



Myths about the Internet and children

What's true and what's not true about Internet sex crimes against children and young people

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Much of the attention to Internet safety over the past 15 years has been focused on discouraging young children from posting online identifying information such as their names, addresses or schools. Young children are taught not to use their real names or to disclose "clues" that could allow a potential predator to stalk and find them at their home, neighborhood or sports team.

However, in 2008, a team of researchers looked into the reality of sexual offenses that occur in the context of Internet contact and found that actual crimes do not fit the stereotypes at all. The National Juvenile Online Victimization Study and the second Youth Internet Safety Survey were funded by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the U.S. Department of Justice.

Below are some myths and facts about Internet sex crimes discovered through this important research:

Myth: Most Internet sex crimes involve young children who post identifying information about themselves.

Fact: 99 percent of victims of Internet-initiated sex crimes in the study were 13 to 17 years old; none was younger than 12.

Myth: Most Internet-initiated sexual offenders pretend to be children in order to trick children into interacting with them.

Fact: In the great majority of cases, victims are aware they are conversing online with adults. In the study, only 5 percent of offenders pretended to be teens when they met potential victims online.

Myth: Most Internet-initiated sexual offenders deceive children about their interest in sexual activities.

Fact: Internet-initiated sexual offenders rarely deceive victims about their sexual interests. Sex is usually broached online, and most victims who meet offenders face to face go to such meetings expecting to engage

in sexual activity.

The deception in these cases lies not with the fact that the offender is interested in sexual contact, but with the promises of love and relationship that offenders use in their online seductions. Many victims profess love or close feelings for offenders and the crimes involve statutory rape, defined as nonviolent sexual activity with victims who are too young to legally consent to sexual intercourse with adults.

These findings have serious implications for online sexual crime prevention efforts. Experts in the field have offered the following recommendations:

- In educational materials, avoid descriptions of the problem that characterize victims as young children or emphasize violence and deception.
- In educational materials, be clear about why sex with underage adolescents is illegal, wrong and can cause harm, even when it is not violent.
- Focus prevention efforts more on adolescents and less on parents.
- In programs for parents, provide factual descriptions of at-risk youth and their behavior online.
- In programs for adolescents, focus openly on concerns relevant to adolescents, including issues of autonomy, privacy, romance and sex.
- Focus prevention more on the interactive aspects of Internet use and Internet-based relationship development, and less on posting personal information.
- Educate adolescents about criminal sexual behavior and child pornography.
- Develop targeted prevention approaches for the most at-risk youth populations. ■

Applewhite, Ph.D., is an expert in standards of care and the dynamics of abuse in organizations that serve children, youth and vulnerable adults. The original report, "Online 'Predators' and Their Victims," was published in the February-March 2008 issue of American Psychologist.

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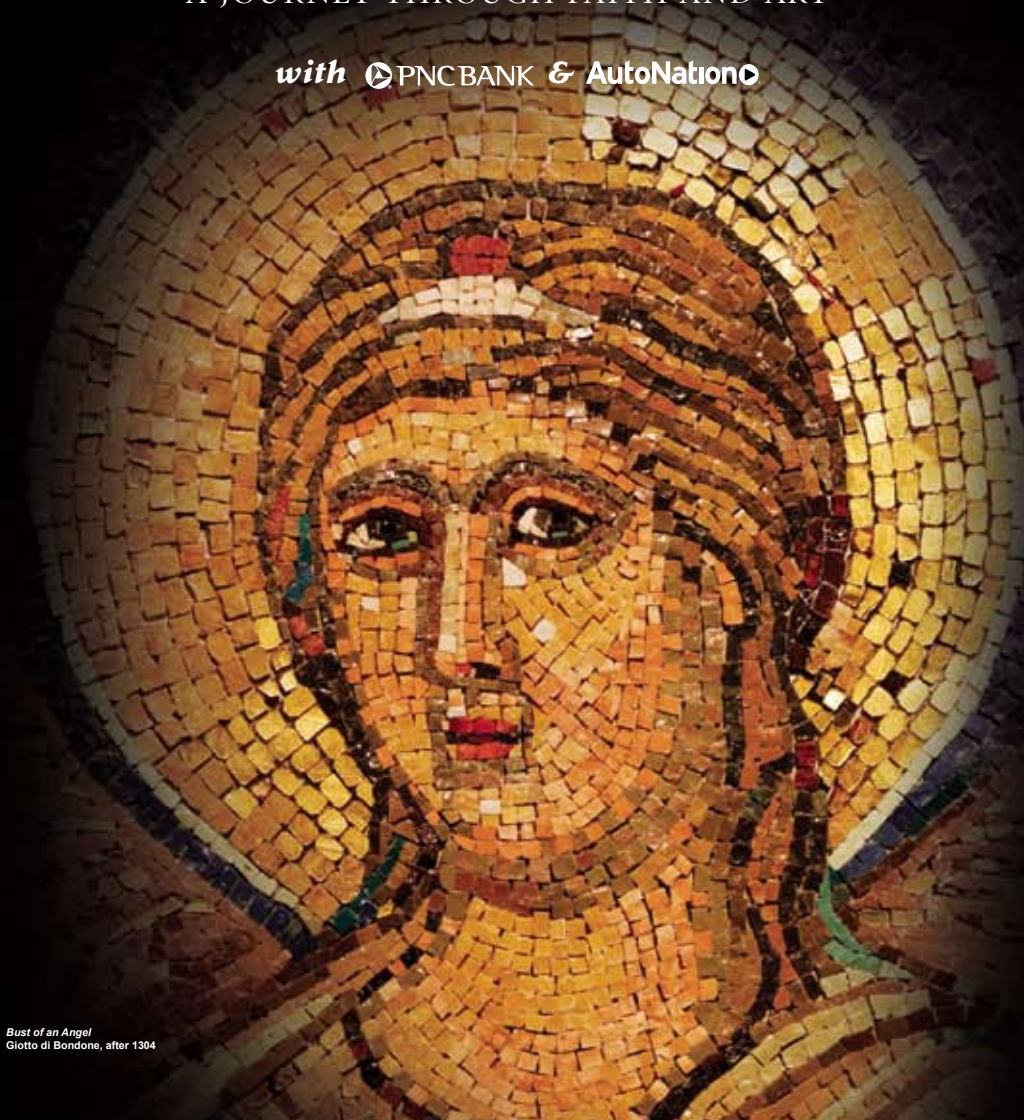
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THEY ARE HERE TO HELP



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Victim Assistance Coordinator

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(for reporting abuse by someone representing the archdiocese)

Background-Check Coordinators



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State of Florida abuse hotline

1-800-96-ABUSE
(1-800-962-2873)
(for reporting all abuse allegations to civil authorities)

Tips for protecting children

10 things to remember about protecting children from sexual abuse

TERESA M. KETTELKAMP

1. Sexual molestation is about the victim. Many people are affected when a priest abuses a minor, but the individual most impacted is the victim who has suffered a violation of trust that can affect his or her entire life. The abuser, the family of the abused, and the parish community are all affected by this sin and crime, but the primary person of concern must be the victim.

2. No one has the right to have access to children. If people wish to volunteer for the Church, for exam-

ple, in a parish or school, they must follow diocesan guidelines on background checks, Safe Environment training, policies and procedures, and codes of conduct. No one, no matter who they are, has an automatic right to be around children or young people who are in the care of the Church without proper screening and without following the rules.

3. Common sense is not all that common. It is naive to presume that people automatically know boundaries, so organizations and families have to spell them out. For example, no youth minister, cleric or other adult leader should be in a child's bedroom, alone with the child.

4. Child sexual abuse can be prevented. Awareness that child sexual abuse exists and can exist anywhere is a start. It is then critical to build safety barriers around children and young people to keep them from

harm. These barriers come in the form of protective guardians, codes of conduct, background evaluations, policies and procedures, and safety training programs.

5. The residual effects of having been abused can last a lifetime. Those who have been abused seldom "just get over it." The sense of violation goes deep into a person's psyche and feelings of anger, shame, hurt and betrayal can build long after the abuse has taken place. Some have even described the feeling as if it has "scarred their soul."

6. Feeling heard leads toward healing. Relief from hurt and anger often comes when one feels heard, when one's pain and concerns are taken seriously, and a victim/survivor's appropriate sense of rage and indignation are acknowledged. Not

PLEASE SEE **PROTECT, A12**

Fingerprinting policy and locations

As part of its commitment to keeping children safe from abuse, and in compliance with the U.S. bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children, the Archdiocese of Miami requires fingerprinting and national (Level 2) background checks for anyone over 18 who has direct or indirect access to children and vulnerable adults.

These requirements apply to anyone employed by the archdiocese at any of its schools, parishes or agencies, including clergy, and religious and seminarians; anyone who volunteers in any way at a parish or school, including extraordinary ministers of holy Communion, lectors, ushers, choir members and volunteers at the church carnival; adults who want to accompany children on field trips or retreats; and contractors and vendors. Fingerprints and background checks are retaken/redone every five years.

The archdiocese has enlisted Advantage Biometric Group (ABG, formerly known as PrideRock Holding Company Inc.) as its provider of fingerprinting services and data management.

All those who need to be fingerprinted MUST first register online

by accessing www.adom.sofn.net. Select a service center online and obtain (print) a bar code receipt, which is automatically generated at the end of the registration process. If you already have made a fingerprint appointment at your pertinent entity, then choose the Archdiocese of Miami as your service center.

After registering, call to schedule an appointment at the selected service center. If you already have made a fingerprint appointment at your pertinent entity, you do not have to call the Archdiocese of Miami to schedule an appointment as indicated online. You must take the printed bar code receipt along with the photo ID used during registration to the selected service center. The fingerprinting system will not work without these numbers.

The archdiocese will pay for all employees and volunteers of all entities that are controlled by, operated by, or administered by the archdiocese. All contractors and vendors must pay for themselves. Employees and volunteers of schools not administered by the archdiocese must also pay. Payment will be required online during the registration process.

Here is a list of all service centers throughout Miami-Dade and Broward. You must register online at www.adom.sofn.net prior to going to any of these centers. Individuals who do not have access to a computer or require assistance in registering should contact their pertinent parish, school, archdiocesan entity or the Archdiocese of Miami directly for their designated fingerprint coordinator.

Miami-Dade County Archdiocese of Miami

9401 Biscayne Blvd.
Miami Shores, FL 33138
305-762-1057 or 305-762-1059
mleinweber@theadom.org or
egutierrez@theadom.org

By appointment only; must call ahead.

Mail Mart

13727 S.W. 152 St.
Kendall, FL 33177
305-255-6480

Appointments can be made online when registering or by calling. Saturday hours available.

Broward County Super Postal

314 E. Dania Beach Blvd.



Father Luis Casabon, a retired archdiocesan priest, has his fingerprints taken by Myriam Leinweber, background-check coordinator for the archdiocese. Seated at right is fingerprint assistant Tomas Rodriguez. (ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO | FC)

Dania Beach, FL 33004
954-920-1901

Appointments can be made online when registering or by calling. Saturday hours available.

US Pack-n-Ship

7744 Peters Road
Plantation, FL 33324
954-423-3544

Appointments can be made online when registering or by calling.

Parcels Plus

2637 E. Atlantic Blvd.
Pompano Beach, FL 33062
954-782-9527

Appointments can be made online when registering or by calling. Saturday hours available. ■



Frequently Asked Questions about Virtus

Q: What is Virtus?

A: Virtus is a brand name identifying an awareness and preventative program. The Archdiocese of Miami utilizes this program for protecting children from child sexual abuse. The word "Virtus" is Latin and means "valor, moral strength, excellence and worth." In ancient times, *virtus* denoted a way of life and manner of behavior that always aspired to the highest, most positive attributes of people and aspects of human interaction.

Q: If I do not work or volunteer with children, do I need to take the Virtus training session?

A: Yes. All adults are protectors of children. The Archdiocese of Miami believes wholeheartedly in the power of Catholics working together. That is why the Archdiocese has included in the Safe Environment Policy the requirement for all employees and volunteers, whether they work with children or not, to complete the Virtus training. It is your role in a faith community to keep your eyes and ears open, and to report any suspicious activity to

the proper authorities. The Virtus training session illustrates how to do so effectively.

Q: Can the Virtus training session be taken online instead of a live class?

A: The Virtus program begins with a three-hour live training session. After considerable research, Virtus was chosen because of the live session. There are more than 39 million adult survivors of child sexual abuse. The subject matter is so emotionally charged that the archdiocese did not want anyone, especially a survivor, dealing with this issue alone. It was a priority that there be human interaction to see to the cares and concerns of this topic. All continuing training, after the live session, is done online with monthly bulletins and yearly recertifications.

Q: If I took the live Virtus session years ago, but did not register online, does my attendance count or do I need to take it again?

A: You may post-register for the session you attended at any time. If your attendance can be verified,

SIGN-UP FOR VIRTUS TRAINING

Required session helps volunteers, employees recognize sexual abusers

Virtus is a training program that helps parents, teachers and anyone who works with children recognize signs of sexual abuse and spot abusers.

The training is required for anyone, be they clergy, religious, or lay, employee or volunteer, working or serving in any capacity in a parish, school or entity of the Archdiocese of Miami. Virtus training is free.

Following is the schedule of training sessions for the rest of the year, although more are being added all the time. An updated schedule can be found on the archdiocesan website, www.miamiarch.org, under "Offices and Ministries/Protecting God's Children."

For more information, call 305-762-

1250 or email jrayburn@theadom.org.

- Saturday, May 14, 9 a.m., St. Louis Parish, Pinecrest.
- Wednesday, June 1, 6 p.m., Blessed Trinity Parish, Miami Springs.
- Saturday, July 30, 9 a.m., St. Jerome School, Fort Lauderdale.
- Saturday, Aug. 27, 9 a.m., St. Jerome School, Fort Lauderdale.
- Wednesday, Sept. 14, 6 p.m., Blessed Trinity Parish, Miami Springs.
- Saturday, Sept. 17, 9 a.m., St. Jerome School, Fort Lauderdale.
- Saturday, Sept. 24, 9 a.m., St. Jerome School, Fort Lauderdale.
- Saturday, Oct. 15, 9 a.m., St. Jerome School, Fort Lauderdale.
- Saturday, Oct. 22, 9 a.m., St. Jerome School, Fort Lauderdale.

you do not need to take the session again. To know for sure, call the Safe Environment Office at 305-762-1250. The staff will do a search of the files to find the sign-in sheet from the session you attended. If your signature can be found and you have registered for the session, your account can be activated.

Q: What is the continuing training?

A: Once you have been activated for your attendance at the live Virtus training session, your Virtus account will be sent monthly online bulletins. The bulletins are filled with useful information and are a way to keep the program current. For example, when Virtus was first formulated, no one was talking about cellphone cameras, text messaging or even Internet safety. These topics and more, such as vulnerable adults, are covered in the monthly bulletins.

Q: I work with vulnerable adults, not children. Does this apply to me?

A: Yes. While the live training focuses on minors, we are all God's children and in need of protection from predators. The bishops' Charter deleted the term "vulnerable adults" from their policy, but the Archdiocese of Miami felt obligated to keep it in our policy. The same practices we use for protect-

ing children also apply to protecting vulnerable adults. Additionally, Virtus bulletins address this segment from time to time.

Q: If I have been fingerprinted by another agency, employer or even police department, do I need to do it again with the archdiocese?

A: Yes. Due to right-to-privacy laws, this information may not be shared between agencies. The archdiocese needs to have its own record on file. Secondly, not all background checks are a Level 2, which we administer.

Q: Do I have to register to be fingerprinted?

A: Yes. You may register at www.adom.sofn.net. You then need to set up an appointment with the location you selected online.

Q: If the only volunteering I do is with my parish carnival, do I need to attend the Virtus session and be fingerprinted?

A: Yes. All volunteers are to be trained and background checked. No matter the frequency or the capacity, as an employee or volunteer in this archdiocese you are considered a person of trust. You are a part of the solution to the problem of child sexual abuse in our homes, parishes and communities. You help ensure a safe environment for children, be it at a carnival, school

or church.

Q: Do I have to pay for the training or background check?

A: No. The Archdiocese provides Virtus training and background checks without charge to employees and volunteers affiliated with the archdiocese.

Q: How do I register for the Virtus training session or get more information?

A: You may register for Virtus at www.virtusonline.org and click on the word "registration" in the green column. Follow the prompts for a list of upcoming sessions and to register. For more information on the Safe Environment program in the Archdiocese of Miami, call Jan Rayburn at 305-762-1250.

Q: How do I get a certificate of attendance for the Virtus training?

A: After a training session, the sign-in sheets are sent to the Safe Environment Office. Once attendance is verified, accounts are activated. At this time, participants can log into their accounts and print their certificate by clicking on the green "Training" tab at the top of the page. From here, click on "live training" in the green column to the left. Here you will see an option to print your certificate. If you do not have a green "Training" tab, call Jan Rayburn at 305-762-1250 to review your account. ■

BY THE NUMBERS

55,611 — Total number of employees (including clergy and religious), volunteers, contractors and vendors fingerprinted in the Archdiocese of Miami from the time the program began in 1998 through March 2011.

24,661 — Number of employees (including clergy and religious), volunteers, contractors and vendors fingerprinted in the Archdiocese of Miami between January 2009 and March 2011.

87,000 — Number of employees (including clergy and religious) and volunteers who received training in Virtus since the program began in 2004; 37,000 are currently users of Virtus online.

30,382 — Number of adults (employees, clergy, religious and volunteers) who received training in Virtus between January 2009 and March 2011. That is the number with active Virtus accounts; approximately 6,000 more have been trained but have not registered online; 23,309 of those trained and registered were volunteers.

135,518 — Approximate number

of children in archdiocesan schools and religious education programs who received Teaching Touching Safety classes between January 2009 and March 2011. (Children in every grade receive the lessons each year.)

280 — Number of Virtus training sessions held in the Archdiocese of Miami in 2010 — the most ever held in a single year.

20th — Archdiocesan rank nationwide for number of Virtus sessions held (out of 110 Catholic dioceses that use Virtus).

13th — Archdiocesan rank nationwide for number of adults trained in Virtus.

6th — Archdiocesan rank nationwide for number of facilitators trained to teach Virtus.

1-800-96-ABUSE — Number to call to report any type of child abuse to the Florida Department of Children and Families.

1-866-80-ABUSE — Number to call to report incidents of sexual misconduct by Church personnel (calls go to archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator).

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Report: Only seven credible abuse accusations in 2010

U.S. dioceses spent \$20 million-plus for safe environment programs

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

WASHINGTON — Reports of current instances of sexual abuse of minors continue to decrease, with seven credible allegations against seven priests reported in 2010, according to the 2010 Survey of Allegations and Costs done by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, CARA.

At the same time, diocesan audits are uncovering weaknesses in audit compliance and finding reports of boundary violations short of abuse, such as inappropriate hugging.

A credible allegation is one which has a semblance of truth to it following an initial examination of the facts and circumstances surrounding the allegation.

The survey by Georgetown University-based CARA, collects numbers from the dioceses and coincides with the annual audit of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, conducted by the U.S. bishops' Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection. The audit reviews compliance with the charter, and is conducted by a team of independent auditors, the Gavin Group Inc. Both the survey and audit report are available on the Web at www.usccb.org/ocyp/annual-report-2010.pdf.

All dioceses responded to the CARA survey except the Diocese of Lincoln, Neb., which has refused to participate in the compliance audits process since 2004. The U.S. bishops enacted the charter in 2002 and have conducted national compliance audits annually since 2003.

In addition to the seven cases of abuse of minors in 2010, CARA also found hundreds of accounts of sexual abuse from decades ago that were reported to dioceses only last year. The "number of alleged offenders increased by a fifth, from 286 alleged offenders reported in 2009 to 345 alleged offenders reported in 2010," CARA reported.

Almost 60 percent of these offenders had been identified in earlier allegations and three-quarters of the offenders are now dead or laicized.

CARA also noted that two thirds of these allegations (66 percent) are old and occurred or began between 1960 and 1984. The most common time period when these allegations reportedly occurred was 1970-



Myriam Leinweber, background-check coordinator for the archdiocese, takes a fingerprint. Background checks are done every five years for everyone — priest, deacon, religious or lay — who is involved in any type of ministry or volunteer work in any parish, school or archdiocesan entity. (ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO | FC)

1974.

Costs to dioceses and eparchies (Eastern rite dioceses) related to clergy sexual abuse increased between 2009 and 2010 by more than \$19 million. "More than half of the payments by dioceses and eparchies in 2010 (57 percent) were for settlements to victims."

Costs for settlements paid out by dioceses and eparchies in 2010 were \$70,375,228. This was an increase of 28 percent over the previous year's payments for settlements. Legal fees increased by 18 percent.

CARA also noted that "in addition to allegations-related expenditures, at least \$20,954,405 was spent by dioceses and eparchies for child protection efforts such as safe environment coordinators, training programs, and background checks."

The audits of charter compliance, as reported by the Gavin Group, found that "all dioceses/eparchies that participated in the 2010 audit process were found to be compli-

ant with the charter."

At the same time, 55 dioceses received management letters expressing concerns about procedures, which could result in noncompliance. This number exceeded the number in the 2009 audit, which was 23.

Management letters are sent to a diocese/eparchy by the Gavin Group when issues are identified that the auditor believes need to be documented and brought to the bishop's attention to handle as he deems appropriate. These are issues that, though not at a level to categorize the diocese/eparchy as noncompliant in a particular area, were identified as possibly doing so if not sufficiently addressed. The purpose of the management letters is to strengthen the implementation of the charter within a particular diocese/eparchy.

The chief concern, which resulted in the majority of these management letters, centered on safe environment programs.

"Reasons for the management letters include parishes or schools failing to offer classes for children, new pastors or directors of religious education failing to understand diocesan requirements to train students, accepting parent training as parish training, or simply counting absent students as opt-outs. Several dioceses reported receiving verification from pastors that training had taken place, only to have auditors discover it was not offered," the report noted.

In evaluation of compliance with safe environment criteria, the audits found that "over 98 percent of clerics were trained" as were "98 percent of employees and volunteers."

"In addition, over 5 million children received safe environment training. Background evaluations were conducted for over 99 percent of clerics; 99.8 percent of educators; 98.5 percent of employees; and 99.2 percent of volunteers."

Dioceses that refused to participate in audits included the Diocese of Lincoln; Diocese of Baker, Ore.; the Eparchy of St. Peter the Apostle for Chaldeans; Eparchy of Newton for Melkites; Eparchy of Our Lady of Nareg in New York for Armenian Catholics; Eparchy of St. Josephat of Parma for Ukrainians; and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Deliverance of Newark for Syriacs. Based on their refusal, all were declared noncompliant. ■

PROTECT

FROM A10

being acknowledged contributes to a victim's sense of being invisible, unimportant and unworthy; they are in some way "re-victimized."

7. You cannot always predict who will be an abuser. Experience shows that most abuse is at the hands of someone who has gained the trust of a victim/survivor and his/her family. Most abuse also occurs in the family setting. Sometimes the "nicest person in the world" is an abuser, and this "niceness" enables a false sense of trust to be created between abuser and abused.

8. There are behavioral warning signs of child abusers. Training and education help adults recognize grooming techniques that are precursors to abuse. Some abusers isolate a potential victim by giving him or her undue attention or lavish gifts. Another common grooming technique is to allow young people to participate in activities which their parents or guardians would not approve, such as watching pornography, drinking alcohol, using drugs, and excessive touching, which includes wrestling and tickling. It is also critical to be wary of age-inappropriate relationships, seen, for example, in the adult who is more comfortable with children than fellow adults. Parishes can set up rules to guide interaction between adults and children.

9. People can be taught to identify grooming behavior — which are the actions abusers take to project the image that they are kind, generous, caring people, while their intent is to lure a minor into an inappropriate relationship. An abuser may develop a relationship with the family to increase his credibility. Abusers might show attention to the child by talking to him/her, being friendly, sharing alcohol with a minor and giving the child "status" by insinuating that the child is their favorite or "special person." Offenders can be patient and may "groom" their victim, his or her family, or community for years.

10. Background checks work. Background checks in churches, schools and other organizations keep predators away from children both because they scare off some predators and because they uncover past actions, which should ban an adult from working or volunteering with children. If an adult has had difficulty with some boundaries that society sets, such as not driving while intoxicated or not disturbing the public peace, he or she may have difficulties with other boundaries, such as not hurting a child. Never forget that offenders lie. ■

Kettelkamp is executive director of the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.