

Blue Ribbon Campaign



April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

In 1983 a Presidential Proclamation designated April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Observing Child Abuse Prevention month allows us to raise awareness of the severity of this issue and to arm the faithful with the tools to help prevent abuse from happening. In this time of uncertainty and stress, the ability to cope with the needs of a child can sometimes be overwhelming. Now more than ever we need to, as a community, intervene and take the steps necessary to protect our children!

Display a blue ribbon in April to show your concern for children and as a pledge of commitment to pray for the safety and healing of the most vulnerable among us. Each year, people and organizations concerned about the very real problem of child abuse and neglect display a blue ribbon in their businesses, churches, synagogues, schools, hospitals, homes and cars around the nation. Thousands have responded to the challenge each year. Challenge your parish and/or school community today!

Can One Person Make A Difference?

A brief history of the blue ribbon campaign...

In the spring of 1989, Bonnie Finney, a Norfolk, Virginia grandmother, took a stand against child abuse when she tied a symbolic blue ribbon to her van. It was a signal to her community of her personal commitment to involve everyone in the battle to stop child abuse. Bonnie's own grandson, Michael Wayne "Bubba" Dickenson, was a tragic young victim of child abuse. His death gave her blue ribbon its own inspiring message. In her words:

"The blue ribbon serves as a constant reminder to fight for protection of our children. We must protect our most precious gift of all...our children. Please wear [display] a blue ribbon...put one on your car...give one to your friends, tell them what it means...you may save a child's life!"

The spirit of Bonnie's blue ribbon grew, and others have joined her in using blue ribbons as reminders of the wounds of child abuse. One person CAN make a difference!

Imagine what thousands of us can do together!

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Get Into the Action!

Initiate one or more of the following in your parish or school

- ❖ Consider utilizing some of the items in the enclosed catalog...many of them can be used as a fundraiser for a youth project!
- ❖ Consider sending the enclosed information on Family Internet Safety home with your students for them to share with their parents. Possibly make it a goal to adopt one new Internet Safety strategy that includes the whole family.
- ❖ Ask a florist, fabric or craft shop to donate blue ribbon and straight pins. If they cannot donate, ask if they will give you a discount.
- ❖ Purchase 100% acetate ribbon, which comes in widths from ½ to 5/9 inches on 100 yard rolls. If you cut the ribbon in five inch segments, you can make 700+ ribbons.
- ❖ Ask a local printer to reproduce the enclosed Blue Ribbon Campaign handouts at no or low cost. Consider using any color paper the printer has excess from a previous job to reduce cost.
- ❖ Either ask the printer or enlist volunteers to cut the handouts. Perhaps cut the ribbons and handouts as part of a class or grade level project.
- ❖ Pass out the ribbons at school, at church after Masses, at stores, shopping mall (check with the manager first).
- ❖ Arrange to send a ribbon (with no pin) home with children in your parish or school with instructions to tie the ribbons to shoe laces, tennis rackets, pocket books, backpacks, sleeping bags, luggage, briefcase, golf carts...use your imagination!
- ❖ Parishes: Plan a car wash with your youth group and make blue the color of the day (blue sponges, soap, rags, t-shirts, posters, etc)...all donations could be given to a children's shelter in your area or to help families in your parish or school with foster children. As your car wash customers leave, give them a blue ribbon and a handout to go!
- ❖ Schools: Plan an out-of-uniform day where everyone in the school wears as many shades of blue as they can!
- ❖ Suggest to your students to wear blue ribbons all month or tie a blue ribbon loosely around their arm...when someone asks them what it's for share with them the history of the Blue Ribbon Campaign.
- ❖ Have the kids plan and hold a Children's Prayer Service praying for kids who are having a hard time in life. Invite their parents and pass out the ribbons and handouts after the service.

