



St. Thomas the Apostle Church
Parish Religious Education Program
One St. Thomas Plaza, Old Bridge, NJ 08857
732-251-1660

Dear Parents and Guardians,

September 2026

The Diocese of Metuchen requires all parish religious education programs to present the VIRTUS® Empowering God's Children program each year. At St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, we are committed to partnering with parents to help children understand personal safety, healthy boundaries, and how to respond if they ever feel unsafe. It is our cherished role as adults to fully protect our children. In addition, we must also teach our children/youth about their safety rights and boundaries, so that they have tools to protect themselves. **PLEASE NOTE: Be sure to complete, sign, and return the required Parent Acknowledgment Form found on Page 2.**

The *Empowering God's Children* program consists of 6 age-appropriate lessons of which we give you 2 each year. This year you will be given Lesson 5 & Lesson 6 (next year will be Lesson 1 & Lesson 2). Within each Lesson there are 4 Options or Activities. **Please do at least one Option or Activity from each Lesson and return the attached Parent Acknowledgement Form, signed, by December 4th, 2026.**

The themes covered this year (in an age-appropriate way) are:

- **Lesson 5 Being a Safe Friend.** Children must know that being a friend means that we “do the right thing” when it comes to healthy friendships with their peers: meaning we recognize unsafe situations, intervene (when possible) and get the information to a safe adult.
- **Lesson 6 Boundaries: Feelings and Facts.** Through this lesson, the adult Lesson Leader teaches students specifically about boundaries, what unsafe situations could potentially feel like, and what to do in response if they feel uncomfortable or are in an unsafe situation.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Andrea Madonna, PCL, amadonna@saintthomasob.com



Empowering God's Children Program Information

As we partner together in delivering this content to youth, there are two especially helpful resources to assist in delivering the lessons. These resources can be found on our website. First, the Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide, which equips safe adults to facilitate an ongoing safety dialogue, and the Lesson Leader Orientation and Certification Module, give you better insight about conducting the lessons. You can find both documents on our website: <https://saintthomasob.com/safe-environment>.