

April designated as Child Abuse Prevention Month in parishes, dioceses

Washington - Child Abuse Prevention Month will be marked this month in parishes and dioceses around the United States.

To assist church groups, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection has developed resources in English and Spanish to facilitate activities to highlight the need for prevention efforts.

They include posters, liturgical guides, articles on church efforts to

reach out to abuse victims and to protect children, and bulletin announcements. All materials may be downloaded for use locally.

The materials are available on the USCCB Web site at www.usccb.org/ocyp/april_cap_month_2009.shtml

The USCCB Child and Youth Protection Secretariat has made care for minors a key priority and spearheaded nationwide safe environment programs. Through these programs, more than five million minors already have been educated on how to protect themselves from harm and almost two million adults have undergone background screening and training on appropriate relationships with youth in their care.

"There are few things more important than protecting our children from harm," said Bishop Blase Cupich of Rapid City, South Dakota, Chair of the USCCB Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People.

"Child abuse in our society is rampant and we are called to do what we can to stop it. Children are gifts entrusted to us by God. All responsible adults must protect the life and dignity of those gifts. Child Abuse Prevention Month deserves our attention in both prayer and action." *(courtesy of www.usccb.org)*

➔ *See page 8 to read about how the USCCB is being proactive in creating a safe environment for our children and youth.*



Staff training relevant during Child Abuse

Prevention Month The Catholic school administrators of the Diocese of New Ulm and additional school staff from various Catholic schools participated in the Minnesota Department of Health psychological first aid training last month in New Ulm. The training offered suggestions for practical assistance and coping skills in helping individuals dealing with the emotional impact of a traumatic event. Those attending learned to recognize the signs and symptoms of stress within individuals, as well as strategies in helping others to increase their resilience from stress. The event was co-sponsored by the New Ulm Diocesan Offices of Schools and Catholic Charities.

(photo by Sr. Mary Charles Mayer, RSM)