

Archdiocese of Dubuque
Secondary Safe Environment Curriculum
Children and Adolescents Protection Program
Lesson Plan, grades 9-12

1. Opening Prayer; Sign of the Cross

Let us listen to the ancient story of creation from the Book of Genesis.

(Read aloud Genesis 1:26-27).

Reflection: **What does this passage say about our bodies?**

(Allow 30 seconds for private reflection, then invite a few responses from those who wish to share.)

Let us pray: Thank you, God, for the gift of ourselves. Remind us, too, that those around us were created by you and are loved by you, just the way they are. Thank you for your gifts to others. Thank you for your gifts to us. Amen

2. Introduction

Say the following: **Today, Tonight we are going to discuss child abuse and specifically child sexual abuse - what it is, ways to avoid sexual abuse, and things to do if you or someone you know has been sexually abused.**

Distribute the handout - "Sexual Abuse Prevention Statement to High School Adolescents."

Read aloud page 1 of the handout:

The overwhelming majority of adults working with youth today are positive faithful individuals, dedicated to helping our youth grow in the Catholic faith. Unfortunately, there have been cases where adults have behaved inappropriately and have even abused people entrusted to their care.

The Church believes in the dignity of the human person and recognizes abusive behavior as sinful and in some cases criminal. One victim of abuse is one too many. The Church seeks to restore any broken relationship ... sometimes this is difficult.

The Archdiocese of Dubuque is sincerely committed to the spiritual and emotional well being of all by providing morally good, healthy, and informed leaders, thereby making the Church a place of safety and trust. The Archdiocese needs you to share in this responsibility of awareness and to seek help for yourselves or your friends if you are aware of any prior or present sexual abuse.

3. What is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual Abuse includes contacts or interactions between a child and an adult when the child is being used as an object of sexual gratification for the adult. A child is abused whether or not this activity involves explicit force, whether or not it involves genital or physical contact, whether or not it is initiated by the child, and whether or not there is discernible harmful outcome.

4. Ways to Protect Yourself

- **Take precautions to limit the possibility that you might be sexually abused. Keep the following in mind:**
 - **Your body is sacred domain. You have a right to decide how it will be touched and by whom. No one is ever free to force, pressure, or tease you into having sexual contact of any kind.**

Then say the following: **There are different types of behaviors or touch. The four types are: appropriate, possibly inappropriate, never acceptable, and illegal.**

Appropriate forms of affection include, but are not limited to:

1. side hugs
2. shoulder to shoulder or “temple” hugs
3. pats on the shoulder or back
4. handshakes
5. “high - fives” and hand slapping
6. verbal praise
7. kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
8. arms around shoulders
9. holding hands while walking with small children
10. holding hands during prayer

There are some forms of touch or physical affection that have been used by adults to initiate inappropriate contact with young people. If a you feel uncomfortable with any of these actions, it is appropriate for you to stop the action and to tell a trusted adult. If you are unable to stop the action, it is appropriate for you to tell a trusted adult after the incident occurs. Here are some examples of possible inappropriate behavior:

1. compliments that relate to physique or body development
2. any type of massage given by an adult to a minor or young person
3. touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
4. touching knees or legs of a minor or young person

Thirdly, there are some forms of touch or physical affection that are never acceptable. In order to maintain the safest possible environment for minors, the following are examples of touch inappropriate for use in Church/school sponsored and affiliated programs. If a young person feels uncomfortable with any of these actions, it is appropriate for the young person to stop the action and tell a trusted adult. If the young person is unable to stop the action, it would still be appropriate for the young person to tell a trusted adult after the incident occurs. Here are some examples of never acceptable behavior or touch by an adult to a young person:

1. inappropriate or lengthy embraces
2. kisses on the mouth
3. showing affection in isolated areas of the program such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms
4. sleeping in bed with a minor
5. any form of unwanted affection

The final type is abuse behavior. Those are defined on the second page of your handout, which we have already read.

Then read aloud numbers two through ten from **“What are ways to protect yourself?” on page 2-3 of the handout.**

1. Trust your own feelings. If someone’s conduct or attitude seems suspicious, or if you are confused, afraid, and uncomfortable, there may be a good reason.
2. Have a clear idea of your own sexual values, goals, and ideals. Be assertive in saying no if you feel you are being pushed or pressured.
3. Don’t weaken your defenses with alcohol or any other substance.
4. Don’t walk alone at night. Don’t hitchhike or accept rides from strangers.
5. Immediately leave a room if someone is there you can’t trust.
6. Don’t be alone with a date in a potentially dangerous place like an empty house or a parked car.
7. Refuse single dates with someone you don’t know well and never go on a date with someone who has the reputation of being sexually abusive or immoral.
8. Never accept a drink you have not poured and never set your drink down or leave it unattended. (Rapists today are using powerful drugs like Rohypnol and GHB commonly called ruffes, roofies, and many other street names-to disable females. These drugs are slipped into a person's drink. As one teen said, “The last thing I remember about the party was this guy giving me a drink. I woke up seven hours later in his bed. I can’t remember anything in between.”)
9. Avoid any situation you deem to be dangerous.

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5. What to do if you or someone you know has been sexually abused.

If you have been abused in the past and haven’t ever talked about it, tell someone you trust, preferably a parent, teacher, counselor or youth minister. You may need professional help to cope with the abuse, to put it in perspective, and to move on to a healthier way of relating to the world.

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Then say the following: **If a friend tells you that they have been physically or sexually abused by an adult and asks you to promise not to tell, don't be sworn to secrecy. Don't promise not to tell anyone. Say, "I can't promise to keep a secret if your life is in danger or you are being hurt." Then, seek the help of a trusted adult or professional who can help you report the situation.**

Then point out the section in the middle of the page on the last page of the student handout. Have the student write the number in their area to report child abuse. In addition, have students write the Archdiocesan Abuse Hotline.

Then say: **To report and an all abuse of a child call the Archdiocesan help line at 1-800-803-6758 or 1-866-319-4636 or call the DHS hotline at 1-800-362-2178**

Say the following: **There are many people who can be trusted to help you If you or a friend is physically or sexually abused. Some people are required by law to report the abuse to the proper law officials.**

Then read aloud the following from the last paragraph on the back page of the student handout:

To report any and all child abuse, contact:

State

Department of Human Services

Website <http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/reportingchildabuse.asp>

Hotline: 1-800-362-2178

Archdiocese

Victim Assistance Coordinators - Facilitate access to appropriate professional mental health services, social service agencies, support groups and/or individuals who can provide spiritual care. Call toll free 800-803-6758 or 866-319-4636 to report an allegation or receive assistance.

State of Iowa - Mandatory Reporting

The state of Iowa has a mandatory reporting law. This means that people in certain professions must report child abuse. Mandatory reporters are:

- According to Iowa law, six classes of professionals must report suspected abuse within 24 hours from the time they notice the suspected abuse. Those professions are: health, mental health, education, law enforcement, child care and, social work. These people are required by Iowa law to complete a training course in mandatory reporting of abuse.
- A more detailed listing follows: health practitioner who examines, attends, counsels or treats a child (licensed physicians, surgeons, osteopaths, dentists, optometrists, podiatrists, residents or interns, PAs, nurses, basic and advanced EMS personnel, all social workers (private and public), psychologists, school employees, day care employees, staff of all health care facilities, staff of mental health centers, peace officers.

Emphasize the following:

If you or someone you know is ever involved in sexual assault, get help immediately. Both the victim and the offender may need professional help.

If a friend tells you he or she has been abused in the past, be supportive and affirming but do not try to counsel your friend alone. The problem is too big for you to handle. Encourage your friend to get professional help; if you can, take the person to a mandatory reporter yourself.

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6. Optional activities:

Optional activity #1: Concluding activity

Divide into groups. Give each group one of the following:

1. Write a list of the situations you can think of that can be classified as sexual abuse.
2. What would be your course of action if a close friend told you of being sexually abused?
3. Name some of the precautions a teenager can take to avoid being sexually abused.

Invite each group to share their responses.

Optional activity #2: Myths about Child Sexual Abuse

The following two sheets will be used for this activity and are in the forum folder.

- “Sexual Abuse & Assault: Fact or Myth Quiz” - invite students to circle on their answer sheet whether the statement is a fact or a myth about sexual abuse and assault.
- Then, read aloud the “Sexual Abuse & Assault: Fact or Myth Quiz” - Answer Sheet that repeats each statement read and provides a response to each. All the statements from -the quiz are myths.

7. Closing Prayer - Meditation

Conclude with the following meditation. Feel free to close with another prayer if you wish.

MEDITATION

A prayer from God to an abused child

You are a precious child.
You deserve to be here and you deserve to be happy.
It was my will for you that you be happy.
It was not my plan that people hurt you.

People choose to hurt you of their own free will.

It was not what I wanted. I wanted to protect you.

I want you to know that I have. always been beside you. I have given you friends to help you.

I have willed you my strength through them, and I have loved you through them.
You must learn to reach out to your friends, to trust that they care.

I am always with you, even in your darkest moments. I will always be with you. I want you to trust me. I am stronger than you. I can carry you when you need to be carried.

I believe in you, even if you don't believe in me.

I want you to know that people care about you. I care about you.

You deserve to be happy.

You deserve to be loved.

You ARE LOVED.

By M. Villarrubia

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