

SAFE ENVIRONMENT CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Introduction

In recent years our society has begun to understand the pervasiveness of child sexual abuse. It is estimated that one female child out of every three will be sexually abused before she is 18 years old. In addition, one male child out of 7 will be sexually abused as well. Child sexual abuse is not confined to any racial, ethnic, or socio economic class. Children across the world experience the nightmare of abuse. Only now are we beginning to research the effects of abuse on children. The abuse experienced by children, especially young children, appears to explode into countless emotional problems that affect everyone in our society.

As our awareness of the effects of child sexual abuse grows, frustrated parents educators and Church leaders look for ways to prevent the abuse from happening. In order to teach prevention techniques, we are forced to examine our social, cultural, and religious attitudes about appropriate roles, family life, personal safety and violence. The continuing patterns of abuse can be broken with the use of preventive education and with appropriate counseling interventions with children who have already been victimized.

Education is an important aspect of effectively preventing the sexual abuse of children. Education accomplishes the following:

- It breaks through the individual and societal silence and denial that have long supported/tolerated sexual abuse of children;
- It increases access to community resources for treatment and intervention for young people;
- It decreases the level of public acceptance of sexual abuse;
- It increases the degree of understanding and awareness by children of the issues related to sexual violence.

Prevention education focuses on the dissemination of factual information about child sexual abuse and the development of skills to enable a child to avoid or to resist an approach by an offender. A necessary ingredient for education is information about what to do and who to contact for help if assaulted. Beyond these obvious goals, prevention education within a religious context offers the Church an opportunity to teach children about God's care for children, about justice and forgiveness, and about the Church's care for survivors.

Even though many public schools are introducing prevention curricula, it is essential that the Church be involved in the prevention of sexual abuse. Children who have been taught child abuse prevention in the context of religious education report that having this information in this setting allows them to discuss values, the Church's teachings, and Scripture as it relates to this topic. Teaching prevention also allows the Church to offer children images of hope, comfort, and healing that will be very useful to them in the future no matter what their experience. Every avenue of communication must be used to spread the Gospel message of God's love and care for children.

Resources: Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Archdiocese of Mobile, Diocese of Joliet, Diocese of Tucson

(If concepts are not in materials used, supplementation must be provided.)

Grades Pre-K - 1

Taught	The students will:	Benziger Family Life Grade/Page
	Learn that their body is created by God and is special.	K/34, 1/4
	Recognize that while touch can be a wonderful way to express caring, sometimes they may not want to be touched, or some touches may make them feel “funny” or uncomfortable.	K/19 & 25
	Learn that they should say “no” and get away if anyone tries to touch them in a way that makes them feel “funny” or uncomfortable.	K/25, 1/25
	Understand that they should tell someone, such as their parent or a teacher, if someone tries to touch them in a way that makes them feel “funny” or uncomfortable.	K/ 21, 23, 25

Grades 2, 3, and 4

Taught	The students will:	Benziger Family Life Grade/Page
	Learn that each person’s body is created by God and is special.	3/74, 4/74
	Understand that their families, trusted adults and teachers work together to help them grow.	2/4
	Recognize that safe touch makes a person feel loved and cared for, and that unsafe or unwanted touch makes a person feel uncomfortable and unhappy.	3/64, 4/26
	Learn that their private parts are those covered by our bathing suits. No one has the right to touch their private parts except to keep them healthy (i.e. parents or doctors).	
	Understand that unsafe and unwanted touch must be avoided and immediately reported to a parent or trusted adult.	3/63, 4/27
	Reflect an understanding that respect for themselves and for others is demonstrated by how they talk and how they act and interact.	3/25
	Understand that inappropriate language, jokes, and actions are not acceptable.	4/60
	Recognize that belittling and humiliating words are not the way others should treat them.	4/60
	Understand that it is alright to say no and get away if anyone tries to touch them in a way that makes them feel “funny” or uncomfortable.	3/64, 4/20
	Learn the principle of “If someone harms me, or touches me in a way that makes me feel “funny” or uncomfortable, I will keep telling until someone helps me.”	4/26
	Explore strategies for recognizing when to get help when others are making harmful choices.	3/25 & 25, 4/26
	Understand that adults and even children sometimes engage in actions or behaviors that are wrong and sinful.	3/25 & 25, 4/26
	Recognize that behaviors such as kicking, hitting, slapping and belittling , can damage their bodies, minds, and spirits. These behaviors must be reported to a trusted adult.	4/29

	It is important not to keep secrets about touching and to tell a safe adult if anyone tries to touch them in an unsafe way.	3/63
	Know the difference between games and play activities with friends that are healthy, fun and enjoyable and games that are wrong and harmful. Learn that harmful games must be avoided and reported to a trusted adult.	3/25 & 25
	Recognize good friendships and friendships that are hurtful.	4/27
	Identify good and bad choices and determine how those choices affect them and others.	2/21, 3/31
	Understand that although the world is not always a safe place, there are good and loving people who will help them.	3/24 & 25
	Understand that is never their fault if someone touches or tries to touch them in a way that makes them feel “funny” or uncomfortable.	
	Make a list of three trusted adults in addition to parents and family members that they can go to with any problem.	

Grades 5 and 6

Taught	The Students will:	Benziger Family Life Grade/Page
	Understand that they are created in the image and likeness of God. Their body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.	
	Realize that they are loved persons deserving of respect.	5/6
	Understand that they have parts of their bodies that are considered private and know to respect these in self and others.	5/36
	Understand the importance of reporting abuse until they are believed (for self and others).	5/7
	Describe strategies to get out of abusive or potentially abusive situations.	
	Understand the consequences of false reporting of abuse.	
	Realize that any child who is touched inappropriately needs healing, help and support from family, community and professionals.	
	Know that there will be consequences and professional help for people who touch children in an improper way.	
	Discuss personal safety and tactics for when they are home alone.	
	Understand that the Internet, while potentially a good tool for learning and connecting with people, can be misused by persons who desire an opportunity to sexually abuse young people.	
	Realize they should use safe practices while on the Internet—avoid giving any personal information...and never under any circumstances agree to meet an online contact in person but communicate with them only on the Internet. If a contact wants to meet in person, a parent or trusted adult must be told immediately.	
	Know that it is never their fault if someone touches them or tries to touch them.	
	Make a list of three trusted adults in addition to parents and family members that they can go to with any problem.	

Grades 7 and 8

Taught	The students will:	Benziger Family Life Grade/Page
	Understand that they are created in the image and likeness of God. Their body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.	7/37, 8/20
	Know that their families and trusted adults and teachers share a concern for their safety.	
	Learn to differentiate between safe and unsafe or unwanted touch.	
	Understand that they are called to chastity and have a responsibility to avoid and immediately report any unwanted or unsafe touch to a parent or other trusted adult.	7/54 & 55
	Identify respectful and disrespectful language and actions and avoid anyone who fails to respect them. When they are disrespected or abused by others, they must report the offense and get help.	7/51
	Recognize that secrets can be very harmful to us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Always question secret play, secret games and determine how the secrets can cause harm.	7/55
	Understand that God has given them the gift of free will. All actions have consequences and they must learn to discern the implications of the choices they make.	7/74, 8/10
	Recognize the different types of perpetrators. People who manipulate or misuse our friendship are not friends.	
	Explain safe internet use as a means for protecting oneself from predators.	
	Explain the importance of reporting of abuse until they are believed. (for self and others)	7/55
	Explain the consequences of false reporting of abuse.	
	Understand that good communication with their parents and family helps keep them safe. They can also help keep younger siblings and others safe by being observant and concerned	8/51
	Know that it is never their fault if someone touches them or tries to touch them.	7/55

Grades 9 – 12

Taught	The students will:
	Recognize that they are unique gifts of God deserving of respect and dignity .
	Recognize when an adult is grooming him or her for an inappropriate relationship.
	Name behaviors or situations that could make him or her uncomfortable or unsafe.
	Learn appropriate ways to express feelings, thoughts, and beliefs.
	Identify the risk factors associated with sexual abuse.
	Learn to avoid dangers, resist seductions, withstand peer pressure and demonstrate care for others.
	Build on personal strengths so as to enhance the ability to resist temptation or more aggressive offers to engage in inappropriate activity.
	Become confident about making reports regarding abuse or attempted abuse of self or of others and to

	understand the obligation of others to make such reports.
	Understand that watching out for others is part of their Christian responsibility. Those youth who are themselves less vulnerable play an especially important role in watching out for the welfare of those who may be more vulnerable—by virtue of age, personality or other circumstances—to abuse or maltreatment.
	Identify and steer away from questionable and potentially dangerous situations such as internet predators and date violence.
	Learn about the tools, resources, and guidance that are available to help create a safe and sacred community.
	Discuss the importance of preventing sexual abuse.
	Pray for the healing of victims and those who suffer any type of abuse as well for those who have brought harm against another through any kind of abuse.
	Summarize the meaning of appropriate boundaries with the leaders of youth group, leaders of the parish, teacher, all adults and among peers.
	Know the rules of conduct for their age group as defined in the Diocesan Code of Conduct.

Sources: Diocese of Joliet, Diocese of Tucson, Archdiocese of Mobile