



Safe Environment Education

7th Grade

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



Healthy Boundaries

Children would benefit from having conversations about friendships, and who they associate with. We tend to be remembered for those we usually hang out with. If someone we hang out with tends to make bad choices, even if we are usually making good choices, we can be guilty by association. Setting the healthy boundary with friendships is very important especially as our children near high school. We want to help our children know that they should surround themselves with friends who will help them be better versions of themselves and to be kind. If they are surrounded by these types of people, they are more likely to make better choices and live happier lives because they aren't just trying to fit in or feeling like they have to impress others.

When you feel your friends are making poor choices, what is something you could do to make sure you don't make the same mistakes? How does that feel for you?

Who are the people you feel help build you up and help you want to be better and make better choices? How do you feel when you are around them?

Communication

This is often a confusing age for children. There are a lot of hormone changes, physical changes and lot of input from technology, friends, songs and television. It is good to have open communication with your child during this time of their lives. Beyond these questions, talking to your kids about sex, porn, puberty, etc. is good at this age.

Do you know that you can talk to me about anything?

Sometimes there are things that are difficult to talk about, can we determine some words to use when you want to but are uncomfortable?

Technology

By this age, I want kids finishing your sentences and rolling their eyes because you remind them of certain things so often. "Honey, there's nothing you could see on a device that would change the way I feel about you. Bring it to me. I will still love you and I won't freak out." Whatever it is that you want them to hear often, make sure they hear it often. Be more persistent and consistent than the algorithms in their lives.

Is there any part of being online that I haven't done a good job talking about?

What's one thing about technology that you wish every adult understood better?

Body Awareness

As our children are growing and developing it would be important as the most influential role models in their lives, to help give them an opportunity to see their bodies for what they can do, and not for what they look like. Establishing a healthy body image is very important as they are trying to figure out their role in this world. We as their parents want them to feel confident about their bodies, and not go looking for validation from others especially the opposite sex on what they "should" look like.

What are some things you feel you are capable of doing? What are some ways you've noticed your body being strong and healthy?

Looking around you at your age, based on how people dress or present themselves, do you feel people are confident in their body image or seeking validation from others?

Theology of the Body

Self-control is not needed because the body is evil - the truth is just the opposite. The body should be controlled with honor because it is worthy of honor.



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.

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.protectyouneyes.com

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