



TO: Parents & Guardians
FROM: St. Stephen Catholic Church (Faith Formation)
SUBJECT: Empowering God's Children® program ("Opting" your child out)
DATE: August 5, 2021

The education and protection of your child is a sacred trust. **St. Stephen Catholic Church** will present a personal safety and abuse prevention program, *Empowering God's Children®*, to our students on this semester. This program is provided to us by the Diocese of Fort Worth and is a part of our ongoing mandated effort to help create and maintain a safe environment for children and to protect all children from those who might harm them.

The material in the program is founded on the principles of appropriate relationship boundaries in the broader context of Christian values and virtues, and each lesson is developmentally appropriate for the specific age group. Each lesson includes content with simple and fun activities that reinforce the message.

The scheduled lesson is being offered to all students at **St. Stephen Catholic Church**. Despite our strong belief in the value and necessity of this program, we recognize that as a parent/guardian, you have the right to choose whether your student participates. We encourage you to read the attached "overview" and "lesson plan" so you'll be aware of the nature of the *Empowering God's Children®* program. If you have questions about the program or the lesson, please contact Lilia Arevalo at lilia@saintstephenc.org. If you determine that you DO NOT want your child to participate, the Diocese requires that you complete the "opt-out" form at the bottom of this page, and return it to your child's teacher as soon as possible. Only those children for whom a current opt-out form has been received by this date will be exempted from attendance.

For more information on the *Empowering God's Children®* program, visit the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth website at <https://fwdioc.org/safe-environment>, or contact the Diocese Office of Safe Environment at (817) 945-9342.

Opt-out form for use with the *Empowering God's Children®* program

I understand and acknowledge that the attendance of my child at the scheduled lesson of the *Empowering God's Children®* program is strongly recommended and encouraged, however,

St. Stephen Catholic church does not have my permission to present the *Empowering God's Children®* program to my child whose name is _____ Grade: _____

Parent's Name (printed): _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian's Email: _____

Parent/Guardian's Phone #: _____

Date: _____