

Parents, please share this information with your children between

11-16 YEARS OLD

Usually, sexual abuse of an adolescent or a teenager starts with boundary violations. An adult or older kid can push boundaries before the sexual activities even start.

It's possible that when an adult or older youth violates your boundaries that it could lead to sexual abuse.

Once someone has violated your boundaries you may feel like you have to have sexual contact with them even if you don't want to. You may feel like you owe them something. You may think you would get in just as much trouble as they would if you told. But it's not true. It's not your fault and there are adults who want to help you.

Physical Boundaries

Physical boundaries are where you draw lines about:

- Who can touch you
- How much they can touch you
- Where they can touch you

Physical Boundary Violations

- Touching too much.
- "Accidentally" touching in private areas.
- Wrestling or tickling too much.
- Holding you, an older kid, on the lap.
- Hugging too much or with too much body contact.

Emotional Boundaries

Emotional boundaries are where you draw the lines about:

- Who you share personal information with
- Who you talk to about your feelings, and
- Who you spend time with.

Emotional Boundary Violations

- Ridiculing the beliefs of your family
- Calling or E-mailing too much
- Giving too many gifts or secrets
- Acting too possessive

Behavioral Boundaries

Behavioral boundaries are where you draw the lines about:

- What you will or won't do
- What set of rules you follow

Behavioral Boundary Violations

- Talking about sexual activities
- Showing you pornography
- Giving you alcohol and drugs
- Getting you to lie or keep secrets



Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

As you know, since 2002 the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops has required each Diocese to implement a Safe Environment program. The Diocese of Fort Worth has met this requirement by striving to create a culture of safety for children and youth throughout our parishes, schools, and ministries. Through the efforts of our priests, religious, employees, and volunteers, we have raised awareness about child abuse prevention, personal boundaries, and the standards of the Diocesan Code of Conduct. Over 30,000 members of our diocese have been trained in our Safe Environment program due to the efforts of our trainers in this ministry. I am grateful to them for all they have done to promote this culture of safety.

As members of the Body of Christ, we are responsible to inform members of our community about the expectation to treat others with dignity and respect at all times as a reflection of our Faith. This year we implemented a curriculum in Catholic Schools and Religious Education and Youth ministries that is directed to the children and youth. Parents, in particular, have a social and moral duty to teach their children about the world we live in, and provide them with the knowledge and skills to thrive and grow in Faith and life.

Unfortunately, we live in a time and place where children are at risk for mistreatment from those who would take advantage of their innocence. This brochure presents a brief outline of concepts that children and teens should know and understand. Please take time to review this information, and consider prayerfully how you might discuss these topics with your children.

While sharing this information with our children is important, we are ultimately obligated to ensure safe boundaries are maintained at all times. Accordingly, we need to work hard together to keep children and youth safe through our vigilant awareness of their environment and the actions of ourselves and others in their charge.

I am asking each of you to continue promoting the culture of safety we have worked so hard to grow in all of our diocesan ministries, and thank you for all you have done so far in this vital effort.

Yours in Christ,

Kevin W. Vann

Most Rev. Kevin W. Vann, JCD, DD
Bishop of Fort Worth

Internet SAFETY



1. Talk to your child about Internet safety and establish family rules about using the Internet.
2. Monitor your child's Internet use. Know who he or she talks to online and what they talk about.
3. Periodically ask your child if he has received any inappropriate E-mails or pop-ups and prepare how you will respond.
4. Teach your children about physical, emotional, and behavioral boundaries. Help them set "online" boundaries.

TO REPORT sexual abuse or neglect, CALL: 1-800-252-5400 Texas Department of Family Protective Services (Child Protective Services)

VICTIM ASSISTANCE Ministry

If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct by anyone who serves the church, call: Judy Locke, Victim Assistance Coordinator, 817-560-2452, ext. 201

Or CALL the Sexual Abuse Hotline 817-560-2452, ext.900

Or CALL The Catholic Center at 817-560-2452, ext. 102 and ask for the Chancellor/Moderator of the Curia
Very Rev. E. James Hart

IMPORTANT NUMBERS to share with your children:

Emergency: _____

Police: _____

Family Contact: _____

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Ruth Smith, *Director / Child & Youth Protection Office*
817-560-2452, ext. 180

The content of this brochure is based on Praesidium, Inc.'s program entitled "Called To Protect."

A Parent's Guide: Promoting a CULTURE of SAFETY



Recognize
Respond
Refer



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH



PROMOTING A CULTURE OF SAFETY

Child sexual abuse is when someone older or more powerful involves a child or adolescent in sexual activity. The activity can be anything of a sexual nature, such as:

- inappropriate hugging or kissing
- talking “dirty” about sexuality
- playing sexually oriented games
- showing pornography
- taking nude photos

Why should I teach my child about sexual abuse?

Research shows that child sexual abuse is alarmingly common. Before the age of 18, one in four girls and one in eight boys will be sexually abused. But abuse doesn't have to happen.

Child molesters count on children not knowing about their bodies. They count on children not knowing the names of their body parts or the rules about their bodies. They count on children not knowing about sexual abuse. Teaching the right information to your children when they are young helps them recognize when something isn't right or when someone may be taking advantage of them or doing something illegal.



As a parent, you are the primary protector of your children. Their safety is up to you. But when you teach your children the information in this handout, they can help you keep them safe.

Parents, please share this information with your children between 3-10 YEARS OLD

The names of his or her body parts

Number one, your child needs to know the names of his body parts.

Your child needs to know the names of his body parts so he has the words to tell you if something is wrong.

Teaching Tips

When you start teaching your child names of body parts like eyes, ears, nose, elbows, and knees, include private parts like breast, bottom, penis, and vagina. Most experts agree that children should learn the anatomically correct names of their body parts.

Don't worry that your child will be uncomfortable talking about this topic. Even if he is (or you are) this is a perfect time to break the ice—before there's a problem! Just knowing that it's okay to talk about private parts with his parents is a big step in the right direction for your child.

Talking with your children when they are young helps keep the lines of communication open as they get older.

Rules about his or her body

Children understand the idea of rules. They know there are rules about how to behave at the dinner table, about how to play with other children, and about following instructions from their parents.

When you teach your children these rules, just add rules about their bodies.

What to do if someone tries to break the rules about his or her body

Number three, your child needs to know what to do if someone breaks the rules about his body.

Teaching Tips

Teach your child early on that if someone tries to break the rules about his body, he should tell you right away. Let him know that he will not get in trouble for telling you and that you are proud of him for following the rules about his body. You should also teach him that if someone tries to break the rules about his body, he can tell that person to stop.

Reinforcing Tips

Every once in a while, remind your child about the rules. For example, ask him to tell you a rule about his body. Or ask him if anyone has ever touched his private parts, told him to keep a secret from you, or tried to get him to do something he wasn't supposed to do. This accomplishes two things: It teaches your child he can talk to you about anything, and it reminds him that he should tell you if something has happened.

Teaching Tips

Teaching children rules about their bodies can be very natural. For example, we teach children a rule about their eyes: Be careful not to poke them. We teach children a rule about their ears: Don't stick objects in them. And we teach them to keep their bodies clean by taking baths.

In the same way, we also can teach them rules about their private parts—for example, don't touch them in front of other people and don't let other people touch them unless Mommy or Daddy knows about it.

And there are other important rules your child should know. Teach her that she should not touch other children's private parts or use bad words to describe her own private parts.

She should also know to tell you if someone asks her to keep secrets from you, tries to get her to do things she isn't supposed to do, scares her, or makes her feel uncomfortable.

Reinforcing Tips

Reinforce the rules by bringing them up occasionally, at convenient times, like during baths or at bedtime. With older children, you can casually mention the rules, perhaps while taking your child to school or playing a board game. By reminding your children about the rules, you let your children know their bodies are valuable gifts, that you are there to listen, and that they can talk to you about their bodies.

Another way to reinforce the rules is by modeling them yourself. For example, if your child touches your private parts, gently remind her of the rule that other people are not allowed to touch your private parts.

Sharing information can help your CHILD STAY SAFE

Talk about sexual abuse the same way you talk about other safety issues, like crossing the street or using scissors properly. Take advantage of convenient opportunities—for example, if you see something about safety in a children's book you're reading.

Remember to use a calm tone of voice and don't act secretive or frightened. Ultimately, how much you teach your child depends on your child's age and what she is ready to learn. You'll have to decide based on your own child's development. And of course, the language and examples you use will be different for a 3-year-old than for a 9-year-old. The important thing is that you teach your child that she can talk to you about anything. You'll want to bring up the topic many times, just like you do any other safety lesson, because you can't teach everything at once.

What if my child discloses abuse?

If your child tells you that someone has broken the rules about his body or sexually abused him your reaction will make a big difference. Follow these five guidelines:

1 Stay calm.

Staying calm at a time like this will be very difficult for you, but your reaction will affect how your child responds. Try not to raise your voice or cry.

2 Listen.

Listen carefully to what your child tells you. Your child will be scared and may not give you many details. Ask questions like: “Can you tell me more about it?” “What did the person do?” “When did this happen?” or “How many times did this happen?”

3 Comfort your child.

Let your child know that you love him very much and that he has done nothing wrong. A big hug can work wonders. Don't ask your child why he didn't tell you sooner—that will just make him feel guilty.

4 Don't threaten or criticize the person who committed the abuse.

Although this is a natural response, avoid criticizing the person your child has identified as the abuser. Chances are, your child knows the person well and may even care very much for the person.

5 Contact the authorities.

Once you have learned all you can from your child, you should immediately contact the police or child protective services. Be sure to keep your child away from the person involved.