

## Introduction

### *For the Sake of God's Children*

### *Keeping Our Promises Curriculum 2019*

Catholic Education is rooted in our responsibility to teach the Gospel Message. As we model the teachings of Jesus Christ, we are called to affirm the dignity of the human person as created in the image and likeness of God. We recognize that ministry to and with children and young people is a sacred trust.

In recent times, our Church has experienced a crisis without precedent, a crisis that resulted in a tragic loss of trust. In 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Article 12 of that Charter directs that all dioceses create programs and processes to teach children and youth about sexual abuse and its prevention.

In that same summer, the Bishop of the Diocese of Wilmington convened committees to develop such a program for our Diocese and, in March of 2003, approved and called for the implementation of *For the Sake of God's Children*. Since that time, various processes and procedures have been set in place to ensure the safety of children entrusted to our care.

In light of these efforts, the Diocese developed a curriculum guide called *Keeping Our Promises*, to promote education that informs and empowers those served by Catholic Education Programs in a manner that fosters dignity, prevents abuse, and encourages communication of potential and actual abuse. The title, *Keeping Our Promises*, was selected because it reflects yet another aspect of the commitment of our Diocese to fulfilling the requirements of the Charter, of the commitment of educators to provide safe and secure environments for children entrusted to their care, and the commitment of parents to the sacred trust they received in providing safety and security to the children with which they are blessed.

In 2019, the Diocesan Offices for Safe Environments, Religious Education, and a committee of Parish Directors/Coordinators of Religious Education, revised the *Keeping Our Promises Curriculum* in collaboration with Prevent Child Abuse Delaware to create a curriculum specified for Parish Religious Education Programs.

Prevent Child Abuse Delaware provides discussion and interactive activities that focus on learning about the difference between secrets and surprises, the different kinds of touches, identifying safe people, private places, and other personal safety rules, age appropriately. These lessons will be taught within the context of the teachings of the Catholic Faith by trained Parish Facilitators.

Annually, the Office for the Protection of Children of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops audits all Dioceses in the United States to assess the level of compliance with the "Charter for the Protection of Children." One of the requirements of the Charter is to have in place a curriculum for children, young people, and parents which prepares them to create and maintain a safe environment. This curriculum was designed to help Directors/Coordinators of Religious Education, Catechists, and Parents in this process.