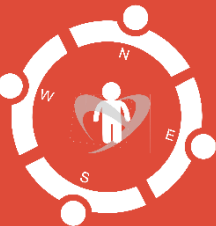


Kindergarten - CLASSROOM

COMPASS CHILD PROTECTION CHILDREN'S PROGRAM



TOUCH SAFETY
Parent Handout

Touch Safety

Kindergarten- PARENT FOLLOW-UP SESSION

with children who attended the parish/school session.

Instructions for Parents:

Your child attended a lesson which dealt with personal safety and how God made them special. The classroom session was intended to open discussions with your child and encourage dialogue with you, the parents.

You are encouraged, sometime within the next week, to set aside 30 minutes for a discussion on this material with your child. This packet contains information to guide your conversation, as well as a step-by-step guide with suggestions.

Dealing with issues of personal body safety often requires a child to behave in ways that can be uncomfortable to a child. For instance, saying “No” to an adult or summoning the courage to tell you a secret that your child was threatened not to tell can be challenging exceptions for younger children who have been taught to respect adults. You will need to give them the permission and the affirmation required so that your child believes that they can tell you anything. Practice saying “No! Stop!” with your child. In this way, children build confidence in their ability to shout if they need help.

The information in this handout can allow you to reinforce the information taught in the session. Please repeat this dialogue with your child on a regular basis.

General Safety Tips

As you prepare to lead your child through a conversation on staying safe, this background information is for you, not your children, to better understand the issues.

Child sexual abuse is a form of abuse that includes sexual activity with, or in front of, a minor. When a person engages with a minor in this way, they are committing a crime that can have lasting effects on the victim. A child cannot consent to any form of sexual activity.

The following are forms of child sexual abuse:

- Sending obscene phone calls, text messages, or other communication.
- Touching a child's private parts.
- Forcing or tricking a child to touch the private parts of an adult or another child.
- Having sex of any kind.
- Exposing oneself.
- Producing, owning, or sharing pornographic images of children.
- Trafficking children for sex.
- Engaging in any other sexual conduct that is harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare.

Some behavioral signs in children that may indicate sexual abuse include sudden and intense fears, trauma, isolation from others, drastic disruptions in temperament and coping styles, hygiene changes (such as refusing to bathe or washing excessively), being over-protective of siblings, sleep problems or nightmares, inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviors beyond their years, or running away from home.

Most sexual abusers have a pre-existing relationship with their victims and/or families.

Sexual abusers have gained access, authority, and often the trust of both the child and parent. They may involve themselves in a family's life as well as appear to do great things in the

community – this is phony and a way of being “hidden in plain sight” to gain access to children.

A process—often called “grooming”—is a way that abusers break down a child or young person’s physical, emotional, and behavioral boundaries while, at the same time, damaging their relationships with adults, their spiritual life, their values, and their sense of self. As part of a grooming process, potential abusers (also called predators) might give presents to or offer favors for children.

Grooming bribes or “guilt gifts” might include unexplained clothing, cash, jewelry, phones or trips. Parents should know the source of any gifts and treats their child receives. Children and teens should ask their parents before accepting ANY gifts.

Abusers use grooming tactics with parents and caregivers, too. Predators may be eager to babysit; they may offer “a shoulder to cry on” or financial help. They may pose as the wise counselor with sage advice (what a stressed parent often needs) or the go-to neighbor with exciting “treats” or offer to take a child on a family trip with them (things a lower-income parent may not be able to provide). These intentional behaviors are designed to trick the parent into trusting their child with the predator.

An offender’s boundary violations may become so entrenched into daily life that adults fail to recognize it as grooming. In this way, a child’s support network can be tricked into believing in the predator and into discounting anything that the child may say later about that person’s behavior.

If a child says that they have been abused, believe them—even if you think it’s impossible.

It is common for children who are victims of abuse, including neglect, to blame themselves and believe a situation is their fault. Furthermore, this message may be reinforced by the person who is abusing them. It is our responsibility as their parents to let them know that it’s NOT THE CHILD’S FAULT, they did NOT do anything wrong. This should be continuously

reinforced—don't just say it one time and think that's enough. For kids to believe it, we have to say it over and over.

Just as abuse is difficult for us to talk about, it is hard for children. One of the most important ways we can keep our children safe is to have open and courageous communication with them, and by encouraging them to talk to us about difficult things. Having conversations about the opposite sex, names of private parts, or other uncomfortable things related to sex helps build language and comfort with your child. This enables a child to share with you freely when they suspect abuse happening to a friend, or even to themselves.

Another aspect of this is being supportive when your child does step forward and shares something that is challenging. It may be a mistake they made, or something that a friend did, or something that happened to them that was unjust. How we react to these situations determines their level of comfort in continuing to share such things with us.

In these situations, avoid reacting emotionally, and be supportive. Talk to your child and identify ways to respond that they are comfortable with. Assure them that you still love them and you will help them find a solution.

PARENTS: Please read the entire handout before reviewing the information with your child. Be prepared to discuss the material using language that is appropriate to your child's intellectual and social abilities. And be advised that at this age level, you will find your child rapidly advancing in understanding and retention of the information.

SESSION OVERVIEW

The topic of our bodies being special and deserving of protection is taught to children through an activity called Silhouettes.

During the session, the teacher uses activities to help the children understand why it is important to remain safe. Teachers discuss some types of touch with the students.

The teacher discusses stories with the children to help them apply what they have learned about safety.

The session ends with a prayer.

PARENT-CHILD DISCUSSION

1. What makes us unique?

Ask your child to show you the silhouette they decorated in the class. Ask them what they added to the picture, and why they did it. Reinforce how God made them unique and special and different from everyone else. Reinforce your love and acceptance of your child.

2. Touch

(Direct your child to the page in the Activity Book that is titled "Touch.")

Say:

Let's discuss the types of touch mentioned here.

Explain different types of touch to your child and help them understand and why that type of touch is safe, or unsafe, and maybe even a context when that changes.

Say:

I'm going to read out some types of touch and let's talk about it.

Read out randomly different types of touch mentioned in this chart below, allowing time for discussion after each. The ones bolded were discussed in class, but the more sensitive ones were left for you to discuss with your child.

- a hug when you want it
- holding hands
- hand placed lightly on your shoulder
- gentle kiss on the cheek from someone in the family
- rocking or holding a younger child
- a tap on the shoulder
- a pat on the back to indicate someone did a good job

- holding a person's body while they learn to ride a bike
- kick or a hair pull
- being tickled after saying "Stop!"
- a squeeze that feels too hard
- an unwanted kiss
- looking at or touching a private part of the body
(remember that private parts of the body are those that are covered by a bathing suit)

(If you have not done so before this, or if you would like to review, Use this opportunity to teach your child the names of their private parts. This is important because it helps the child accurately share with an adult if they have experienced any type of abuse)

You can say, "No" to any type of touch. If you don't want to sit in someone's lap anymore or be hugged or kissed by someone, you can simply say, "No" in your nice indoor voice and move away. You can say "No" and move away because your body belongs to you.

This works in any situation. People who give unsafe touches don't like to be told "no" and when a kid yells and runs, the person usually stops.

If there is an unsafe touch, you must tell your mom and dad about it.

Let's talk about some other times when saying "No! Stop!" would be the right thing to do:

What if an adult, older child or teen surprises you on the playground at school, or anywhere, and tries to take you with them in a car or make you walk away with them? What do you do?

(Wait for response.) That's right...Tell them "No! Stop!" and move away from them. Never leave where you are supposed to be

even if you know the person. Wherever you are, there are adults responsible for you and they must know where you are at all times.

3. Debrief of Stories

Say:

In your class, your teacher shared some short stories. We are going to read a couple of them again and talk about them a little more.

I'm going to tell you about Robert. Robert was wearing a new pair of red underwear. He thought the color was pretty cool and wondered if he should show his underwear to his friends at school. Is that a good idea?

Say:

(Wait for response.) No, his underwear covers a place on his body that would be covered by a bathing suit and his outer clothing. This is a private area.

Say:

Have you ever seen someone's underwear? What did you do?

Has anyone ever shown you their underwear or private parts? What did you do?

If your child answers yes to either of these questions, remind them that parts of the body covered by a bathing suit are private.

Reinforce how they can say no, and move away in such situations too.

Say:

Here's another story. One night, Sara had a new babysitter. The babysitter wanted Sara to sit close to her on the couch while watching a movie.

Ask:

Did Sara have to sit close to the babysitter?

(Wait for response.) No, Sara's body is her own. Sara does not have to sit close to her babysitter or anyone when watching TV.

Say:

One time a babysitter started tickling Sara. It was fun at first but the babysitter tickled harder and harder. What can Sara do? (Wait for response.) Sara does not have to accept any kind of touch from anyone.

If someone wants you to do something, you can tell them "No" and move away from them. Make sure to tell mom and dad if anyone says or does an unsafe touch or makes you feel yucky or uncomfortable. Also, if someone shows you their private parts or a picture of a private part, get away and tell mom and dad.

Ask:

Have you ever gotten an unsafe or uncomfortable touch from someone? What did you do?

In case your child says that it was difficult to say no, talk about it more, let them know that it is the right thing to do, and help them practice for future situations by acting out such scenarios.

4. Prayer

End the session with a time of prayer, asking God for protection and wisdom to stay safe.