



## Child Protection Week 2020

6 September – 13 September

*Putting Children First*

National Child Protection Week begins this Sunday, running from 6<sup>th</sup> September – 12 September with Child Protection Sunday being celebrated on 13 September. This year marks 30 years for the event, with the theme being 'Putting Children First'.

One of the key objectives of the week is to provide the opportunity for conversations around child safety to occur within a community. As such, we encourage you to share the following information and resources with your parish community to engage them in these conversations and assist in continuing to help keep children safe and putting children first. This could be through parish bulletins, websites, email communications, or any other avenues that you think are appropriate.

### Why Child Protection Week is important?

The week aims to address the 'taboo' and 'out of bounds' nature of child abuse and neglect, by placing the issue on the national agenda. By removing the stigma around the issue, we create the space for communities to be better equipped to prevent child abuse and neglect, and for a better response to the issue after it has occurred.

The importance of the idea of *putting children first* is reflected in Child Safety Standard 2 from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and one that should inform the way we interact with our community and in the provision of ministry.

**NAPCAN**  
PREVENT CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

Child Protection Week is coordinated by the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. NAPCAN was established in 1987 and provided a host of services included, promotion of research, advocacy of child safe policies and strategies, demonstration of good practice, and deliverance of training and supports.

## Getting children involved



One key learning of Child Protection Week is the importance of talking through the issue with the children in our community. This allows them to have sound foundational knowledge about who they can turn to when they feel unsafe.

Here are a few activities from NAPCAN which you could share with the children and families in your parish:

- NAPCAN Colouring In poster ([https://www.napcan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NAP36\\_ColouringInPoster\\_FRONT.pdf](https://www.napcan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NAP36_ColouringInPoster_FRONT.pdf))
- NAPCAN Children's Voices activity (<https://www.napcan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Childrens-Voices-Activity-2018.pdf>)
- Family Online Safety Bingo activity (by Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation) ([https://www.acce.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/62944/20200417-bingo\\_A4\\_v0.3.pdf](https://www.acce.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/62944/20200417-bingo_A4_v0.3.pdf))

## Involving the Parish

One great way for us as a diocese to celebrate Child Protection Week is to share the message with our parishioners and community. It would be great to include the message as part of Mass throughout the week, and through Parish Bulletin's.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Council has provided some resources at the following link: <https://www.catholic.org.au/childprotectionsunday> This page includes example bulletin notices, intercession prayers, prayer, and images which you can utilise. One example is below:

Gracious God,  
you love and care for all of your children,  
especially the smallest and most vulnerable.

We entrust to you the lives of children and adults at risk  
who have been sexually abused, and whose trust and innocence have been destroyed.

Help us to hear their cries of pain  
and to take responsibility for those whose lives have been broken.

Help us to recognize the hurt felt by those wounded by abuse,  
and the failure to be heard.

We pray that with the help of your grace  
communities and families will find understanding and support,  
so that now and in the future their wounds may be healed and they may find lasting peace.

Let your grace and love fall gently now upon our children,

giving them the inner strength, peace and resilience  
to seek out assistance when required.

We ask this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

Amen

When including Child Protection Week into your mass or bulletins, the following points can be useful to include:

- Providing information to our parishioners and community about what the week/day is about: **This week is National Child Protection Week** which is all about how we can work together to create great lives for Australia's children. (You may also like to link to Father's Day as the start of National Child Protection Week.)
- **Promoting an understanding that building connected communities** that are great for children is a job for all of us. How can we all play our part? E.g. by being supportive of parents rather than judging, by getting involved in your local community, by taking time out to engage with children and to believe them, advocating for policies that give families the support they need. If your parish is undertaking any initiatives that assist building connected communities, this is a great opportunity to promote further parishioner involvement in these initiatives, particularly those that have been created to support people during these challenging COVID-19 times.
- **Protecting children from abuse** – this is a job for everyone in the community. We can all look out for children, believe them, speak up if something is unsafe, know the signs and risks for abuse, educate ourselves and our staff about how to create child safe organisations, have conversations with children and families about safety.

### Developing your Understanding

Another great way to engage with this week is to interact with professional development opportunities and webinars. The Office of the Children's Guardian is hosting a panel on "Putting Children First" on 8 September from 2:30pm-4pm online. The panel will include speakers:

- Susan Newall, Senior Policy Officer, Australian Human Rights Commission
- Associate Professor Tim Moore, Deputy Director (Practice Solutions) at the Australian Centre for Child Protection at the University of South Australia
- Young Ambassador, CREATE Foundation

To register for this webinar please visit the following site (or to find out more):

<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/event/free-webinar-putting-children-first-a-panel-discussion-8-sep-2020-webinar-register-via-goto-webinar-australia/0x0/y>