



Diocese of Joliet

Safe Environment for Children Touching Safety Instruction

INTRODUCTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL SESSIONS

GRADES 6-8 – VIDEO – “KATIE’S SECRET”

WELCOME

Welcome! Today we are going to talk about something very important: keeping yourself safe from sexual abuse. We in your school/religious education program and parish community want you to be safe because we care about you. God wants you to be safe because God made you and you deserve to be treated with care and respect.

Before we begin, let's pray for God to be with us today.

OPENING PRAYER

Have someone read aloud from a Bible: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Let us pray...(short silence)

God, you have made each of us in your image, temples of your Spirit,

And we know that each one of us is precious in your eyes.

We ask you to be here with us today

as we learn together how to protect ourselves.

Open our ears to hear what you wish us to know

Open our eyes to see what you wish to show us

Open our hearts to the possibilities of growth and understanding

that you wish us to experience today.

Help us always to look out not only for our own safety,

but for the safety of friends, family members

and those who are not able to help themselves because of disability or fear.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

INTRODUCTION TO THE VIDEO

God created human beings with bodies, and our primary way of experiencing the world is through our senses. Can you name the five senses?

The sense we are talking about today is touch. Touch is actually a good thing, most of the time. There are touches that are safe and welcome, such as hugs from people who love us; there are touches to keep you clean and healthy, such as those from a doctor or nurse. However, there are also touches that may be confusing, which may be hurtful or which may be abusive because the person who is touching you does not have the right to touch you in that way.

There have been studies that suggest that roughly 1 out of every 5 girls and 1 out of every 10 boys in America experience some form of sexual abuse. We hope this never happens to you or to anyone you love. But in case it does, we hope to help you

understand that you should never be afraid to say “no” to unsafe or unwanted touch or to tell someone if you are being touched in an unsafe or confusing way, even if it has gone on for some time. It is never too late to tell. We are going to watch a short video now called “Katie’s Secret.” Katie has a secret problem with touching – we will see how her teacher helps her to do what she needs to do to help herself. Let’s watch.

AFTER THE VIDEO

- How did this movie make you feel? (*Accept comments from a few of the students*).

Sexual abuse can be defined as “the use of a child for sexual purposes by an adult or older, more powerful person, including an older child.” It is a crime in all 50 states. This is what was happening to Katie. Her mother’s fiancé, Bill, was sexually abusing her.

When Katie’s teacher went into the bathroom to see what was wrong with Katie, did you notice that she told another student where she went? Very probably she left the door to the bathroom open, so no one would feel unsafe. Like all teachers, Katie’s teacher was trained to know never to be alone with a student behind a closed door that does not have a window.

- Why is this important?
- How aware are you about the need to protect yourself from unsafe situations?

Advanced questions For Grades 9-12:

- What, if anything, have you heard about how adults are being trained in schools and the Church to protect children and youth from sexual abuse?
- Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not?

At the end of the movie Katie was in her school principal’s office reporting her abuse to her mother and to an officer from what the State of Illinois calls DCFS – Department of Children and Family Services. Katie will be getting help, and Bill’s abuse of her is about to stop, because Bill will be arrested for the sexual abuse of a minor.

- Why do you think it was so difficult for Katie to tell someone?
- Why do you think she changed her mind at the end of the movie?

Advanced questions For Grades 9-12:

- Have you or anyone you know ever been involved with a support group?
- Do you think there is value in being able to talk with others who have had similar experiences?
- How is the ability to share feelings about a life experience related to how a Catholic faith community cares for its members?

As I said earlier, there are ways we can be touched that are safe and good – like hugs from friends or family, or the touch of a doctor or nurse to keep us healthy. Then, there

are touches that are unsafe or confusing. These include touches on a person's private body parts. These are the parts covered by your bathing suit.

- Did you know that until you are over 18, these are parts of the body that no one else should touch except to keep you clean and healthy?
- If someone tries to touch your private body parts or asks you to touch theirs, you should say "no" or words that mean "no". What are some words you can use to say "no" (*accept responses from students*).
- If someone touched or tried to touch you in a way that made you uncomfortable or confused, would you tell someone you trust?
- Now, take some paper and think of some people you think you could tell. Write that list down. (*This may be done as group work. Allow 5 minutes for listing, then ask students to share their responses.*)

You can take charge of your own personal safety. You just need to have a plan. Here are some things you can do to help yourself stay safe:

When you are out:

- Know your phone number and area code.
- If you don't have a cell phone, carry money for emergency phone calls and know how to use a pay phone.
- Evaluate your walking routes for safety.

If someone tries to touch you in an unsafe or unwanted way:

- Say "no" or words that mean "no."
- Yell, kick, make a scene.
- Walk or run away.
- Be "gross" – pretend to be sick, spit, burp, throw up or tell them you have lice.
- Distract them: tell them someone is coming, that you have to leave, change the subject, or, if you are watching TV, change the channel.
- Use "borrowed protection" – "My (mom, dad, or teacher) says you're not supposed to do that".

If someone has tried to touch or has touched you:

- Don't keep secrets about touching.
- Always tell about a touching problem even if it has gone on for a long time.
- Keep telling until someone believes you.

- Do you think you know what to do now if someone tries to touch you inappropriately?
- What have you learned today that was new or surprising?
- What are some things you will be doing differently now to stay safe?

Let us end our time together in prayer. (Use Closing Prayer For Grades 6-12)

(Portions of this lesson have been adapted, with permission, from materials provided by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, based on the NCEA program

FAITH, FAMILY AND FRIENDS....

and from tips from the Committee for Children website: www.cfchildren.org/parents/parenttips/)

CLOSING PRAYER

Safe Environment Instruction - Grades 6-12

Begin with a recording of appropriate youth-friendly music – suggestions:

- “Be Not Afraid” – recommend Jesse Manibusan youth version – from *Spirit & Song by Request* (or *Spirit & Song* full set), Oregon Catholic Press
- “You Are Mine” – David Haas
- from *God is My Rock* (World Library): “Strength For The Journey”, John Michael Poirer; “I Survive”, John Angiotti; or “You Hear Me” Paul Tate & Paul Berrell
- from *Turn My Heart*, Marty Haugen (GIA) “Healer of Our Every Ill Litany” or “Bambelela/Never Give Up”

Copy and distribute prayer below so all can read out loud together:

(or order the prayer card, publication No. 5-506 by calling 1-800-235-8722)

Prayer for Healing Victims of Abuse

God of endless love,
Ever caring, ever strong,
Always present, always just:
You gave us your only Son
To save us by the blood of his cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace
Join to your own suffering
The pain of all who have been hurt
In body, mind and spirit
By those who betrayed the trust placed in them.

Hear our cries as we agonize
Over the harm done to our brothers and sisters.
Breathe wisdom into our prayers,
Soothe restless hearts with hope,
Steady shaken spirits with faith:
Show us the way to justice and wholeness,
Enlightened by truth and enfolded in your mercy.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,
Heal your people’s wounds
And transform our brokenness.
Grant us courage and wisdom, humility and grace,
So that we may act with justice
And find peace in you.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.