

Newsletter



Celebrating Safeguarding Awareness Day in Parishes

Liturgical ideas

Ask the parish safeguarding representatives and the liturgy committee to work together in preparation for Safeguarding Awareness Day.

Where possible, include children in the Mass, for instance during the Prayers of the Faithful or the prayer before/after Holy Communion.

Adult volunteers, such as the sacristan or choir leader, could be asked to take part in the Presentation of the Gifts.

Check that the safeguarding poster is in place and updated.

Prayer of the Faithful for Safeguarding Awareness Day

We pray in thanks to God for the children who take part in our parish life and for the volunteers who help them – may they know that they are loved and cared for by our Father in Heaven. Lord hear us

Notice for Parish Bulletin

Next weekend we will be highlighting the work done by the Safeguarding Children Team. We will acknowledge the children of our parish and the volunteers who assist them in various activities, including altar servers, choir members, children's liturgy etc. It will give us an opportunity to draw attention to the Church's safeguarding children policy which is available at www.meathsafeguarding.ie.

Possible input by a Parish Safeguarding Representative at the end of Mass

Our safeguarding children team is made up of N and myself (N). We work with Fr N and the parish council to help ensure a positive experience for children taking part in parish activities.

We follow the Church's child safeguarding policy, available at www.meathsafeguarding.ie and, as part of the process of implementing this policy, we have in place various procedures which some of you may be familiar with. These include codes of behaviours for the children and the adults involved in parish activities, consent forms which parents and children sign before they participate in activities, adequate supervision and good recruitment practices, including Garda vetting. The parish safeguarding representatives, together with Fr N, have received training and ongoing support in this work.

All contact details for the parish safeguarding representatives are available on the notice board in the porch. Likewise you can find contact details for the Designated Liaison Person, who refers any concerns and complaints to the relevant authorities.

We would like to acknowledge the children who participate in our parish activities; we appreciate their good work and hope they will continue to be part of our parish life. Thanks also to the volunteers and to the parents. Your enthusiasm, care and welcoming manner plays a huge part in ensuring that children have a positive experience in our parish.

A message from Pope Francis to children



Here is an excerpt from the homily of Pope Francis when he invited children from a Roman parish to morning Mass. He addressed his reflection to the children and their parents.

Speaking directly to the adults, he said: "All of us have a responsibility to give the best we have to children. And the best we have is the faith. Give it to them but give it by example, not with words. Words are useless. Today words are useless. In this world of the image, all of these kids have cell phones, and words are useless. What truly counts is setting an example. Therefore, the decisive question to ask ourselves about the education of the youngest is: 'what do I give them?'"

At this point, looking toward the pews where the children from the parish were seated, the Holy Father advised them: "It's also important that you are used to seeing people who set a good example for you. See what they are like and how they live the Christian life."

"The journey of Christian life" the Holy Father told the children "begins with Baptism. The door to Christian life opens with Baptism. To walk in truth and in love – this is Christian life: to believe the truth and to love, to love God and love others. We need to pray to the Lord, pray to Jesus, pray to Our Lady, that they help us on this journey of truth and love. Now Jesus is coming to the altar and we will all see Him: it's Jesus! In this moment we have to ask Jesus to teach us to walk in truth and in love. Jesus, give us this grace to walk in truth and in love."

October training sessions for clergy and parish safeguarding representatives

The following training sessions have been arranged for the weeks ahead:

- **Wednesday 4 October at 7.30pm** in Drogheda (Boyne Valley Hotel)
- **Thursday 12 October at 7.30pm** in Navan (St Anne's Parish Centre)
- **Tuesday 17 October at 7.30pm** in Tullamore (Parish Centre)
- **Thursday 19 October at 7.30pm** in Mullingar (Parish Centre).

These sessions are primarily for priests and parish safeguarding representatives. Attendance at any one of these sessions fulfills the training commitment for clergy and parish safeguarding representatives for 2017.

Each session, which will last for one hour, will address the following areas:

- *Completing the new parish audit form*
- *Garda vetting for parish personnel and volunteers*
- *What to do if you receive an allegation or a complaint*
- *Options for Safeguarding Sunday.*

We are aware that there are several new parish safeguarding representatives who have not been trained and there are some foreign clergy now serving in the Diocese who may not have had an opportunity to take part in training. Therefore, a full training day for new parish safeguarding representatives and clergy will take place in Trim Castle Hotel on **Saturday 28 October from 11am until 3pm**. It would be helpful if you can email or text us to book a place for this training day.

Contact details for Diocesan Trainers

David Gavin Tel. 087 6793523

Antoinette Shaw Tel 086 8484518

In our next newsletter

We would like to feature some examples of good practice or fresh ideas for involving children in parish life in our next newsletter. If there is something you would like to share with us, please email Irene (secretary@dioceseofmeath.ie). Thank you.

Garda Vetting in Catholic Schools:

An update from Fr Brendan Ludlow, Education Secretary

The vetting legislation states that any person engaged by a school in a voluntary or employed capacity requires Garda vetting to have been processed prior to the commencement of any work or placement.

Subsequent to the clarifications on the Vetting Act received from the Attorney General's office (as outlined in the additional FAQ's appended to the D.E.S. Circular 31/2016), this office is of the opinion that the vetting of transition year students is the responsibility of their post primary school; the vetting of student teachers is the responsibility of their institute/college, and the vetting of sports coaches falls on their sporting organisation (such as the G.A.A.).

In such circumstances the primary school is hosting or facilitating the placement in each instance and therefore the administrative burden of vetting should not fall back on the host school. This also means that I can no longer see any reason for the Diocesan Office processing transition years, trainee teachers or sports coaches for work in a primary school setting. A primary school may facilitate placements of transition years, those on teaching practice or sports coaches provided that:

- (1) **the candidate has been vetted for the purpose of their placement or teaching practice or football coaching by the post primary school, college, institute or sporting organisation to which they are affiliated;**
- (2) **That the vetting disclosure from An Garda Siochana has been received by the organisation to which they are affiliated;**
- (3) **That the organisation confirms that nothing in the disclosure would raise a concern about that person being engaged in a primary school setting;**
- (4) **That the primary school has signed a 'joint agreement' (as provided for under section 12(3a) of the 'Vetting Act') with the organisation to which the candidate is affiliated. (A template 'joint agreement' has been drafted by C.P.S.M.A. and is being finalised and will be made available to schools shortly).**
- (5) **That the candidate(s) themselves have furnished the primary school with a copy of the vetting disclosure received by the affiliate organisation in respect of their placement.**

Here is a link to the template joint agreement which CPSMA has drafted in consultation with other agencies such as the GAA: <https://www.cpsma.ie/vetting-update-and-template-joint-agreement/>

Reporting Allegations of Abuse

To create and maintain a safe environment, the Diocese of Meath will ensure all allegations and suspicions of abuse are reported, both within the Church and to statutory authorities. The Diocese of Meath provides guidance and training on recognition of abuse, and clear procedures on what to do when a child protection concern arises, so that everyone knows how to respond appropriately. This involves knowing who to tell and how to record it. The local reporting procedures are fully consistent with statutory legislation, regulations and guidance. Reporting a concern can be a challenging responsibility. The procedure needs to ensure that everyone is clear what steps to take to ensure that the safety of children is the paramount consideration.

If you wish to report a concern, we encourage you to contact Fr Seán Henry (046 9431251) or Ms Nuala McLoughlin (086 157 4774) without delay. They will deal with you in a sensitive and helpful manner.

Child Safeguarding and Canon Law

Fr Fintan Gavin, a canon lawyer in the Archdiocese of Dublin, gave a presentation to a joint meeting of the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee and Advisory Case Management Committee on 5 September 2017.

The presentation focused on the question of the Preliminary Investigation to be conducted when a complaint is received.

Can. 1717 § 1 Whenever the Ordinary receives information, which has at least the semblance of truth, about an offence, he is to enquire carefully, either personally or through some suitable person, about the facts and circumstances, and about the imputability of the offence, unless this enquiry would appear to be entirely superfluous.

§ 2 Care is to be taken that this investigation does not call into question anyone's good name.

§ 3 The one who performs this investigation has the same powers and obligations as an auditor in a process. If, later, a judicial process is initiated, this person may not take part in it as a judge.