

# SAFE ENVIRONMENT LESSON PLAN

## “EXPLOITATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT”

**Grade: High School**

### OBJECTIVES

The High School student will:

1. List characteristics of a safe, healthy environment.
2. Discuss ways to keep ourselves and others healthy.
3. Define exploitation and victimization and describe how to combat/prevent them.
4. Contrast authentic and counterfeit views of masculinity and femininity.
5. Distinguish sexual harassment from flirting.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Student needs:

- Pencil
- Notebook

Teacher needs:

- Chart paper
- Permanent marker
- List of ways we respect ourselves and others
- Definition of exploitation
- Authentic vs. Counterfeit chart
- Definition of victimization
- Sexual harassment vs. Flirting chart
- Authentic vs. Counterfeit chart with action steps
- Assessment materials
  - Self reflection on exploitation
  - Authentic and counterfeit examples within the media
  - Sexual harassment and Flirting Matching

### CONTENT

#### CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

We all know that the environments where we live, work, study, and play in affect who we are, how we act, how productive we are, how comfortable we are, etc. Everyone can agree that the best environments are the ones that are safe and healthy. But what is a safe environment? Take a minute and jot down your ideas about what a safe, healthy environment looks and feels like. (Have the students write down their ideas and then share some examples with the class.) A healthy, safe environment is one that honors the dignity and worth of all human beings and helps them to grow and flourish spiritually, physically, emotionally, and intellectually.

Within a healthy, safe environment, each of us respects ourselves and others, as created in

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the image and likeness of God. We should also be able to make use of the gifts God has given us, and the gifts God has given to others. When we are in a safe environment, we will grow in a greater understanding of ourselves, what we were created for, and the meaning of our relationship with God and others. We develop a greater awareness of our dignity and worth when we are in a safe environment. As we grow in a deeper understanding of our dignity and worth, we are more likely to respect ourselves and others.

How does one show respect for their health and safety and the health and safety of others? Demonstrating respect for ourselves and others is evident in many ways:

- Respect through our words: no cursing/foul language; refraining from gossiping, talking behind someone's back and lying.
- Respect through our bodies: dressing modestly; dressing up for Sunday Mass; eating well and exercising; avoiding using drugs, excessive piercings or tattoos, and engaging in intentional sexual stimulation or activity outside of marriage; refusing to allow others to exploit us or our bodies; refusing to engage in any activity that would exploit another.
- Respect through our actions: refrain from physically hurting ourselves or others, fighting, cheating and stealing.

#### **EXPLOITATION & COUNTERFEIT MESSAGES**

I want to focus on two of those examples specifically: ***Refusing to allow others to exploit us or our bodies***, and ***Refusing to engage in any activity that would exploit another***.

Let's first talk about what exploitation means. (Show definition of exploitation.)

Exploitation is a negative relationship based on selfishness and lack of respect for the other person. Some level of exploitation is present in most relationships due to our human weakness. Exploiting others is a temptation toward selfishness which exists because of original sin. Going back to the book of Genesis and the story of Adam and Eve in the garden, our original communion with God was breached. Because of this, we are all affected by original sin and are in need of restoration. The world we live in is full of sin, and the culture continually tries to sell us counterfeit messages in terms of how we should live, act, dress, etc.

Let's look at what authentic masculinity and femininity look like (God's design for men and women) and contrast that with the counterfeit messages that we receive from our culture and the media. (Display the authentic/counterfeit chart and go through the men's points first and then the women's.)

The counterfeit message of man's tendency to want to selfishly sexually conquer a woman

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creates an unsafe environment where a woman is victimized. Victimization is unwanted exposure to sexual content (visual, written, verbal). This includes being employed, enticed, persuaded, or forced into engaging in sexual activity or with real content. The woman who is victimized finds herself in a dangerous situation of sexual abuse. The victimization of women is not just something that is happening in real world relationships – it is also happening millions of times over through pornography. Pornography is not a victimless crime.

The counterfeit message that a woman's tendency is to become obsessed with having the perfect sex appeal, to reject their bodies as they are and strive after an artificial beauty defined by society. Exploitation leads many women into the false world of porn. Women in the pornography industry live a life of frequent sexual abuse, exploitation, and victimization – It is not a career, a paycheck, or a harmless video. Most women in pornography get lured in and trapped. They do not freely choose that lifestyle and feel they cannot escape it.

When anyone watches porn, they are choosing to exploit and re-exploit someone's daughter. Because content posted online (pictures, videos, conversations) can be saved and accessed by an indeterminable number of people, the exploitation of these women may never end.

#### **SEXUAL HARRASSMENT**

Another form of exploitation that sadly is very common and misunderstood is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is NOT flirting or an appropriate way of expressing attention or sexual attraction. Sexual harassment is defined as asking for sex as a condition of school or work decisions, and "creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or educational environment". Sexual harassment is about power, either getting it or maintaining it. The harasser believes that they have or should have an advantage over the victim in some way. The harasser either is or wants to be stronger, bigger, older, more popular, and/or more important. It is negative, intimidating, and demeaning to the victim.

The first kind of harassment would include, for example, a teacher conditioning a grade based on a student having sex with them. The second kind ("hostile environment harassment") has some overlap with bullying, and would include repeated or severe unwelcome behavior, like sexual remarks or jokes, asking for sex, displaying sexual images, degrading remarks about a person's appearance or sex, and remarks that are insulting or demeaning to homosexual persons.

Sexual harassment is not limited to behavior by men against women, but can be committed by women against men and between members of the same sex. Our schools and programs

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have an obligation to prevent it, and to respond appropriately when it happens.

Sexual harassment can be confusing because some people try and dismiss it as “harmless flirting.” Unfortunately, many of the behaviors associated with sexual harassment (suggestive comments, inappropriate touches, requesting sexual favors, etc.) are considered “normal” in the world we live in. Because our society accepts many of these behaviors as normal, the victim of sexual harassment may have a difficult time determining whether the behavior was sexual harassment or flirting. Let’s look at a chart contrasting sexual harassment with flirting to get some clarity. (Display and read through the sexual harassment vs. flirting chart. After going through the chart, ask if anyone needs clarification or has questions about anything listed.)

#### **PROTECTION FROM ABUSE**

Abuse and harassment of any type is NEVER ok. Because they are such serious sins against the dignity of each human person, there are serious consequences for those who are harassing or abusing others. There are laws in the city and state that we live in to protect us from any form of abuse or harassment. If someone breaks these laws, there are legal consequences for their actions. These consequences could be losing a job, paying fines or serving time in jail.

To protect each of us from abuse, there are many people who are required by law to report suspicions of abuse of minors to law enforcement. If any of these people suspect that you are being abused in any way by a family member, friend, relative, boyfriend or girlfriend, neighbor, et al. they MUST report their suspicions. The people who are required to report suspected abuse are: Medical professionals (doctors, nurses, EMTs, paramedics), school teachers and staff, counselors, childcare workers, police and law enforcement, and clergy. They are required to report abuse for your protection.

Often, if someone is in an abusive situation, the victim cannot get out. They may feel trapped. They may love the person who is hurting them. They may not believe there is anywhere else they can go. They may think that they deserve the abuse. None of these ideas are true although the abuser may try to convince the victim of these lies so that they will not get into trouble for being abusive. Abuse is never the fault of the victim – Everyone deserves to be treated with love and respect which is why it is so important for all of us to report suspected abuse if we think it is happening.

In addition to breaking the law, someone who abuses another person is breaking the moral law of God. Harassment and abuse are sins against God’s law because they rob the other person of their dignity. Everyone has a duty under God’s law to respect and care for others,

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and 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 by their abuse.

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

What can we do to combat the problem of exploitation, victimization, and harassment? The answer lies in returning to our characteristics of authentic manhood and authentic womanhood – the way God designed us. Let’s revisit our chart and brainstorm some functional ways that we can live these out and keep ourselves and others safe. (Give the students time to write down their own thoughts and then share some as a class.)

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 soul of yours, as a man or a woman, for a specific reason. In the entirety of ALL historical existence, God uniquely created you, and ONLY you, this way. 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**

God of love, You have made each of us a temple of the Holy Spirit. We know that we are precious in Your eyes. Be with us today- and each day. Open our ears to hear Your voice. Open our eyes to see what You wish to show us. Open our hearts to Your unending love. Help us to quiet the noise in our lives so that we may better hear Your words to us. Watch over us and help us every day, so that we might live out Your will for our lives. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

#### **ASSESSMENT**

Ask student to complete:

- Self-reflection on exploitation (Resource A)
- Authentic and counterfeit examples within the media (Resource B)
- Sexual Harassment and Flirting Matching (Resource C)

# TEACHER RESOURCES COVER PAGE

- Definition of exploitation
- Authentic vs. Counterfeit chart
- Definition of victimization
- Sexual Harassment vs. Flirting chart
- Authentic vs. Counterfeit chart with action steps

# Exploitation:

Exploitation is a negative relationship based on selfishness and lack of respect for the other person.

# Authentic vs. Counterfeit

	<b>Authentic</b>	<b>Counterfeit</b>
<b>Man</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>CONQUER</u></b> – Master self and desires; Accept a challenge or mission</li> <li>• <b><u>PROTECT/PROVIDE</u></b> – Use our gifts for the good of others; Acts of service</li> <li>• <b><u>SACRIFICE</u></b> – Sacrificing for whom he loves; We see the witness in Christ</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>SEXUAL CONQUEST</u></b> – Conquer, objectify women; Use them for own gratification</li> <li>• <b><u>TURNING INWARD</u></b> – Serving ourselves and our desires; Greedy desires</li> <li>• <b><u>SELFISHNESS</u></b> – “What can I do to satisfy my needs and my desires?”; Using others to satisfy ourselves</li> </ul>
<b>Woman</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>NURTURES</u></b> – Cares for others; accepts fertility as a gift; bears life within her body</li> <li>• <b><u>RECEIVES</u></b> – She is worth serving; Strength of a man allows her to flourish as an equal; Receives a gift as she realizes she is a gift</li> <li>• <b><u>BEAUTY</u></b> – Created beautiful by the One whose image she bears; accepts her beauty as she is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>REJECTION OF FERTILITY</u></b> – Fear and rejection of the gift of fertility; rejects life within her body</li> <li>• <b><u>EQUALITY</u></b> – Seeks to become identical to man; No need to collaborate with man</li> <li>• <b><u>FALSE CONCEPT OF BEAUTY</u></b> – Becomes obsessed with perfect, sexy body as society defines it</li> </ul>



# **Victimization:**

Unwanted exposure to sexual content (visual, written, verbal); being employed, enticed, persuaded, or forced into engaging in sexual activity or with explicit content

# Sexual Harassment vs. Flirting

<b>Sexual Harassment</b>	<b>Flirting</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One-sided</li><li>• Unwelcome</li><li>• Demands sex as a condition for work or school</li><li>• Creates a hostile environment</li><li>• Power-based</li><li>• Produces negative self-esteem</li><li>• Demeaning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reciprocal</li><li>• Feels attractive</li><li>• Is a compliment</li><li>• In control</li><li>• Equality</li><li>• Welcomed</li><li>• Open</li><li>• Flattering</li><li>• Happy</li><li>• Produces positive self-esteem</li></ul>

# Using Our Authentic Nature to Stay Safe

	<b>Authentic</b>	<b>Ways to Stay Safe</b>
<b>Man</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><u>CONQUER</u></b> – Master self and desires; Accept a challenge or mission</li><li>• <b><u>PROTECT/PROVIDE</u></b> – Use our gifts for the good of others; Acts of service</li><li>• <b><u>SACRIFICE</u></b> – Sacrificing for whom he loves; We see the witness in Christ</li></ul>	
<b>Woman</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><u>NURTURES</u></b> – Cares for others; accepts fertility as a gift; bears life within her body</li><li>• <b><u>RECEIVES</u></b> – She is worth serving; Strength of a man allows her to flourish as an equal; Receives a gift as she realizes she is a gift</li><li>• <b><u>BEAUTY</u></b> – Created beautiful by the One whose image she bears; accepts her beauty as she is</li></ul>	

# ASSESSMENT RESOURCE COVER PAGE

- Self-reflection on exploitation (Resource A)
- Authentic and counterfeit examples within the media (Resource B)
- Sexual harassment and flirting matching (Resource C)



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Authentic and counterfeit examples within the media

Fill in the chart below with examples from your own life or the media that exemplify the characteristics described.

	Authentic	Examples for each	Counterfeit	Examples for each
<b>MAN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CONQUER</b> – Master self and desires; Accept a challenge or mission</li> <li>• <b>PROTECT/PROVIDE</b> – Use our gifts for the good of others; Acts of service</li> <li>• <b>SACRIFICE</b> – Sacrificing for whom he loves; We see the witness in Christ</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SEXUAL CONQUEST</b> – Conquer, objectify women; Use them for own gratification</li> <li>• <b>TURNING INWARD</b> – Serving ourselves and our desires; Greedy desires</li> <li>• <b>SELFISHNESS</b> – “What can I do to satisfy my needs and my desires?”; Uses others to satisfy our desires</li> </ul>	
<b>WOMAN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NURTURES</b> – Cares for others; accepts fertility as a gift; bears life within her body</li> <li>• <b>RECEIVES</b> – She is worth serving; Strength of a man allows her to flourish as an equal; Receives a gift as she realizes she is a gift</li> <li>• <b>BEAUTY</b> – Created beautiful by the One whose image she bears; accept her beauty as she is</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>REJECTION OF FERTILITY</b> – Fear and rejection of the gift of fertility; rejects life within her body</li> <li>• <b>EQUALITY</b> – Seeks to become identical to man; No need to collaborate with man</li> <li>• <b>FALSE CONCEPT OF BEAUTY</b> – Becomes obsessed with perfect, sexy body as society defines it</li> </ul>	

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Sexual Harassment and Flirting Matching

Put "SH" next to any description of sexual harassment and "F" next to any description of flirting.

Happy		Feels powerless	
Feels Attractive		Feels Unattractive	
Unwelcome		Is a compliment	
Reciprocal		In control	
Open		Equality	
Negative touching		Degrading	
Power-based		Welcomed	
Hostile Environment		Threatening	
Demeaning		Flattering	
Sad/angry		Negative self-esteem	
One-sided		Positive self-esteem	

# THE TRUTH AND BEAUTY OF OUR SEXUALITY

One of the great gifts of our Catholic faith is our positive and beautiful view of sexuality.

## **We are made for love**

We can't live without love. Every human person, made in the image and likeness of God, has been given a vocation to love. We are all drawn to relationships where we can experience genuine love -- friendships and romantic relationships, but ultimately in the vocation of marriage. We know this from our own hearts, which long for love.

## **The language of our bodies**

To break out of our loneliness, we have to listen to the language of our bodies, and to the meaning God has put there. Essentially, our bodies tell us that God has made us for the gift of ourselves in the communion of persons of marriage. This is called the "nuptial meaning of the body", and it's the starting point to living the truth and beauty of our sexuality.

## **Real sex and real relationships**

Our sexuality is designed to bring us into relationships in which we can truly love others, by giving ourselves to them. For most of us, we find this in marriage, when we give ourselves to our spouse fully, fruitfully, and forever. But we also see it in priesthood, religious life, friendship and parenthood. In these relationships, through the gift of ourselves, we find love and happiness and we bring it into the lives of others.

## **Use and misuse**

All too often, unfortunately, we don't live according to God's plan. Instead, we buy into the world's view of sex. We use others for our own pleasure, we manipulate others for our ends, or we deliberately sterilize our sexual acts. When we do this, we're not giving ourselves fully in life-giving love. That's surely not where God wants us to be, and we all suffer the consequences -- loneliness, frustration, and feeling used and empty.



## **Redeemed sex**

Fortunately, there's hope -- we're not stuck in the trap of use and misuse. Jesus Himself has redeemed us and our sexuality by speaking the truth about marriage, sex and love, and showing us God's plan for us. When He gave Himself fully and completely to His spouse -- to us -- on the cross, He freed us from our selfishness and showed us that we can also give ourselves to others in love. Thanks to Jesus, and with His help, we can live God's plan for us.

## **What must we do?**

We have to make sure that work to understand this positive and beautiful vision of our sexuality. This is the responsibility of all of us; our parents, our Church's programs, and especially ourselves to reinforce it and ensure that we can grow in an environment of safety and virtue and trust. To do this of course, we MUST embrace the gift ourselves.

When we approach it with prayer and an open heart, this teaching is liberating and transforming, and can lead us to truly live God's plan of life and love.

## **Want to learn more?**

The best way to do this is to learn more about our Church's teaching, particularly Pope John Paul's "theology of the body". Here are some suggestions:

[www.theologyofthebody.net](http://www.theologyofthebody.net)

Theology of the Body for Beginners, Christopher West (Ascension Press, 2004).

Good News About Sex and Marriage: Answers to Your Honest Questions about Catholic Teaching, Christopher West (Servant Publications, 2000)

Real Love: Answers Your Questions on Dating, Marriage and the Real Meaning of Sex, Mary Beth Bonacci (Ignatius Press, 1996).