

Grade EIGHT
Diocese of Covington Safe Environment Curriculum

TOPIC: Personal Safety

Grateful acknowledgement to the Diocese of Tucson for permission to use its material.

Student Objectives

The students will

- a. Recognize that through their Baptism and Confirmation they are marked as Children of God making them special persons who are deserving of love and respect.
- b. Learn to distinguish verbal abuse and legitimate correction by parents and others in authority.
- c. Review emotional abuse and discuss concrete courses of action to take if they or one of their friends experiences it.
- d. Review physical and sexual abuse and discover ways to avoid becoming a victim by learning and using strategies to get out of abusive or potentially abusive situations.
- e. Discuss the dangers of sexting and cyberbullying and meeting strangers online.
- f. Explain the importance of reporting abuse until they are believed.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will

- a. Describe verbal abuse and distinguish it from legitimate correction.
- b. Define cyberbullying and name concrete actions they can take if they experience it.
- c. Define emotional abuse and name concrete actions they can take if they experience it.
- d. Define physical and sexual abuse and review potential interventions.
- e. Study situations and determine if they are examples of abuse; brainstorm options and role-play them.
- f. Explain importance of reporting abuse until they are believed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This lesson is a tool for providing a meaningful experience for the students so they are able to recognize the various types of abuse and learn some strategies to deal with the abuse. Each student needs to feel that he/she is a special person who deserves to be loved and respected by adults and peers.

This lesson plan is not meant to be done all in one session. Students learn better when the lesson is spread over time and used specifically to address real situations the students encounter.

Two good books for discussion are: Anne Frank's "Diary of a Young Girl" and Corrie ten Boom's "The Hiding Place."

Consider starting a group involved in Netsmartz which teaches online safety. The group then presents the lessons to younger children.

VOCABULARY

Physical Abuse: causing bodily harm to another person.

Emotional Abuse: an ongoing pattern of behavior, such as intimidating, belittling, ignoring, corrupting, bullying, speaking or acting in ways that affect one's healthy emotional development.

Verbal abuse is emotional abuse.

Sexual Abuse: when someone tricks, forces or convinces a person into sexual contact such as looking, touching, undressing or viewing pictures or movies of adults/children undressed, in sexual poses, touching each other's private parts of the body.

Sexting: Sexting is sending and receiving sexually explicit messages or pictures, primarily between mobile devices.

Bullying: Demeaning, belittling behavior towards a fellow human being. Bullying is emotional abuse.

Cyberbullying: Demeaning, belittling behavior towards a fellow human being using social media devices.

Neglect: Not to attend to one's duties as a parent by not providing children with their basic needs, schooling or nurturing.

Verbal: Being mistreated or abused by the words which a person uses against another person.

MATERIALS

- a. Bible – The story of Creation
- b. "Situation Report" (handout)
- c. "Handling Threatening Situations" (handout)
- d. "Discussion Guide" (handout)
- e. "Scenarios" (handout)
- f. Bibles or copies of Psalms 34, 57, 62, 76:9-10
- g. "Breaking the Silence" dvd (may be borrowed from the Office of Catechesis and Formation)

TEACHING/LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Provide a safe environment for the students to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Give student information and options for reporting known abuse.

ACTIVITIES/EXPERIENCE

1. Review the story of Creation, emphasizing the fact that all God made is GOOD. We are made in God's image and likeness and destined to live with God forever. Humans, though, have free will and can make bad decisions and do bad things.
2. Say to the class:
Probably we have all seen films or television programs or news reports where child abuse takes many forms, including verbal, emotional, physical and sexual, bullying. (Give one or two examples from recent news.)
3. Cyberbullying
Define cyberbullying for the class. As the class for examples they know.
What is the difference between cyberbullying and bullying in general? While the means is different, the pain and hurt they cause is the same.
4. Select one or more of the Situation Report stories (attached). Since many students have computers and tv's at home as well as personal phones, they have ample opportunity to view the dangers involved. #5 will help you discuss cyberbullying.

5. Ask, "How can I protect myself?" After discussion, distribute the handout "Handling Threatening Situations." (handout)
6. Review the differences between "reasonable correction" and "abuse." Review the differences between "neglect" and "poverty." Use the Situation Report to discuss examples.
7. Use the Scenarios (attached) to identify people who can help in times of trouble. Make a list of helpful people as you read through the scenarios.

PROCESSING THE EXPERIENCE

Use the handout Discussion Guide (handout) review today's lesson. Divide the class into groups. Have them fill out the Discussion Guide. Then share with class.

CLOSURE

End with prayer. Choose from these psalms: 34, 57, 62 76:9-10.

SITUATION REPORT

1. Two girls, Hannah and Betty, are spending the afternoon together at a nursing home for service hours. They go to Hannah's house after school to change clothes before going to the nursing home. After the girls change in Hannah's room, Betty notices that the bedroom door is slightly ajar and she can see someone looking in. From the height of the person, Betty thinks it is Hannah's little brother, Roy.
 - a. What happened?
 - b. What should Betty do?
 - c. What should the girls do?
 - d. Is this an abusive situation?
 - e. Should it be reported to anyone? If so, to whom?

2. Jack and Jon are staying overnight at Ted's house. They are not looking forward to it because every time they visit Ted's house, his older brother, George, tries to pick a fight. As it turns out, this time George is really angry and he punches Ted in the face, injuring his eye. Jack and Jon come to Ted's aid by yelling at George to stop and standing between the two brothers. George stomps away, muttering, "Just wait till your little friends leave, Ted!" Ted yells at Jack and Jon, "Why did you do that? It'll just be worse when you leave."
 - a. What might happen?
 - b. What should Jack and Jon do?
 - c. Is this an abusive situation?
 - d. Should it be reported to anyone? If so, to whom?

3. Charlotte has been so depressed lately. She cries easily, has nightmares and her grades are getting really bad. She is finding it hard to concentrate on school. A few weeks ago, she came running over to your house, frightened because her older sister's boyfriend, Derek "said something rude to her and touched her." After she calmed down, she said, "Maybe I misunderstood." She then went home.
 - a. What happened in this situation?
 - b. Was it abuse?
 - c. What will you do?
 - d. What should Charlotte do?
 - e. Should it be reported to anyone? If so, to whom?

4. James loved to play computer games and spends a great deal of time on his home computer. One day he went into a chat room looking for people who liked to play the same computer game he did. While he was in the chat room, he met a guy who called himself "Gamer." Gamer said that he was in the eighth grade and liked to play too. He asked if he could meet James at his house and they could exchange game codes. James agreed and gave Gamer his home address and phone number. After hitting the send button, James started to worry about giving out his address and phone number.

- a. What happened in this situation?
 - b. Did James make a dangerous choice?
 - c. What could happen with the information James gave out?
 - d. What should James have done instead?
 - e. What should James do now?
 - f. Should James report this to anyone? If so, to whom?
5. Therese spends a lot of time alone at school. She is shy and has a hard time making friends. Therese goes straight home after school and cries a lot. She does not want to go to school anymore. Her one enjoyment is playing on the computer. Lately someone has been sending her mean messages. It says Therese is a loser, will never have friends, and is ugly. Therese thinks she knows where the messages are coming from but she can't prove it.
- a. What happened in this situation?
 - b. Has Therese done anything wrong?
 - c. What could Therese do to make things better?
 - d. Should Therese report this to anyone? If so, to whom?

HANDLING THREATENING SITUATIONS

Here are some steps you can take when your feelings and body signals tell you this may not be a safe situation:

- ❖ Take a deep, soft breath. Let it out slowly.
- ❖ Think – What am I feeling? Is there danger here? What can I do?
- ❖ Ask Jesus for help.
Jesus, I'm scared. I don't feel safe. Please be with me and help me think through what the best thing to do is. I love you and I know you love me. Please help me."
- ❖ Ask an adult for help if you still feel confused or scared.

REMEMBER

- You deserve to feel safe/comfortable and to be treated with respect.
- Your needs and feelings are important. You can trust your feelings.
- It's okay to tell someone you feel afraid or don't like something.
- Your body belongs to you. It is God's precious creation.
- You can decide who touches you or gets close to you.
- You can say, NO, even to someone older whom you know well and care about.
- It's not your fault and you are not a bad person if someone tricks you into something wrong.
- You can tell someone about it and KEEP TELLING until someone helps you.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

In small groups, discuss and respond to the following questions. On a rotating basis, have each group member record a response upon which your whole group has agreed.

1. What is the difference between neglect and poverty?

2. What is the difference between correcting a child and abuse?

3. What is cyberbullying? What are ways to deal with it?

4. Which of these strategies would be effective in dealing with verbal and emotional abuse?

___getting angry ___yes, ___no, Why or why not?

___praying for a friend who is being victimized and showing compassion to that friend
___yes, ___no, Why or Why not?

___telling another adult, like a parent, priest, teacher ___yes, ___no, Why or Why not?

___running away ___yes, ___no Why or Why not?

___calling the police ___yes, ___no Why or Why not?

SCENARIOS

1. You are visiting your cousins who live out of town. Your brother indicates to you that your uncle gives him unwanted attention and has touched him inappropriately. Your brother is worried that it will happen to you too. You tell your mom, but she says your brother misunderstood your uncle's friendly gesture.
 - a. What do you do then?
 - b. What if, after telling again, our mom gets mad at you and says, "Stop making things up! Your uncle would never do that."
 - c. What if your brother tells you not to tell anyone, ever. He's afraid because your uncle said not to tell.
 - d. Should this be reported to anyone besides mom? If so, to whom?
 - e. What actions could be taken?

2. While at school, your friend tells you that her step father treats her roughly and you see bruises on her arms and legs. But, she has a smile on her face and quickly says, "Really, I'm kidding. I just fell a few days ago."
 - a. Would the situation change if your friend were the kind of person who was always seeking attention from others by exaggerating things that did happen?
 - b. What if the bruises appeared on a regular basis? How would that change your thinking?
 - c. Should this be reported? If so, to whom?
 - d. What actions could be taken?

3. Your friend has a bad attitude toward the coach of your sports team. He says to you, "You know, that guy really bothers me. He's always saying weird things to me. Last week he invited me over to his house to see some movies. You know the kind. He keeps offering to pick me up in his car."
 - a. What would you say to your friend?
 - b. What if these things kept happening to your friend?
 - c. Should this be reported? If so, to whom?
 - d. What would you report?

4. Your big sister is keeping herself locked away in her bedroom. She keeps her phone with her all the time. You know you are not allowed to keep your phone in the bedroom but she asks you not to tell. One day you see her crying. She doesn't tease you anymore or play video games with you. You remember that she is being secretive about her phone.
 - a. What could be happening?
 - b. Could this be cyberbullying? If so, what signs do you see?
 - c. Should this be reported? If so, to whom?
 - d. What would you report?

Date:

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Your child, being formed as a disciple of Jesus by you as well as through our curriculum, is one of the most precious gifts you will receive.

As a community we are called to protect the life and dignity of the children entrusted to us. We are called to give special attention to the most vulnerable among us. Together we are charged with caring for all that God has created.

Because we believe so strongly in the importance of being faithful to this call, we take special steps to make sure our children are aware of what it means to create a safe environment for themselves.

Safe environment education is not education for human and sexual development. It is rather an effort to train young people to recognize when adults or others behave in an inappropriate manner toward them, how to resist, and to report any and all attempts.

Age appropriate information is integrated into the lesson plan taught at each grade level. The curricular points covered in your child's class are listed below. We encourage you to discuss these points with your child. Parents are primary educators of their children and studies have shown that children listen when parents take the time to talk with their children.

If you have questions, please call us. Thank you for your concern, your care and your dedication to the formation of your child. Thank you for entrusting the precious gift of your child to us.

Sincerely in Christ,

<p>Grade 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review concepts of emotional, sexual, physical abuse , sexting and peer pressure.• Define cyberbullying and the rule Stop-Copy-Block-Tell.• Review the signs of abuse.
<p>Suggested Parent/Child Follow-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review cyberbullying to make sure your child is grasping the concepts.• Review the handouts, especially Handling Threatening Situations.• Assure your child that the rules you have for him/her are because you love him/her and want to keep him/her safe and happy. Tell your child that you will not be disappointed in him/her if he/she comes to you with a problem.