

SAFE ENVIRONMENT LESSON PLAN

“ABUSE”

Grade: High School

OBJECTIVES

The High School student will

1. Define abuse (physical, emotional, sexual).
2. Recite NO, GO, TELL as an action plan if being abused.
3. List warning signs of a possible predator.
4. Explain how to avoid potential dangerous situations.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Student needs:

- Pencil
- Notebook

Teacher needs:

- Chart paper
- Permanent marker
- Definitions of abuse
- Warning signs of potential predators
- Myths and facts about abuse
- Assessment materials
 - Warning Signs of Predators
 - True and False: Abuse

CONTENT

UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND ABUSE

No relationship is perfect. All relationships are between two human beings, and therefore none of us are perfect. All of us struggle daily to become better, more holy versions of ourselves. We are all flawed human beings because we are born with original sin. I am sure that we all remember the story in the Book of Genesis of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Our communion with God at that time was wounded, and as a result we are all affected by original sin and need restoration. Even though we are all created in the perfect image and likeness of God, each of us also has the gift of free will, which allows us to make decisions that sometimes draw us farther away from God.

Because we are imperfect human beings, we are sinners. Sometimes we have a tendency to use others. We look for ways someone can fulfill some need or desire we have. We see relationships that are not based on respect, trust, and honest communication. We see relationships that are grounded in deceit, pain, abuse, lies and a lack of respect. We may have experienced these ourselves or seen it in our own families and neighborhoods. Unfortunately, too many of us have seen or felt the effects of abuse.

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We are going to take some time to learn about what abuse is, what forms it can take, and what to do if we are in an abusive dating relationship. We will learn about the topic of abuse so that we can help ourselves and others recognize the warning signs and know how to get out of this kind of destructive relationship if we see the signs.

First, I want you to think about the word “abuse.” What does the word mean to you? (Have students brainstorm their ideas on paper and then ask them to share with the class.) There are many forms of abuse: physical, emotional, and sexual. Let’s briefly look at what each of these means. (Show definitions of abuse and read through together.)

Abuse of any kind is NEVER okay. If you are being abused in any relationship, you are not alone. The Church is here to help you. You are worth so much more than the way you are being treated. Let us help you to be free from the abuse. When we put ourselves in the victim's shoes, we feel pain, hurt, discouragement, and isolation. Because perpetrating abuse is such a serious sin against the dignity of another human person, there are serious consequences to those who abuse others. Besides breaking the city or state law, someone who abuses another person is breaking the moral law of God. Abuse is a sin against God's law because it robs the other person of their dignity. Everyone has a duty under God's law to respect and care for others. By abusing someone, they are going against everything that God asks of us. It is then their responsibility, as an offender, to seek forgiveness from God for their sins, to seek forgiveness from those they have hurt, and to seek forgiveness from the community that has been harmed from this abuse.

NO, GO, TELL SAFETY RULES

Just as we learn STOP, DROP, and ROLL as a slogan for fire safety, we will use the phrase, NO, GO, TELL to recall personal safety rules. We are going to review these rules of what to do if you are being abused. This simple action plan is called NO, GO, TELL.

1. NO – We say, “NO, I don't like that!” in a loud, assertive voice and use body language to signal “NO.” Remember that being assertive means saying exactly what you mean directly and confidently. Body language may be stepping back from the person, putting up your hands, or crossing your arms. When we say “NO!” loudly, it is because we respect ourselves and want to stay safe.
2. GO – After we yell, “NO, I don't like that” or some other assertive phrase, the next step is to GO away from the person. This means removing yourself from the physical environment you are in with that person. This may mean leaving a party, a friend's house, a classroom, or wherever you are with the person who is abusing you.
3. TELL – The last step is telling a trusted adult about what happened. When you TELL a trusted adult what happened, you are doing the right thing. God put these adults in

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your life to keep you safe, and they need to know if someone has made you feel uncomfortable. If you are being abused in any way, it is not your fault and that person deserves to have repercussions for his or her actions. Even if you didn't try to stop an abuser from touching you or doing certain sexual acts with you, it is not your fault. Even if you are told that you asked for it, it is not your fault. It is important that you do not keep secrets about abuse even if someone has made you promise not to tell. When you tell a trusted adult, they need to believe you and listen to you. If they don't believe you, go tell another adult.

WARNING SIGNS OF POTENTIAL PREDATORS

Another important aspect of our personal safety rules is to be aware of the potential tricks and lures predators use so that we are not led into their traps. It is important to be aware of your surroundings. Think of it like preparing to go on a hike. You would want to be prepared for any pitfalls you may encounter to avoid them and stay safe. You might find out if there are any dangerous animals or poisonous plants in the area or check to see what the weather will be like. You could find out if there were any dangerous rockslides. These are all pitfalls you would typically never encounter, but it is good to know about them just in case to help you stay safe. Knowing the possible tricks and traps that a sexual predator uses is a way to be prepared. Let's go through the list together to see what these potential warning signs are. (See attached list.)

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT ABUSE

A few tactics used by the Devil to lure us into sin is to make us fearful, to confuse us, or to keep the sin hidden. Frequently, all of these things will happen with the sin of abuse. Often, if someone is in an abusive situation, the victim believes that they cannot get out. They may feel trapped. They may see their abuser daily. They may not feel that there is anywhere else they can go. They may even think they deserve the abuse. They may think that because of the way they dressed, they were asking for the abuse. They may not have said no to the advances. None of these ideas are true even though the abuser may try to feed the victim these lies so that they will not get into trouble for being abusive.

Let's get the facts straight about abuse. We are going to dispel the five most common myths about abuse and bring the truth to light! (NOTE: These facts relate primarily to sexual abuse. Some may or may not be pertinent to other forms of abuse.)

Myth: Abusers are usually strangers whom you do not know.

Fact: Most abusers are someone that you know, are familiar with, trust, or have seen many times before.

Potential predators work hard to look like everyone else, gain your trust and/or the trust of

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your family, They will work or volunteer in a role that allows them to be around children or young adults.

Myth: Most abuse is reported right away.

Fact: Most abuse goes unreported and remains hidden for many reasons.

Some victims do not report abuse because they are afraid that they will get hurt again, are worried that no one will believe them, or that they will be blamed for what happened to them. The victim may also feel ashamed, embarrassed or guilty.

Myth: Typical sex offenders are old, white men.

Fact: There is no “typical” stereotype for a sex offender.

Sex offenders can be old or young. A sex offender could be someone your own age. It could be a man or a woman, any race, any ethnicity, any age.

Myth: Sex abuse typically happens when a shady van drives by and someone inside grabs a young person off the street, like on TV shows.

Fact: Most abuse is committed by someone you know, not a snatch and grab situation.

Even though TV shows and movies portray abuse as something that happens after a snatch and grab situation, in reality, this happens very rarely. Sex abuse happens most often in a familiar situation with someone you know or have seen often. Sometimes the abuser is a family member or close family friend.

Myth: If you dress immodestly and provocatively, you are asking to be abused.

Fact: Abuse is NEVER your fault!

Many sexual abusers will tell their victims that they were “asking for it” by the way they were dressed. They will try to convince the victim that he or she never said no, and therefore it was not abuse. They will try to convince the victim that they should feel guilty or dirty for what they did. This fact needs to be loud and clear – Abuse is NEVER the victim's fault! No matter what led up to the abuse, you are not to blame.

WHAT CAN WE DO – TURNING BACK TO AUTHENTIC MAN AND WOMAN

What can we do to combat the problem of abuse? The answer lies in returning to our characteristics of authentic manhood and authentic womanhood – the way that God designed us. In both authentic man and woman, we are called to respect the gift of the other person, as someone with God-given dignity. We are called to be selfless and respect others, not look at how others can be of use to us.

The way you exist in the world, as authentic man or authentic woman, is exceptionally important. Remember that you were placed in this world, at this time, with this body and

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soul of yours, as a man or woman, for a specific reason. God created you this way and you will be fully alive and fully yourself when you embrace your authentic design and live out God's will for your life.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, help me to accept and receive my sexuality as a gift from you. Grant me the grace to resist the many lies that distort this divine gift and help me to live my sexuality according to the truth of self-giving love.

Grant me purity of heart so that I might see the image of your glory in the beauty of others, and one day see you face to face. Amen.

Prayer provided by www.ascensionpress.com

ASSESSMENT

Ask student to complete:

- Warning Signs of Predators (Resource A)
- True and False: Abuse (Resource B)

TEACHER RESOURCES COVER PAGE

- Definitions of abuse
- Warning signs of potential predators
- Myths and facts about abuse

Examples of Abuse

Physical Abuse: An action that causes a physical injury that was not an accident. This includes beatings, serious or unexplained bruises, burning someone, welts, breaking bones, scars, causing internal injuries, starving or denying water, and exposure to extreme heat or cold

Emotional Abuse: Action or words that seek to harm or destroy the emotional development and well-being of another, especially his/her sense of confidence, personal worth and dignity. Behaviors include:

- Constant criticism
- Rejection and isolation
- Withholding physical affection, support, and guidance

Sexual abuse: Exploiting children through sexual situations that are dangerous and hurtful.

- Non touching sexual abuse
 - Indecent exposure
 - Exposing children to pornographic material
- Touching sexual abuse
 - fondling
 - rape/sexual intercourse
 - making a child touch an adult's sexual organs
- Sexual exploitation - using children to film, photograph, or model pornography
- Coerced/pressured sex

Warning Signs of Potential Predators

Avoid adults who seek to do the following:

- Always wants to be alone with you
- Are more excited to be with you than other adults
- Give you gifts, especially in secret
- Give you contact that is outside your comfort zone (unwanted hugs, extended touching of shoulders or arms, body rubs, etc.)
- Try to wrestle or tickle you
- Use bad language or tell inappropriate jokes
- Show you pornography
- Allow you to engage in behavior your parents wouldn't allow (drinking or drugs)
- Think that the rules don't apply to them

Myths and Facts about Abuse

Myth: Abusers are usually strangers whom you do not know.

Fact: Most abusers are someone that you know, are familiar with, trust, or have seen many times before.

Potential predators work hard to look like everyone else, gain your trust and/or the trust of your family. They will work/volunteer in a role that allows them to be in the company of children or young adults.

Myth: Most abuse is reported right away.

Fact: Most abuse goes unreported and remains hidden for many reasons.

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ASSESSMENT RESOURCE COVER PAGE

- Warning Signs of Predators
(Resource A)
- True and False: Dating
Violence (Resource B)

Name _____

Warning Signs of Predators

Preventing abuse starts with recognizing the warning signs of potential predators. Use the space below to list and explain 5 of these warning signs.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Name _____

True or False: Dating Violence

Circle TRUE or FALSE for each statement. If FALSE, explain a truth that applies to that statement.

Most abuse goes unreported and remains hidden for many reasons.	T or F
If false...	
Abusers are usually strangers whom you do not know.	T or F
If false...	
Abuse is NEVER your fault!	T or F
If false...	
Sex abuse typically happens when a shady van drives by and someone swipes a young person off the street, like on TV shows.	T or F
If false...	
Typical sex offenders are old, white men.	T or F
If false...	