

Grade FOUR
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 student will

- a. Realize that all children are persons of worth and their bodies are God's special gift to them.
- b. Discuss body privacy and what steps they can take if their privacy is being invaded.
- c. Teach the difference between punishment that is okay (correction) and punishment that is abuse.
- d. Explain the importance of reporting abuse and where to go for help if they are abused.

Lesson Overview

- a. Discuss body privacy. Each person's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and is deserving of respect.
- b. Define abuse and the option for dealing with physical abuse.
- c. Use various scenarios to decide on a plan of action for the victim.
- d. Remind the students that most correction and punishment is not abuse.
- e. Read "Confused in Cleveland"
- f. Students work in groups to analyze a problem and to develop a plan to deal with the issues discussed in the scenarios.

Background Information

The statistics for childhood sexual assault is staggering. Nationally, one out of every four girls and one out of every eight boys are sexually assaulted. In 89% of reported cases of sexual abuse, the children were abused by someone they knew. Education is an important tool for decreasing these statistics. If children do not have knowledge of sexual abuse, they will not know what to do if someone tries to abuse them. In addition, lacking this information, victimized children may be too embarrassed or afraid to report the abuse. It is clear, unfortunately, that students need to be prepared to deal with physical and/or sexual abuse at the hands of a family member or friend. Any abuse reported to a child's teacher must by law be reported to the authorities. Telling principal or pastor does not take away your responsibility to report.

Assess your own comfort level and biases which could affect your presentation. Not all teachers will feel enough ease to discuss sexual abuse with their students. In such cases, a qualified person should be asked to present the material. The presentation is more effective, however, when done by the teacher since the children are more likely to open up to a trusted and familiar person. If the teacher cannot present, he/she should remain in the room and participate as much as possible.

Children who are empowered to make and act on choices in their lives and who have well-developed self-esteem generally are very capable of dealing with any crisis. Those victims of child abuse have difficulty identifying themselves as victims or are prevented from making appropriate choices are at greater risk for long term negative consequences.

Teacher's Role

Assist students in analyzing problems and developing a plan of action when dealing with physical abuse.

Materials

- a. "Dear Chris Letters" (handout)
- b. Large sheets of drawing paper
- c. Markers or crayons
- d. Pencil and paper

Vocabulary

Abuse: something that hurts oneself or others

Physical Abuse: something that hurts one's body or someone else's body (slapping, hitting, pinching, kicking, tripping, etc.)

Body Privacy: Respect for one's body. Covering one's private parts.

Correction or Punishment: consequence of doing something wrong.

Teaching/Learning Activities

1. Introduce the lesson by asking, What do you think "Body Privacy" is?
Today we are going to discuss our right to body privacy. There are times when someone needs to see or touch our private parts like when mom or dad help us get clean or if a doctor needs to examine us.
What would you do if...
Your Uncle Rex likes to wrestle with you. Lately you have been feeling uncomfortable with the wrestling and would like him to stop.
Discuss what could be done.
Does everyone have right to Body Privacy? (yes)
Why? (we are temples of the Holy Spirit and so very special)
How can we show respect for private parts of our own and others' bodies? (Take care of our own. Keep them clean and covered. Do not let others invade our privacy. Do not invade the privacy of others.)
2. What is "physical abuse"? (when someone hurts one's body or someone else's body)
What can you do if someone is "abusing" you? (NO, GO, TELL)
3. Discuss the difference between correction/punishment that is good for us and punishment that is abuse/hurtful to us. (Helpful as a consequence of doing something wrong: denied play time; spanking; denied computer or TV time) (Hurtful when it does not help us: spanking that happens a lot; being hit on parts of our body that is not a spanking; being forced to do without needed food)
4. Divide the class into groups. Give "Dear Chris Letters" to groups. Ask them to identify the problem and suggest a way to deal with it.

5. Have each group share their responses to the letters. In each example, what is discipline/correction and what is abuse? What are ways to handle each problem?

Processing the Experience

1. How do you know if someone is abusing you? (Physical abuse included hitting, slapping, punching, biting, kicking, scratching, hard shaking, beating.) (Sometimes physical abuse leaves cuts and bruises.)
2. What is the difference between correction/discipline/punishment and punishment/abuse? (Correction is less severe and is a reminder not to do something wrong again. Punishment that is abuse causes harm to the person.) (Physical abuse causes harm to one's body.)
3. Do you have names of trusted adults who can help you if you are abused?
4. What do you do if the first adult you tell does not help you? (go to the next person on your list of trusted persons.)
5. What do you do if a friend tells you about abuse in his/her home and wants you to promise not to tell? (Difference between "good secrets" and "bad secrets") (Tell a trusted adult.)
6. How do you protect yourself from abuse? (NO, GO, TELL)

Closing Prayer:

God, you created us and made us very special. You love us and want us to grow healthy and happy. Help us to respect ourselves and one another. Help us to speak out when someone is hurting. Bless our moms and dads, our brothers and sisters, our friends. Thank you for loving us.

Follow Up

It is important to present short lessons multiple times through the year for young children. Accessing Kidsmartz is a handy way to do that.

www.virtus.org

enter id and password

click on EDUCATOR on top bar

click on Kidsmartz on left column

DEAR CHRIS LETTERS

Dear Chris,

I am ten years old. Whenever I am taking a shower my older sister, who is 16, always wants to come into the bathroom to get something that she has forgotten. One time it was for her lipstick. Another time it was for her hairbrush. I feel uncomfortable whenever she does this. My parents have asked me to not lock the door in case they need to get into the room. What should I do?

Signed,

Getting Fed Up in Fresno

Dear Chris,

My dad remarried last year to a woman named Sally. Sally is okay most of the time, but she can be very strict. Last month she grounded me for a week when I cheated on a test at school. Yesterday, she spanked me and sent me to my room after she saw me run out in the street after a ball right in front of a car. I was lucky the car stopped in time. I want to know if stepparents have the right to discipline their kids and if spanking is considered abuse.

Signed,

Confused in Cleveland

Dear Chris,

My baby sitter is the daughter of my parents' friends. Sometimes she gets really mean and slaps and hits my brother and me. I have told my mom, but she does not want to upset her friends. This is not getting any better. If mom will not listen, who will?

Signed,

Please Help in Tucson

Dear Chris,

About once a month my dad comes home really drunk. Sometimes he hits me and my brother for no reason. Mom sees him, but she does not do anything. I think she is afraid, too. She says not to tell anybody since dad is fine when he is sober. I think twelve times a year is a lot. What do I do?

Signed,

Desperate in Dallas

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,

Grade 4

- Discuss body privacy (We all have a right to privacy.)
- Know the difference between correction/punishment/discipline and abuse.
- Become familiar with assertive responses in potentially dangerous situations.
- Verbalize to a trusted adult when something inappropriate happens.

Suggested Parent/Child Follow up

- Discuss how your child could respond if a classmate told a secret that should be shared with a trusted adult.
- Discuss some scenarios in which your child will need to make a prudent decision: "What would you do if..."
- Explain that you love your child very much even though you punish/discipline/correct your child.