

Grade SIX  
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

1. Review emotional abuse.
2. Introduce sexual abuse.
3. Explain the importance of reporting until they are believed.
4. Discuss peer pressure.

Lesson Overview

A continuum is used to review different types of touching. Emotional abuse is reviewed with ways to deal with it. Sexual abuse is defined. The importance of reporting is emphasized.

Background Information

Both forms of abuse, sexual and emotional, can have serious long-term effects. The impact of such abuse is made worse by a range of factors, including shame, keeping the abuse secret, and blaming self for the abuse. Victims of abuse seem to run a greater risk of perpetuating the cycle of abuse. It is important to encourage students to continue to report the abuse until they are believed. With sensitivity, it is also important to emphasize that reports must be honest. The overall goal of education at this age is not only to help children recognize, resist and report abuse, but also to give them a basis for resisting it and counteracting it by reminding them of the truths of God-given human dignity and love.

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.

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

Catechist's Role

- a. Review the concepts of safe/comfortable touch and unsafe/uncomfortable touch
- b. Review the concept of emotional abuse
- c. Introduce the term "sexual abuse."
- d. Emphasize the importance of reporting abuse until one is heard.
- e. Involve the students in the process of identifying strategies for responding to potentially abusive situations.

## Materials

- a. Continuum of Touching (on board)
- b. Give Me A Break (handout)
- c. How Do I Spell Relief? (handout)

## Teaching/Learning Activities

1. Use the Continuum of Touching as a tool to discuss different types of touching or body contact distinguishing between respectful/healthy touch versus hurtful/unwanted touch. Discuss the gray area when a touch can make one feel either good or bad and the need to pay attention to one's feelings and to say NO when the feeling is bad.
2. Review the concept of "emotional abuse." Explain that emotional abuse is when someone continually and consistently treats the child in cruel ways, like verbal attacks/put downs, belittling, ridiculing, shaming, terrorizing, ignoring, rejecting, degrading, corrupting, bullying, or places excessive and unreasonable demands on a child.

Use the fairy tale Cinderella to give examples of emotional abuse.

- happened over many years
- told she was not pretty
- expected to be a servant to the others
- not given decent clothes to wear
- personal things stolen from her (dress)

What is the difference between teasing and abuse? (Teasing is done in fun when the person being teased also thinks it is fun.)

When does teasing become abuse? (bullying, demeaning, repeated over time)

What is the difference between good peer pressure and bad peer pressure?

Good peer pressure is when friends work together, play together in ways that support one another. (Follow the rules of a game so all can have fun and be fair to one another.

Choosing to hang out with friends who do good things rather than hurtful things.

Challenging one another to be the best at something.)

Bad peer pressure is when one feels pressured to do something bad in order to fit in.

(Bullying, teasing to the point of hurting, doing things one would not do on his/her own, feeling afraid to refuse to do something.)

3. Introduce the concept of "sexual abuse." Sexual abuse is 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.

4. Questions:

- a. What do you think emotionally and sexually abused people begin to believe about themselves? (worthless; something is wrong with them; they are not worth much; they are isolated and alone)
- b. What do we as Catholics believe about the value of every human person? (We are good. God wants us to be happy. We are to respect ourselves and others.)
- c. What can a person do if he/she experiences repeated abuse? (NO, GO, TELL a trusted adult.)
- d. Why is it important to tell someone if either you or a friend is being physically, sexually, or emotionally abused? (The longer we hurt, the more injured we become. Abuse is making it hard to grow up healthy and happy.)
- e. Why is it important to keep telling until someone believes you or agrees to help you? (It is not good to suffer and be hurt. Adults are here to help you.)

Processing the Experience

1. What is physical abuse?
2. What is emotional/verbal abuse?
3. What is sexual abuse?
4. Why is any type of abuse wrong?
5. What are some ways (self-talk) to help when you feel confused or hurt? Use the handout "How Do I Spell Relief?"

Closure

Remind the students that they know lots of ways to take good care of themselves, like exercise, praying, talking with a trusted friend, etc. Use the handout "Give Me A Break". Choose one exercise and do it with the class.

Follow up:

Netsmartz [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org)  
Enter id and password  
Click on Educators (on top bar)  
Click on "Netsmartz" (on left column)  
Click on "Teach Netsmartz"  
Education Kit: Click on "Learn More"  
Download Kit

You may need to sign in using your email address and create a password the first time. Netsmartz may be used to supplement the safety message throughout the year. Also available in Spanish. Recommended for grades 6 and up. Older students train younger ones using this website. It is free.

## CONTINUUM OF TOUCHING

| NO Touch | SAFE Comfortable                                | CONFUSING Touch | UNSAFE Uncomfortable                               | NO Touch |
|----------|---|-----------------|--|----------|
|          | “Heart Touch”<br>Caring Touch<br>Welcomed Touch |                 | Hurtful Touch<br>Abusive Touch<br>Unpleasant Touch |          |

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Use the continuum and the points given below as a tool to discuss different types of touching or body contact. It is best if the students give examples of touches and feelings. Always emphasize that we can listen to and trust the feelings that tell us when something is wrong or unsafe.

1. Ask the students to name touches they like and feel good about. Possible examples are: hugs, hand shakes, pats on the back, tickles, holding hands, mom’s hand on forehead when sick, being held when scared, arms around each other, high five, fist bump, someone brushing or fixing or cutting your hair, back rub. Discuss how sometimes a touch can feel good. At other times the touch can feel bad. Sometimes it depends on who does it. Some touching like being kissed by parents were okay when younger but they are embarrassing now....that doesn’t make the kiss abusive or bad, just embarrassing.
2. Ask the students what types of touch they think are bad, hurtful or abusive, i.e., touches they definitively do not want to receive. Possible examples are beatings, beltings, kicks, slaps, punches, scratches, tripping, pushing down, bullying, pulling hair, pinching, biting, forceful or sneaky touching of private parts. (Review meaning of private parts: those covered by a swimsuit)
3. Point out the two extremes of the continuum, which are both a lack of touch. On the negative end (right side) it means refusing care, protection, affection, which are needed for a person to grow healthy and happy. On the positive end (left side) this represents people whose love and friendship are evident, but not necessarily demonstrated by much touch. People and families are different in how much touching they want to give and receive. That difference is okay.
4. Ask if students can think of a time when a safe (comfortable touch) began to feel like an unsafe (uncomfortable) touch. The touching was the same, but they felt differently about

it. Examples might include the kiss when you were young from your parents, or being tickled in fun but the person would not stop and it was beginning to hurt or was too rough or too prolonged.

Other examples

-A person you do not know (or like very well) gives you a big long hug.

-A handshake that squeezes too hard and hurts.

-Someone crowding too close to you, being too friendly or getting into your “personal space”.

-A hug or kiss from a person you are mad at or afraid of.

-These touches can be confusing because they can give mixed messages.

5. Ask students what feelings alert them to these confusing touches? Body signals may include stomach tightening, feeling scared, angry, anxious, trapped, etc. One’s body says, “Uh-Oh, I don’t like this.”
6. Stress that no one, whether stranger, acquaintance, relative or friend, has the right to force or trick you into sexual contact or activities that you do not feel comfortable about. When anyone touches them in a way that confuses or hurts them, they can let the person know that they don’t like it, and they can tell what happened to a trusted adult. (NO, GO, TELL)
7. Emphasize that no one has a right to intentionally injure them or to frighten and hurt them emotionally over and over again. They can talk about what hurts them and they can tell someone who can help them.

# HOW DO I SPELL RELIEF?

## Directions

1. Think about some of your most stressful situations. List them in column one.
2. Then think of as many ways as you can to handle the stress of each situation.
3. Finally, write some positive and encouraging things to tell yourself in order to help you get through it.

| MY STRESSFUL SITUATIONS | WAYS I CAN HANDLE THIS STRESS | POSITIVE SELF-TALK FOR THIS SITUATION |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|                         |                               |                                       |

# GIVE ME A BREAK!

When you find yourself feeling anxious or tense, try some techniques to help yourself relax.

## 1. DEEP BREATHING

Sit comfortably with your feet on the floor. Take a deep breath by inhaling through your nose slowly while you count to ten. Hold your breath for a couple of seconds. Then exhale through your mouth slowly while you count to ten again. Concentrate on how your chest, stomach and back muscles feel as you continue this slow, deep breathing for a few minutes.

## 2. INSTANT CONVERSATION

Close your eyes, breathe deeply and relax every part of your body—your arms, your legs, your back, your shoulders, your neck, your jaw, your face.

In your imagination travel to your favorite place in nature—a beautiful park, a seashore, a mountaintop, the woods, a stream. Feel, see, hear, smell everything around you in this beautiful and peaceful place. Notice the sun on your face, the breeze, the smell of flowers or pine trees. Hear the rustle of leaves, water splashing, birds singing, whatever natural sounds belong in your special place.

Meet Jesus and/or Mary in this special place. Tell Jesus or Mary your situation and ask what to do. Listen quietly. Enjoy being with Jesus and/or Mary in this place for a few minutes before returning to the present.

## 3. STRETCHING

Stand up and stretch. Yawn a few times. Take a deep breath and in through your nose and out through your mouth. Shake your arms and body with all your muscles loose and relaxed. Finally, just stand for a minute enjoying how it feels to be relaxed.

## 4. MINUTE MEDITATION

In a quiet place, close your eyes, breathe deeply and relax your body. Listen to these words that God speaks to you in the Bible. Hear God saying your name as you slowly repeat the words over and over in your mind:

“I, your God, am holding you by the hand. I tell you: Do not be afraid. I will help you. (Isaiah 41/13)

Here are some other words of God from the Bible that you could use:

“God will be with you and will not fail you or leave you. So do not be afraid or discouraged.” (Deut. 31:8)

“God shelters me in a tent in times of trouble.” (Psalm 27:5)

“Give all your worries to God, for God is looking after you.” (1Peter 5:7)

## 5. NECK STRETCHES

Stand or sit up straight, but comfortable. Lower your head until your chin touches your chest. Swing your head slowly from side to side, feeling the gentle pull in your neck and shoulders. Let your head flop gently back and hold it there for a bit. Then turn to look over your right shoulder as far as you can. Bring your chin down to touch your shoulder.

Feel the gentle stretch of the neck and shoulder muscles. Do the same by looking over your left shoulder. Finally, relax and return to normal.

#### 6. UNWINDING EXERCISES

Stand with your feet about 19 inches apart. Reach upward with your right hand as if you were reaching for something. Let your right hand fall back down and reach up with your left hand. Repeat with your right hand, left hand, etc. three times. Return to starting position and raise both arms out sideways from shoulders, palms down, fingers spread. Stretch outward as far as you can.

Bend forward and down, allowing your arms to swing and your fingers to brush the floor with your head down. Feel the stretch in your legs and back. Bounce gently five or six times. Return to the starting position again, placing your hands on the back of your thighs. Lean backward slowly sliding your hands down the back of your legs and dropping your head back. Return to standing position.



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,

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| <p>Grade 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review concepts of emotional, sexual, physical abuse and peer pressure.</li><li>• Review the importance of reporting until they are believed.</li><li>• Review the distinctions among abuse, teasing, peer pressure.</li></ul> |
| <p>Suggested Parent/Child Follow-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review sexual abuse and peer pressure to make sure your child is grasping the concepts.</li><li>• Review the handouts, especially the continuum of touching.</li></ul>                                |