



*Catholic Church of Eastern Montana*  
DIOCESE OF GREAT FALLS-BILLINGS

*Founded 1904*

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 18, 2016  
TO: Pastors, Parochial Vicars, PLC's, School Principals, DRE's, Catechists  
FROM: Bishop Michael Warfel  
SUBJECT: Safe Environment Training for Children

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### **DEADLINE: March 30, 2017**

In 2002 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops promulgated the Charter for Protection of Children and Young Adults. The Charter was a commitment on behalf of the bishops to the people of God in which all dioceses would establish Safe Environment programs to responsibly educate and train children, youth, parents, ministers, educators and volunteers about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children.

Upon my installation as Bishop of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings in 2009 I mandated safe environment training for all children in accord with the USCCB Charter and Norms for the Protection of Children and Young People. Last year, a new program was introduced -- **Learning about L.I.F.E. – Love, Infatuation, Friendship, and Exploitation.** This program will be utilized again this year.

Last year's audit resulted in a 51% compliance rate which for a mandated program is quite sad. The ultimate responsibility of adhering to this policy lies with the Pastor, Parochial Administrator or Administrator of the parish. I am aware that many parishes who have not complied in the past prepare children for the Sacraments of Initiation so there must be training taking place somewhere.

Laurie Horton serves as the Director of Safe Environment for our diocese and would be happy to answer questions anyone may have. Attached to this memo are instructions from the Safe Environment Director for the upcoming year. Please read the instructions carefully, complete your training sessions with the children in your religious education classes and submit the pertinent documentation by the due date listed above. I ask our full cooperation in adhering to policy for the safety of our children.

Thank you and God bless you in this very important work.

Attachment

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**OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

121 23<sup>rd</sup> Street South  
P. O. Box 1399  
Great Falls, MT 59403-1399

406-727-6683  
800-332-9998  
406-454-3480 (fax)

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

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE  
SAFE ENVIRONMENT CHILDREN'S  
PROGRAMMING – 2016-2017  
Deadline: March 30, 2017**

The **Learning about L.I.F.E.** program will again be utilized in the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings this year, however the **classroom version** will be acceptable for those parishes/schools that choose to utilize it. You still have the option of utilizing the **Family Version** if you found that successful

The **Learning about L.I.F.E.** program was designed as a parish program that guides you in talking to children about relationships, sexuality, character development, and sexual abuse. The **Learning about L.I.F.E.** material is presented by you, a trained facilitator, in one to two-hour sessions, one session each year for the children of various age levels, from pre-school through high school. The program uses engaging, age-appropriate processes to help talk to children about the non-sensitive issues involved with relationships, sexuality, chastity, and abuse. The **L.I.F.E** program recognizes the important role of parents in this process and includes a parent package that students take home. Parents are provided instructions for an additional discussion at home that will cover more sensitive issues that cannot be addressed in the classroom.

Training for facilitators is divided into three sections:

1. **L.I.F.E.PLUS PROGRAM OVERVIEW**
2. **LOWER GRADES: Pre-K to Grade 4**
3. **UPPER GRADES: 5 to 12**

**Anyone presenting the program to children completes the L.I.F.E. Plus Overview and either one or both of the appropriate grade levels applicable to their.** To be certified as a facilitator of the **L.I.F.E. Plus** program your **first step** is to complete the overview of the entire program. The overview examines the meaning of the acronym L.I.F.E. and helps you to understand the theological, catechetical, and pedagogical foundations on which the program is based. You must complete this training in order to move on to the grade level certifications.

**NOTE:** If you completed the Overview last year for the classroom version, you do not need to retake it this year. However if you completed the Overview last year for the Family version and will be presenting the Classroom version this year, you must take the Classroom overview.  
**All facilitators must be in compliance with the required Safe and Sacred Adult training.**

**Step 1 Parent Letter Advising of Training Dates Out (Attachment A) & Right to Opt-Out.**

This **sample letter** outlines the program's purpose and content as well as the annual requirement for children PreK-12, and when and where this year's training sessions will be held. Parents have an opportunity to opt their children out of the scheduled training session and can easily obtain training materials to use at home. This mailing to all parents must also include a copy of the Parent Opt-Out Form (Attachment B) included in this packet. Please be sure to complete the deadline notice at the bottom of the Parent Opt-Out form before enclosing it in the letter.

**Step 2 Training Sessions**

→ Provide the age-appropriate **Learning about L.I.F.E.** training session. There should be a designated time and place for each age group.

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- **Learning About L.I.F.E.** designed by Sister Kieran Sawyer, SSND and Dr. Kathie Amidei is the only approved programming materials in the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings.
- **Parent Envelopes** - have Parent Envelopes prepared to send home with the children and include a date in which you would like the materials returned. Be sure to include the age appropriate **Parent Book**, the age appropriate **Feedback form** (feedback forms can be found on the Safe & Sacred site where you downloaded the class materials) and any materials you completed as a group. **Optional:** If you would like to include a letter with the Parent Packet, feel free to do so.

### **Step 3 Report to the Diocese / Tracking Form**

Only after the Parent envelope is returned with the **FEEDBACK FORM** completed can the child be counted as trained. If the parent does not return anything to the parish/school, the child will be counted as absent, unless the parent opted them out.

A copy of the Tracking Form (**Attachment C**) is enclosed with these materials or can be found on the diocesan web site ([www.diocesegfb.org](http://www.diocesegfb.org)) under the Safe & Sacred tab. After the parish or school training is completed, the individual providing the training or the DRE if applicable must fill it out the tracking form and submit it the diocese at the address below.

- **Parent Opt-Out Form.** Completed and signed opt-out forms **must be returned to the diocese** along with the tracking form.
- **Letter advising of no religious education training (Attachment D).** If your parish does not have a religious education program, send a copy of this letter to the Bishop printed on parish letterhead.

### **Step 4 Follow up for those who Opt-Out or are Absent.**

A follow-up letter (**Attachment E**) must be sent to parents of any child/children who did not attend the classroom training session. The parish or school must mail this letter whether or not the parents submitted the opt-out form, and regardless of the reason the student was absent. This gives the parents one last opportunity to obtain the materials for home training sessions. The letter must be printed on parish or school letterhead, including the parent name/names and mailing address. **Attachment F** should be included in this letter to provide parents instructions on how to access the HOME program.

Laurie Horton, Safe Environment  
Diocese of Great Falls-Billings  
PO Box 1399  
Great Falls, MT 59403-1399

### **Step 5**

Ensure that your parish and/or school has posted an up-to-date copy of the **How to Report Child Abuse and File a Complaint (Attachment G)** poster in parish/school buildings where it can be viewed easily by the public.

### **Step 6 Compliance with Audit**

Once steps 1-4 have been completed the **Pastor Letter – Compliance with Audit (Attachment H)** must be placed on parish/school letterhead to create a final message to the Bishop. This letter is **required** as part of the audit process and **must be signed by the Pastor or Principal only**. Letters signed by individuals who conducted the training will be returned for appropriate signature.

### **Final Important Notes:**

- The pastor or principal must provide **specific** numbers of students for each grade level.
- The parish or school **must** be able to demonstrate for **each** child that the child attended an age-appropriate session, or the parent opted the child out of the program.
- Remember that if a parent opted out, you will need to send a follow-up letter referred to above.
- All of this information must be reported accurately (through proper paperwork) to the Diocese.

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- If your parish does not have a Religious Education program, you must advise the Diocese in order to be in compliance (not applicable to schools).

**Thank you!** I am grateful for your cooperation in meeting the requirements. Though this process is not always easy, it is required to fulfill our commitment to the Church to protect all of God's children.

**Enclosures (also available on Diocesan web site):**

Parent Letter Advising of Training Dates & Right to Opt-Out (**Attachment A**)

Opt-Out Form (**Attachment B**)

Tracking Form (**Attachment C**)

Letter Advising of no Religious Education Training in a parish (**Attachment D**)

Follow-up Letter to Parents Who Opted-Out (**Attachment E**)

Instructions for Accessing LIFE Home Version (**Attachment F**)

How to Report Poster or placement in parish and/or school buildings (**Attachment G**)

Pastor Letter to Bishop – Compliance with Audit (**Attachment H**)

**To be returned to the diocese:**

Completed Tracking Form

All fully completed signed Opt Out Forms

Letter of compliance to Bishop Warfel

**DEADLINE**  
**MARCH 30, 2017**

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Diocese of Great Falls-Billings / Safe Environment  
**Parent Letter Advising of Training Dates & Right to Opt-Out**

<Parish or School Letterhead>

<Date>

Dear Parents,

\_\_\_\_\_ Parish/School will be offering the ***Learning about L.I.F.E. – Love, Infatuation, Friendship, and Exploitation*** training again this year. This program is designed to help you as parents talk to your children about relationships, sexuality, chastity and sexual abuse. We will cover the non-sensitive material in a regular classroom setting and then you will receive a packet of material that will guide you in teaching the sensitive material on sexuality and sex abuse in the privacy of your home.

The classroom session addresses the issue of sexual abuse in the context of learning more about healthy and unhealthy relationships. The content of the session will help you as parents to discuss with your children relationships that are loving and friendly as compared to relationships that are harmful. With you as their teacher, your children will consider ways people relate to each other, develop skills to better recognize and understand feelings, and learn ways to ask for help should they not feel safe at any time or in any way.

The program for children in grades \_\_\_\_\_ will be held:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent materials will be sent home on the same day for you to complete the “at home” portion of this training. Please review the materials with your child and return to me no later than \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_.

While adults can make every effort to provide a safe environment for children, they cannot always be there to protect children from exposure to dangerous situations. By working together and using the materials in this program, parents and educators can help provide the guidance that children need to protect themselves.

If you do **NOT** wish for your child to participate, please complete the attached **Parent Opt-Out Form** and return it to me before the date of the scheduled training. If you choose this option, the program is available through the diocesan website and I encourage you to access the information on the diocesan web site and review it as a family.

Sincerely,

Enclosure: Parent Opt-Out Form



## Audit Form Data Submission Annual Location Audit Data Entry Form

Use this form to enter your annual safe environment audit data for **2016-2017**.

- 1 \*** Please enter your name:
- 2 \*** Select the primary location for which you are reporting safe environment audit information.
- 3 \*** Check all of the **ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS** for which you are submitting audit data on this submission only. If you are only submitting for ONE location, click NOT APPLICABLE below. *Note: you should submit data for each location separately by completing this form one time for each location unless your locations report together.*

### Choose a location

Please complete the following information as it pertains to the current  
audit period:

**July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017**

- 4. \*** Select all grade groups included in this report for your location.
  - PreK – K
  - 1 – 2
  - 3 – 4
  - 5 – 6
  - 7 – 8
  - High School
- 5. \*** **Children and Youth:** Enter total number of children and youth, include all students (though high school) enrolled in diocesan/school religious education classes)
- 6. \*** **Children and Youth:** Number Trained
- 7. \*** **Children and Youth:** Number of Opt Outs
- 8. \*** **Children and Youth:** Number Absent

**9.\* Children and Youth:** Number Remaining to be Trained

**10.\*** Select all of the programs used in this training period in your location.

L.I.F.E. - Family

L.I.F.E. - Classroom

**11.\*** Number of Adults Trained to present the L.I.F.E. Program in your parish/school:

**12.\*** Total Number of Trained Adults in this Audit Period (7/1/16 – 6/30/17) who have received a Certificate of Completion for your parish/school:

**13.\*** I certify that the numbers included in this report for the selected location are correct and accurate for the time period specified.

Yes

No

**Attachment D**

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings / Safe Environment  
**Letter Advising Diocese of No Religious Education held  
in the Parish**

<Parish or School Letterhead>

<Date>

Most Reverend Michael W. Warfel  
Diocese of Great Falls-Billings  
PO Box 1399  
Great Falls, MT 59403-1399

Dear Bishop Warfel,

With this letter I am officially advising that \_\_\_\_\_ parish has not provided any religious education training for the 2016/2017 year. The reason for this is

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As such, the requirement for child protection training is not necessary. I further state there will be no children receiving the Sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation from our parish this calendar year.

In accordance with Diocesan policy, we have properly posted contact information for our Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator. All employees and volunteers with access to children or vulnerable adults have participated in the Safe and Sacred Safe-Environment Program training as required by the *Revised 2005 Charter and Norms for the Protection of Children and Young Persons*. All employees and volunteers have agreed to abide by the Diocesan Code of Conduct, and a current background check is on file with the diocesan office.

Yours in Christ,

Diocese Great Falls-Billings / Safe Environment  
**Parents Choosing to Opt-Out / Provide Home Training**

<Parish or School Letterhead>

<Date>

Dear Parents,

Each year all Catholic parishes and schools in the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings are required to provide safe environment training presentations to children ages PreK-12 grades to help educate them on recognizing safe environments and how to protect themselves. The program utilized is entitled “**Learning about L.I.F.E. – Love, Infatuation, Friendship and Exploitation.**”

Our Diocese recognizes that parents are the primary educators of their children and have the God-given right and responsibility to educate their children in the way they see fit and appropriate. As parents, you have the right to allow, or not to allow, your child/children to participate in the safe environment training held in parishes and schools throughout Eastern Montana. Regardless of the reason your child did not attend the scheduled training, we would like to extend an opportunity for you to participate by using the **L.I.F.E.** training materials designed specifically for home use.

These materials are found on the diocesan Safe and Sacred website at [www.safeandsacred-diocesegfb.org](http://www.safeandsacred-diocesegfb.org). Instructions for accessing this site are attached to this letter for your reference (**Attachment G**). If you experience any problems accessing the site, please contact technical support via e-mail or phone as indicated in the actual program.

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Attachment

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACCESSING THE “LEARNING ABOUT LIFE” HOME VERSION

In a browser window enter the following address: [www.safeandsacred-diocesegfb.org](http://www.safeandsacred-diocesegfb.org).

The screenshot shows the website interface. At the top, the text reads "DIOCESE OF GREAT FALLS-BILLINGS" with the tagline "Live the Gospel. Bring Light to the World." and the diocese logo. Below this is a dark blue navigation bar containing "Tech Support+", a magnifying glass icon for "Log in", and a speech bubble icon for "Click for Live Help". The main content area is divided into two white boxes. The left box is titled "Log in" and contains fields for "Username / email" and "Password", a "Remember username" checkbox, a "Log in" button, and links for "Forgotten your username or password?" and "Cookies must be enabled in your browser". The right box is titled "Is this your first time here?" and contains a "Create new account" button.

Click on “Create new account”

The next screen you will answer establish:

- Username
- Password
- Provide e-mail address
- Full name
- Address
- Phone
- Date of Birth

In the next section titled **My Ministry**:

- Position = volunteer
- Primary Institution = (name of parish or school your child attends)
- Secondary Institution = N/A

▼ My Ministry

Position ?*	Choose...
Primary Institution ?*	Choose...
Secondary Institution ?*	Choose...

- Complete the rest of the form and click on **Create My New Account** (once you do this the following screen comes up). Click **Continue**



Please click the Continue button below to confirm your new account and to proceed to the secure online background screening application form.

After completing your online background screening form submission, you will be directed back to the Diocesan training site to complete your training course.

Continue

You will then be taken into the ScreeningOne site for a back ground check. The screen will look like this:



## Welcome!

### Are you ready to begin the background check process?

Once you start, you will complete the following steps:

- Give consent to running your background check electronically
- Complete the necessary legal process
- Fill out the background questionnaire
- Submit your information

*Do not click the back button during this process. You will have the opportunity to edit the information you provide before submitting your questionnaire*

Continue

Use your back button to exit this screen which will take you back to the previous screen where you just hit the **Log-in** at the top.

Log in



Please click the Continue button below to confirm your new account and to proceed to the secure online background screening application form.

After completing your online background screening form submission, you will be directed back to the Diocesan training site to complete your training course.

Continue

You are now on a screen titled Update My Profile  
Review the information and click **Save** at the bottom of the screen

The next screen that comes up looks like the following: Click on **L.I.F.E. Home** on the right side.

The screenshot shows a navigation bar at the top with links for Home, Tech Support, Internal Use, and My courses. The user's name, Tester Horton, is displayed. A 'Click for Live Help' button is in the top right. The main content area features a large play button icon with the text: 'Click play button to watch a tour of the training site.' Below this is another play button icon and the text: 'Or click the course name in the My Courses menu to go to your course.' A video player control bar is visible at the bottom of the main content area, showing a play button, a 1:43 timer, and icons for closed captions, volume, settings, and full screen. On the right side, there is a 'My courses' menu with '1. Recognizing Child Abuse'. Below that is a 'Learning about L.I.F.E.' section with a 'Children Program' list: '1. L.I.F.E. Family', '2. L.I.F.E. Classroom', and '3. L.I.F.E. Home'. At the bottom right is a 'Need Technical Help?' section with 'Live Chat: Click to chat' and 'Email: Email tech support'.

At the Enrolment Options screen type HomeDGFB1399 in the Enrolment key area and click on **Enrol me**

## Enrolment options

The screenshot shows the 'HOME - Learning about L.I.F.E.' enrolment options. The text reads: 'The HOME program is for parents who cannot or choose not to participate in parish-sponsored versions of the Learning about L.I.F.E. program. Parents learn how to teach their children the age-appropriate materials in their home.' Below this is the text: 'ENROLLMENT KEY REQUIRED - AUTHORIZED USERS ONLY'. On the right side, there is a thumbnail image titled 'Learning about L.I.F.E. HOME' showing a man and a woman looking at a laptop with a child.

### Self Enrollment (Parent)

Enrolment key Incorrect enrolment key, please try again

Unmask

This will bring you to the actual site to access the program. Click on the big **Green GO** button to begin the Overview of the program. You can also view and print the materials you will be using from this screen.

## Learning about L.I.F.E - HOME

### *Love, Infatuation, Friendship, and Exploitation*

by Kathie Amidei and Sr. Kieran Sawyer, SSND

**Learning about L.I.F.E.** is a family-based program that guides parents in talking to their own children about relationships, sexuality, character development, and sexual abuse.

The **Learning about L.I.F.E.** material is presented by you, a trained parent, in one to two-hour parent-child sessions including one session each year for children of various age levels, from pre-school through high school. The program uses engaging, age-appropriate processes to help you discuss with your own children the sensitive issues involved with relationships, sexuality, chastity, and abuse.

Additionally, before learning how to use the Learning about L.I.F.E. program in your family, a parent's guide to recognizing child abuse is included for your review.

*To get started, please click the **GO** button to the right or scroll down to locate and complete the steps. You may return as often as needed to study the tutorial and to access the home session materials.*

### RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE

The information presented in the lesson below is **ONLY FOR YOU AS A PARENT** and is **NOT** intended to be taught to children and is not part of the Learning about L.I.F.E. Family or Classroom programs.

Workbook: 1

### LEARNING ABOUT L.I.F.E. OVERVIEW

To be prepared to facilitate the L.I.F.E. program discussion with your child(ren), your first step is to **read the overview** of the program. The overview examines the meaning of the acronym L.I.F.E. and

#### Get Started

Click the button below to get started or go to the place where you left off last time.



#### Need Technical Help?



**Live Chat:**  
Click to chat



**Email:**  
Email tech support



**Phone**  
Call toll-free:  
888-804-9643



**FAQs:**  
Frequently Asked Questions

Once you've completed the overview you are taken into several screens detailing the preparation process and from there you can access the particular grade level appropriate program. You are able to print the materials from within the program also.

Be sure to complete the Feedback form.

Feedback Form

Print Blank

Your Feedback is Valuable!

So that we can best meet your needs, please take approximately 3-5 minutes and provide feedback related to this program. Thank you!

1

Number of children with whom you used the material:

Choose... ▾

2

What was one important topic that was very helpful to both you and your child/children?

## **HOW TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE AND FILE A COMPLAINT**

**To report allegations of sexual abuse or to obtain information  
regarding  
the implementation of the USCCB  
*Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People***

**please contact:  
*Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator*  
Teresa Schmit  
at:**

**Victim Assistance Confidential Line:  
406-750-2373  
or**

**E-mail: [victimassistancecoord@gmail.com](mailto:victimassistancecoord@gmail.com)**

**Diocese of Great Falls-Billings  
Safe Environment Policies  
available at:**

**[www.diocesegfb.org](http://www.diocesegfb.org)**

**All information received will be treated with confidentiality.  
All victims are advised of their right to report the alleged  
abuse to public authorities.**

**Please note:** If you are a mandated reporter, it is necessary to report suspected physical abuse to the State Department of Child & Family Services at 1-866-820-5437.

Sample Pastor Letter – Compliance with Audit (see Step 6, Phase Two)

<Parish or School Letterhead>

Most Rev. Michael W. Warfel  
Diocese of Great Falls-Billings  
P O Box 1399  
Great Falls, MT 59403

Dear Bishop Warfel,

I am writing to inform you that (Parish & Missions or School) in (City) has/have completed training for the 2016-2017 audit year and is/are in compliance with the *Revised 2005 Charter and Norms for the Protection of Children and Young Persons*.

In accordance with Diocesan policy, we have properly posted contact information for our Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator. All employees and volunteers have participated in the Safe and Sacred Safe-Environment Program, all employees and volunteers have agreed to abide by the Diocesan Code of Conduct, and a current background check is on file with the diocesan office.

Children and youth enrolled in religious education programs, and/or children and youth enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12, have participated in the annual age-appropriate training in compliance with standard Diocesan policy.

Thanking all involved in this important ministry, I am

Sincerely,

**REQUIRES SIGNATURE OF PASTOR OR PRINCIPAL ONLY**