

What is VIRTUS Online™?

VIRTUS Online™ is the brand name that identifies a state-of-the-art, web-based platform that provides best practice resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our system provides a comprehensive menu of functions for churches, religious organizations, and facilities from one convenient web-based resource. Through these functions we can help church organizations prevent wrongdoing, manage risk and improve service to the community through education, training, and best practices. The home page is provided free of charge to anyone in the world with access to the Internet. The subscriber pages (pages requiring a user name and a password) are intended for users from organizations that subscribe to the VIRTUS® programs.

How does VIRTUS Online support ongoing training?

Most programs (seminars, instructor-led sessions, videos) establish awareness, but few change behavior. The Protecting God's Children® session you are attending was designed as an *awareness* session. The VIRTUS programs provide training via the VIRTUS Online system to empower trainees to modify their own behavior. Every training program, in addition to instructor-led and video awareness sessions, includes ongoing web-based training. These regularly scheduled online bulletins and web-based training courses reinforce the knowledge points made during the awareness sessions. Moreover, every training program is tracked so the organization knows who has or has not trained. Plus, most of the online training bulletins and modules are interactive allowing trainees to contact and interact with a trainer.

Specifically, how does VIRTUS Online help in the fight to prevent child sexual abuse?

- **VIRTUS Online provides:**
 - A cost effective, non-intrusive method for providing training to individuals and for tracking each individual's compliance with their individual training requirements.
 - Free information about preventing child sexual abuse.
 - Continuing education through regular monthly (or more frequent) training.
 - Continuous tracking to ensure compliance.
 - Interactive training tools 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
 - Interaction with other peer participants across the nation.

Why is VIRTUS continuing education conducted online?

- **Greater retention of information for trainees**
 - Studies show that people retain 70 percent more information through online training than through training conducted by a "live" trainer. One reason for this is that online training is interactive—a "hot" medium—and allows the trainee to learn at his or her optimum individual pace, without the distraction and confusion frequently present in a "live" training environment.
- **More efficiency, ease and flexibility for trainees**
 - Your time is valuable. When we ask for your time, we want to get the most out of it, and so should you. Studies show that trainees learn more in less time using the Internet.
 - All of us are busy. We don't always have time to do things when others want us to do them. Web-based training allows you to train whenever it's convenient for you—24 hours a day, seven days a week. You get to choose the time and the place. You can train in the comfort of your office or your home ... rain or shine ... day or night.
 - VIRTUS Online allows you to complete your training without having to meet at *someone else's* convenience.
 - You also get to ask the questions *you* want to ask and have the answers directed to you in private.
 - If you need to stop during the middle of your online training to handle another matter, there's no problem. The training will be waiting for you upon your return—or the next time you log into the VIRTUS Online system.
- **Consistency for all trainees**
 - With live training, training quality varies depending on the knowledge, experience, and methodology of the trainer. The material presented via VIRTUS Online is presented in the same way to everyone—all across the nation. *You read what everybody else* reads. This allows the VIRTUS programs to maintain a high quality of excellence, and provides you with the best possible opportunity to learn.
- **Tracking and measurability as required by the Church**
 - The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops wants to know if people in your diocese are trained to prevent child sexual abuse. VIRTUS Online tracks not only who is expected to complete the training, but also whether those individuals have completed their training. Plus, VIRTUS Online tracks training results—to identify whether

the training is working. Isn't it important to you to know that your efforts are contributing to a safer environment—for children, yourself, and everyone else?

- **High turnover of Church employees and volunteers**
 - It is estimated that a diocese turns over between 30 and 60 percent of its employees and volunteers each year. Hypothetically, if you were to train all the employees and volunteers at once, in approximately two to three years you would have to train all of them again. VIRTUS *Online* eliminates this problem by allowing all new employees and volunteers to receive training on their first day of service. So, beginning on “day one,” everybody is aware of the importance of preventing child sexual abuse in your parish.
- **Good stewardship for the Church**
 - Conventional “live” training is expensive—and not just the cost of the materials and trainers. There are travel expenses, overnight accommodations, and meals to purchase. Plus, there’s the lost work productivity of every trainee.
 - Christian stewardship requires that we use our resources wisely. It’s hard to argue with the stewardship of online training versus “live” training. Studies show that online training results in 70 percent more information being retained, at a cost of only 10 cents on the dollar—as compared to “live” training.
 - Dioceses that use VIRTUS *Online* are committed to making every parish a safe environment but, like everyone else, they have limited people resources. Through its automated tracking features, VIRTUS *Online* eliminates the need to hire a department of people to conduct and monitor “live” training.
- **Long-term value**
 - Its affordability makes VIRTUS *Online* a powerful asset for dioceses that are focused on results and willing to make the long-term commitment needed to *really* change community-wide behavior in the fight to prevent child sexual abuse.
- **Availability and convenience**
 - Sixty percent or more of Americans have computers with Internet access.
 - An even larger percentage has access to a computer with a connection to the Internet. For example, public libraries and many workplaces, such as schools, provide Internet access to employees at no cost.
 - “Live” training creates costly logistical and accounting problems. There are staggering costs associated with using expensive printed materials and scarce people resources—not to mention the nightmarish effort needed to track (by hand) everyone’s “live” training participation and results. With the broad availability of computers and Internet access, “live” training alone is simply not a viable option.
 - VIRTUS *Online* training access is not restricted to a particular computer. Participants can use someone else’s computer and Internet connection to access their own, secured link to the VIRTUS *Online* training resources.
 - All you need is an email address. Email is available at no cost from a variety of sources. Two of the most popular free email services are:
 - Yahoo! Mail—Go to <http://mail.yahoo.com> to sign up.
 - MSN Hotmail—Go to <http://login.passport.net/ui/login.srf?id=2> to sign up.
 - Hundreds of other free email services are available. Enter the keywords “free email” into any major search engine, and you’ll be deluged with choices.

How much time and effort is required to use VIRTUS *Online*?

- **VIRTUS *Online* is fast and easy!** For most people, it takes between three and six hours spread over an entire year—about 15 to 30 minutes per month. A few minutes a month is a small price to pay to empower yourself to *really* help prevent child sexual abuse.

What if a participant doesn’t have access to the Internet?

- **They need to call their diocese’s VIRTUS Coordinator or the local VIRTUS Coordinator at their parish.** There are other non-Internet mechanisms for completing the training. The diocese will be happy to provide those resources to those who genuinely do not have Internet access.
- **A quick word of caution:** The non-Internet resources are a very costly staff burden to the diocese. Only those without Internet access should call.

Where can I learn more about VIRTUS *Online*?

- **For more information, please refer to the VIRTUS *Online* registration information sheet in your packet.**