to continue

the registration process. After entering your personal information, a drop down function will enable you to select a Diocese of Richmond training center location/date/time. Continue to follow instructions as indicated to complete the pre-registration process. The *Protecting God's Children for Adults* session is not recommended for those under the age of 18.