



Safe Environment Education

1st Grade

"He Loves, He Hopes, He Waits" -St. Maria Goretti



Healthy Boundaries

It is good for 1st graders to understand their own comfort levels. Conversations with your children could include making them aware that they can say no to an adult if they do not like what the adult is doing. Giving children the words and the encouragement to speak when they are uncomfortable is very important. For example, "please stop. I don't like that."

What are some words that you could use when you feel uncomfortable?

How can you say no to an adult that is doing something you do not like?

Communication

Those that groom kids for abuse will use secrets to isolate and manipulate kids. It is best for parents to have discussions with their kids about what secrets are. Building up a relationship where kids understand that secrets between just two people are not good, and that parents should be able to be part of a secret with others.

What are secrets? Who should know secrets that are told?

What should you do if an adult wants you to keep a secret?

Technology

Early childhood exposures to explicit content are uniquely traumatizing to young children. Some go as far as calling them "adverse childhood experiences," which increases the likelihood of a child having certain negative outcomes as an adult. Your router is the most important digital device for preventing these early exposures. A good router with solid parental controls prevents harmful content from being accessed either intentionally or accidentally. If you're unsure what to do with the router in your home, then read our blog post, "The Ultimate Guide to Understanding Routers" at protectyoungeyes.com.

If you see something scary or weird online, you'll never be in trouble if you tell me. Sound good?

Let's practice. I want you to pretend you see something online that bothers you. What would you do? (Put it down! Tell someone!)

Body Awareness

Children need to have awareness of their bodies. It's important to have discussions with them about appropriate uses of their body, and what is appropriate touch. Along with respecting their own bodies, they need to be respectful of other people and their bodies.

How can we respect our own bodies? How about other people's bodies?

What can you do if someone touches you in a way you don't like?

Theology of the Body

The human body bore in itself, in the mystery of creation, an unquestionable sign of the image of God.



Parent Resources



Ninety percent of abuse victims are abused by someone they know. This may be a peer, a relative, a neighbor, a teacher. Sixty percent are acquaintances, teachers, neighbors or community leaders. Thirty percent are by immediate or extended family members. Only ten percent are by strangers. Many victims are concerned their parents will not believe them, especially if it is someone close to the family or in authority. Talking about these issues with your kids will make it much easier for them to approach you if something is not right.

What are signs you might see that indicate your child might be being abused?

- Becoming more reserved around others
- Not wanting to be around someone they used to feel comfortable with
- Hiding themselves from you, becoming more secretive
- Having fits or frustration or anger that come out (outside of their normal personality)

There are things you can do if you suspect that your child is being abused. The first is to have a conversation with your child. Make sure they know they can tell you anything without getting in trouble. Ask them if there is anything that has happened that has them concerned. Reassure them that they are loved and will continue to be loved by you.

We are here to help you. Beyond Protect Young Eyes, you can find information at protect.diokzoo.org/gorettiproject. Along with this sheet as a guide to talk with your kids, your parish can give you additional lessons to work with your students.

If you suspect that your child or any other child is being abused contact:
Michigan Department of Human Services:
Child and adult protective services intake number:
855-444-3911

Sources:

Statistics on resource page: www.d2l.org

Technology: Chris McKenna @ Protect Young Eyes

Body Awareness and Boundaries: Amy McNamara, LCSW; AM Counseling Services, PLLC

Top reasons for children disclosing their abuse are: access to someone they trust, realizing it is not normal, wanting something to be done, expecting to be believed, and being asked. All of these are easier when parents have open communication with their children about these topics. Children that disclose within a month are less likely to have long-term psychological affects

Red flags can be noticed in many different areas. At school or church you may see adults who are only talking with the children and ignore the parents. You don't might also find adults who are buying lots of gifts for your child. Sometimes they may find ways to be alone with your child. They may also give compliments to your child and ignore others. If you see any of these red flags please bring this to the attention of their supervisor.

Technology can be a difficult part of our world to navigate. Even if we grew up with lots of technology, it is now changing at a very rapid pace. As parents you need to be aware of what is out there and how to address the different concerns and pitfalls of these different technologies. This is why we have partnered with Protect Young Eyes. You can find more information at www.protectyoungeyes.com