



*Archdiocese of Newark*  
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

October 1, 2009

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of the keystones of the commitment of the Archdiocese of Newark to ensure a safe environment for children and youth in our parishes and schools, and to increase awareness of the societal problem of sexual abuse, is education.

Our work in this area has included mandatory training for more than 30,000 clergy, Religious and lay staff, volunteers and parents in parishes and schools through the *Protecting God's Children* program. We have also incorporated the *Teaching Touching Safety* Program into the curriculum offered to the almost 50,000 students in our Catholic elementary and high schools. I personally reviewed and approved of both programs.

Providing similar training and education for more than 50,000 Catholic children in our parish-based religious education programs who attend public elementary, middle and high schools within the Archdiocese also is a concern for me. As with the program implemented in our schools, I have wanted to ensure that the subject of sexual abuse awareness would be addressed in an age-appropriate way. What's more, I wanted to ensure that any program of this type offered to your child would not have to compete for time with the requirements of the religious education program, and thus short-change both programs.

The Child Assault Prevention, or CAP, Program is a state-funded program currently used in public schools in New Jersey. As an official program in the state's efforts to prevent child abuse, CAP office staff in every county work with each school district to provide training to students and staff regularly on this important, sensitive subject, and works as part of the regular curriculum. Like *Teaching Touching Safety* in the Catholic schools, CAP addresses the subject in an age-appropriate fashion, is supported by local public school administration, and compliments existing curriculum in your child's school.

I have reviewed all of the materials for CAP, and staff in the Archdiocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection have been assured of the comprehensive approach to presenting this important information to children in schools in the four counties within the Archdiocese. As a result, I again have directed that CAP serve as the educational awareness program for children in religious education programs conducted by parishes in the Archdiocese. Not only does it meet all of the educational requirements of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, this school-based program will eliminate the need for you to arrange for your

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child to attend a special program in the parish at a time that could be inconvenient for you, and will ensure that your child receives the full benefit of his or her current religious education training.

I am aware that a small number of districts make use of programs that are similar to CAP, and members of the district's own teaching or guidance staffs typically conduct them as part of their regular curriculum. Because such programs are similar in content to CAP and are funded with public funds from the district, they also are acceptable to the Archdiocese.

Each individual school district schedules its safe environment/awareness program according to its own schedule, so I urge you to be in touch with your local board of education or school principal to find out when your child's school is scheduled to receive this educational program. Together, through programs like CAP, we as Catholics can advocate for increased awareness and safety for all children.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Myers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

✠Most Reverend John J. Myers  
Archbishop of Newark

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