

Middle School Grades (6-8) – Safe Environment Plan

Note: It is essential to read *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* by the Pontifical Council for the Family before presenting this material. This booklet is available from the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization for \$4 or the document can be downloaded from the Diocesan website along with discussion questions. This resource can be applied toward Certification Credit of 4 hours under Doctrine, Life in Christ, Christian Sexuality.

Total respect is due to each person because of his/her incredible dignity as a child of God and is the foundation of the Safe Environment Program.

Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.

V. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray:

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant that in the same Spirit we may be truly wise, and ever rejoice in His consolation, through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Objectives

Refer to the Diocesan Religion Curriculum, Life in Christ where the proper teaching on human sexuality is provided

For 6th Grade:

under the Sixth and Ninth Commandment page 21, Conscience page 22, and Dignity page 23-24.

For 7th Grade:

under the Sixth and Ninth Commandment page 21, Conscience page 21-23, and Dignity page 25

For 8th Grade:

under the Sixth and Ninth Commandment page 23, Conscience page 24-26, and Dignity page 28

Additional foundational information is provided in the Overview/Scope Section of the Curriculum under the titles of God (page 7), creation (page 8), and the dignity of the human person (page 15) for each particular grade level (Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grade).

- Students will learn about the dignity of each human person and how each person must be treated with respect.
- Students will learn about and seek to develop or further develop the virtue of prudence.
- Students will understand appropriate and inappropriate (touch) behaviors that respect the dignity of each person.
- Students will know how to incorporate the Buddy System into their everyday life.
- Students will learn practical tips for keeping themselves safe.
- Students will speak of defensive and assertive body language to protect themselves.

Teaching Points

Lesson

Jesus is the Truth. You can know the truth about what is good and right through reason (our ability to think, understand, and judge).

God also gave you the virtue of prudence to protect you. Prudence is a good moral habit that helps you to know and choose what is good for you in every circumstance. It also helps you to foresee and avoid dangerous and harmful situations. It is important to develop and practice the virtue of prudence.

It is wise and prudent to formulate a plan to avoid dangerous situations. It is also prudent to rely on a network of people you trust to help you know how to keep yourself safe. God gave you your parents, friends, and teachers to help you know when and how to avoid dangers, and to turn to them when you are in danger.

It is prudent to have a “Buddy System”. This means that you should never go anywhere alone. Always have a “buddy” with you.

Now that you are older, parents are giving you more responsibilities and along with this, the virtue of prudence becomes more important.

The following are some safety tips that it would be prudent to follow:

- Always be with a group when outdoors. Be aware of your surroundings.
- Never hitchhike.
- Use well lit streets, walkways, and playgrounds. Do not use shortcuts.
- When you are home alone, be sure you have emergency numbers and a number of a neighbor or a near-by friend.
- Never answer the door unless you know the person.
- Always be alert and cautious of your surroundings.
- If an adult or another young person does not respect your dignity by treating you in an inappropriate manner, in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable or scared, the rule is: “Stop!” and then go and tell a trusted adult. It is O.K. to say “Stop” or “No”, and then go away from this person and tell someone, such as your parents, grandparents, teacher or someone you can trust. It is always important to tell someone you trust if you have been made to feel uncomfortable – no matter what has happened.
- “Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit” which means that God dwells within you. Therefore, each person is to be treated with complete respect. Inappropriate behavior includes getting involved sexually with another person. Until completely giving oneself to a spouse in the life-long covenant of marriage, sexual relations of any kind involve using another person’s body as an object and is a lie regarding what it means to show love.
- Never go to a friend’s house or stay overnight if their parents are not home.

- If you are at a friend’s house, and a TV program, video or computer program makes you feel uncomfortable, or is inappropriate, suggest that you would like to watch something different or play a different game.

Activities

- The dignity of the human person as a child of God and the respect that is due to each person is the foundation of the Safe Environment Program. Therefore, the enclosed virtue of respect, which includes an explanation of human dignity, is to be taught and practiced at each grade level.

Discuss the following age-appropriate activities from the virtue of respect, connecting them to real life.

- Sixth Grade: pages 3-4, numbers 1, 3, 9-St. Elizabeth of Hungary, 12, 13, 15-Luke 2:14-52
- Seventh Grade: pages 3-4, numbers 6,11, 17, 18, 28
- Eighth Grade: pages 3-4, numbers 1-5, 9-Pope John Paul II, 15-Luke 10:29-37, 17
- You have read the “Safety Plan”. Sit in small groups and discuss what else you can include in “your safety plan”.
- Discuss your safety plans with your parents and ask for their guidance when you are planning an outing. “What should I do if…” Always tell your parents where you are going, with whom you are going, and the time that you will return so that they can find you if needed.
- Practice saying “No” and acting in an assertive way by responding to these situations listed below:
 - You are walking home from school and a car with a young man pulls up and asks you for directions. How can you respond to this situation?
 - You are babysitting for your younger sister and brother and the doorbell rings. How would you respond to this?
 - You answer the telephone and you do not recognize the voice on the phone. The person says very unkind words to you. What will you do?
 - You and your friend are shopping at the mall and a stranger is following you, asking you questions. How would you respond to this situation?
 - You are walking home with a friend. A young person that you do not know offers you a ride. How would you respond to this situation?

Conclusion

Jesus is the Truth and He wants us to know and follow Him. We can also know the truth about what is good and right through reason. Jesus wants us to have inner peace, joy and to be safe. He gave us the gifts and tools to make good choices, which involves having a safety plan.(to have a plan in case we are in danger). The plan should include precautions such as always traveling with a buddy, avoiding dangerous situations or circumstances that could lead to harmful situations or sin. If anyone treats you in a way that is inappropriate, or touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable or scared, or if you have been violated in any way, immediately speak with parents, grandparents, teachers, or an adult that you trust.

Excerpts adapted from the Diocese of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania