



**MOST REVEREND JOSEPH R. KOPACZ, D.D., PH.D.**  
CATHOLIC DIOCESE *of* JACKSON

April, 2014

The Diocese of Jackson is committed to establish and sustain safe environments for our children who participate in all church sponsored programs. The mission of Our Protection of Children Office is to assist all diocesan institutions and parishes in their obligation to foster safe environments. The implementation of all best practices that emerge from research and experience is one critical component of the Protection of Children Office.

In light of the above, Our Protection of Children Office is distributing the Praesidium, Called to Protect program (in English and Spanish) to all parishes and schools. The program summarizes the major points that children and youth should know in order to prevent physical, verbal and sexual abuse from occurring, and to respond appropriately if it does occur. The training program teaches age-appropriate concepts, consistent with what child development experts say children and youth can understand, learn and use. The program includes a wide range of activities for children and youth of different age groups, and detailed instructions for educators and parents.

The Called to Protect program is consistent with Catholic teachings and is extensively field-tested in the Catholic community based on Gospel values. The curriculum introduces to children and youth the basic concept of body safety and self-protection skills, but it is only a source of information. Parents, teachers and volunteers must help children and youth feel they can speak openly and honestly about their concerns and make time to keep the dialogue open about this important topic.

I want to thank all in our Diocese of Jackson who work untiringly to create the safe environments that protect our children. If you have questions about the Called to Protect program, please contact Vickie Carollo at 601-960-8471 or by email at [vickie.carollo@jacksondiocese.org](mailto:vickie.carollo@jacksondiocese.org).

May God bless you as we all work together to keep children safe from harm so that they may thrive as children of God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph R. Kopacz".

Joseph R. Kopacz  
Bishop of Jackson