

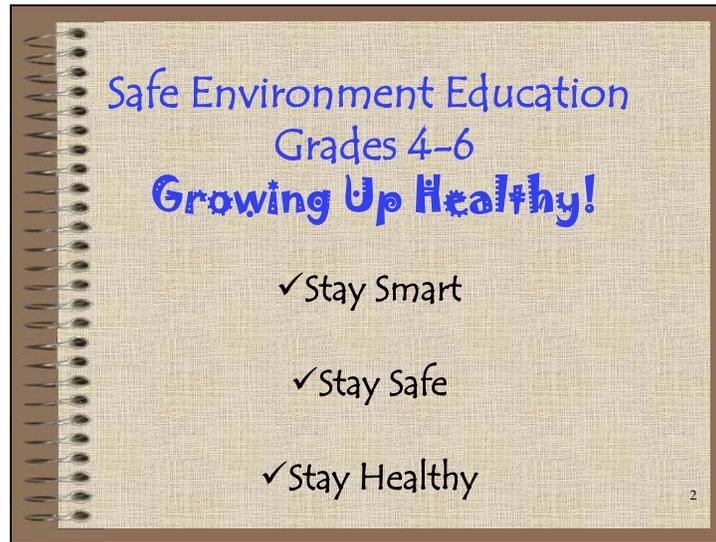


Parent Notes

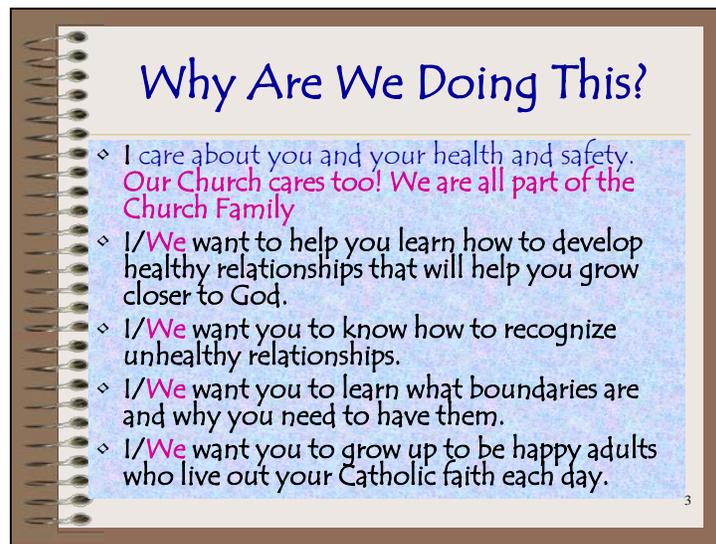
Dear Parents,

This presentation is part of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' annually required program of Safe Environment Education for children and parents. In addition to the requirements that have been in place since 2005 for fingerprinting and safe environment training for clergy, employees and all Church volunteers who have responsibility for the care and supervision of minors and vulnerable adults is a student-parent education program. This is an essential layer of protection for children as their knowledge of inappropriate behaviors that can be perpetrated on them and ways to not only stay safe, but to avoid the violation of their person, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually is their first line of defense from harm. The materials that follow include refusal and reporting skills that goes a long way toward keeping our children safe from all harm. During these alternative programming times due to Covid-19, your role is more important than ever in helping your child to be safe, happy and healthy. Thank you for your time and attention to this program.

Please review these documents and conduct an open and honest conversation with your child. At the end of the conversation, you and your child should complete the assessment that was sent along with these presentation materials. When completed, please return the assessment page to your parish Faith Formation Director for the auditor records that they are required to keep. They can provide the best way to return the assessment pages to their attention. Mail, email (scanned document attached) or Faxed copies are all acceptable means of demonstrating completion and compliance.



Introduce the topic to your child. Remind him/her that this is an important conversation and that nothing that is discussed is intended to make them afraid, but rather to empower them to be active in protecting themselves from any harm that others may wish to do.



Why Are We Doing This?

- ◇ I care about you and your health and safety. **Our Church cares too! We are all part of the Church Family**
- ◇ I/**We** want to help you learn how to develop healthy relationships that will help you grow closer to God.
- ◇ I/**We** want you to know how to recognize unhealthy relationships.
- ◇ I/**We** want you to learn what boundaries are and why you need to have them.
- ◇ I/**We** want you to grow up to be happy adults who live out your Catholic faith each day.

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- Take time to note, discuss and expand as appropriate.

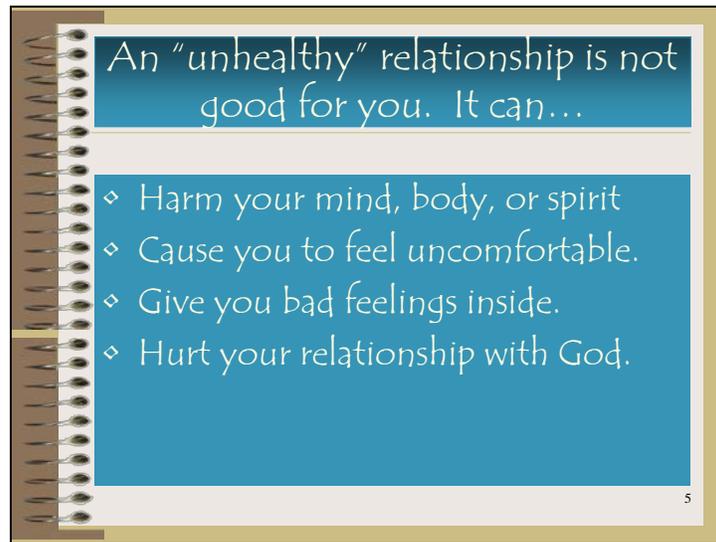
A “healthy” relationship is good for you. It...

- protects your mind, body, and spirit.
- allows you to feel comfortable.
- gives you good feelings inside.
- Helps you live out your faith each day.

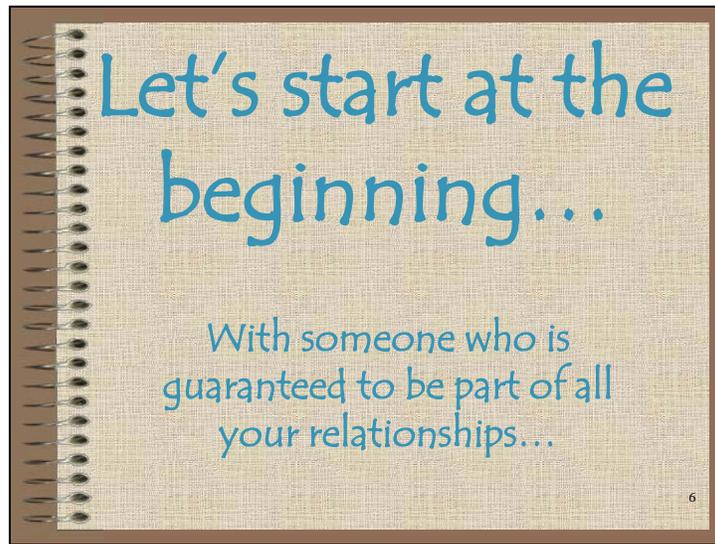


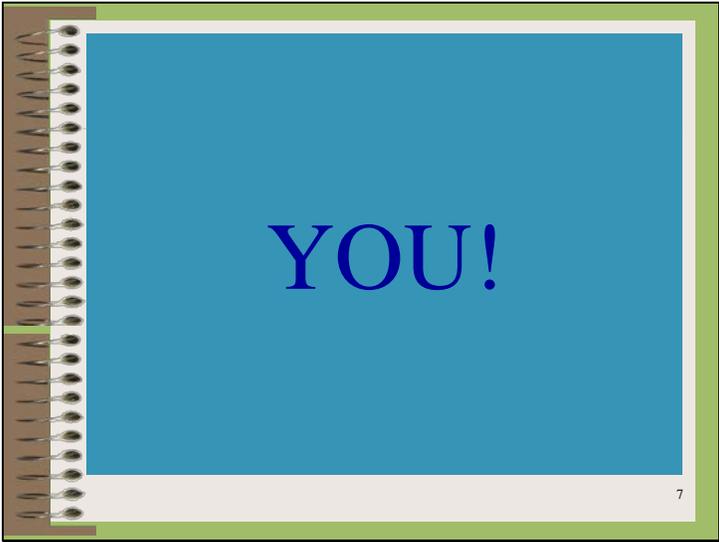
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Discuss: Our bodies, minds, and feelings change as we become older. We enter into different situations and meet new people. Life is always changing. But, as we go through these changes, we should always feel comfortable in our relationships.



Discussion: Feelings are a gift from God and are used to communicate with one another. When we have feelings of sadness or anger because someone has hurt us, it is sometimes hard to forgive. However, Jesus tells us to forgive others. Forgiveness is even mentioned in the Lord's prayer. Help your child to understand that ultimately, forgiveness is healthy for us. Holding on to anger and withholding forgiveness causes the harm to continually offend us over and over within our thoughts and emotions. Acknowledge that it takes time to forgive, but ultimately, that is our goal, to forgive and seek forgiveness. Remind them that God is always waiting to forgive us; all we need to do is ask and confess our sins. The healing that comes with forgiveness is a wonderful gift for the forgiver and the one forgiven.





Be Safe-Be Happy-Be Healthy



God loves you, and wants you to be happy, healthy, and safe.



- Emphasize that this is the basis for all that we do to respect others and why we likewise deserve respect. All human persons are blessed with the dignity that God has given to all human life.

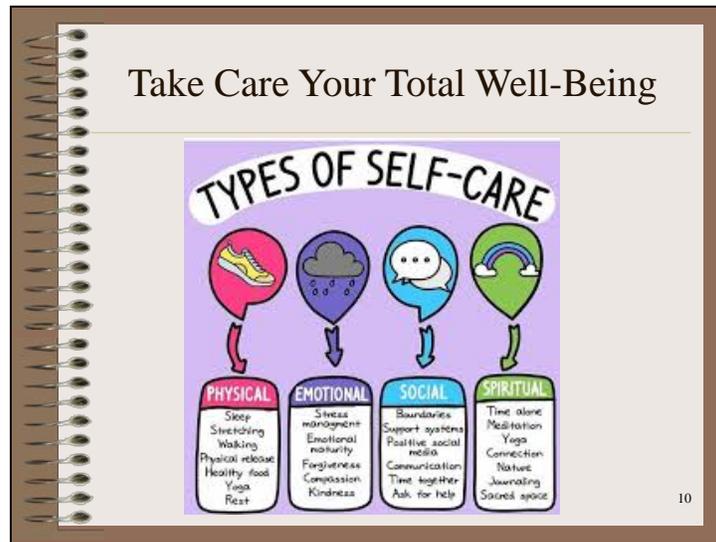


First...Taking good care of yourself is a top priority!

Good health habits show respect for the gift of life!

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Discuss: Self-care is not selfishness. We show our gratitude to God for all his generosity and love by taking care of the gift of our own life and respecting all life.



Physical Health is often an obvious part of being healthy for children. Discuss that there are ways to be mentally healthy, emotionally healthy, socially healthy and spiritually healthy as these may seem as obvious to your child. Discuss and expand as appropriate. Later pages develop these concepts from a different perspective so the concepts of mental, emotional, social and spiritual health will be emphasized throughout.

Practice good habits for healthy
"spiritual" growth.



- ◇ Keep a close relationship with God.
- ◇ Make time to pray each day.
- ◇ Attend church on Sunday.
- ◇ Model your faith by having good character and being a good friend.
- ◇ "Love thy neighbor as thy self"

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Emphasize and personalize as appropriate to your child and his/her prayer and your family's prayer and worship practices.

What are Boundaries?

- First, healthy boundaries keep you physically and emotionally safe.
- Second, boundaries teach you how to behave and interact in a broad range of life situations and relationships.
- Third, boundaries are any efforts by another that make you uncomfortable or ashamed.

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All Relationships Have Boundaries...



- ✓ parent – child
- ✓ teacher – student
- ✓ husband – wife
- ✓ neighbor – neighbor
- ✓ friend – friend
- ✓ babysitter – child

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•Explore your child's understanding of boundaries. How do they describe the concept? Discuss and expand as appropriate or necessary.

•You may wish to emphasize that different relationships, and the depth of those relationships usually determine different levels of boundaries. For example: A hug from a parent can be longer or closer than a hug from a teacher or casual acquaintance.

Developing Meaningful Relationships

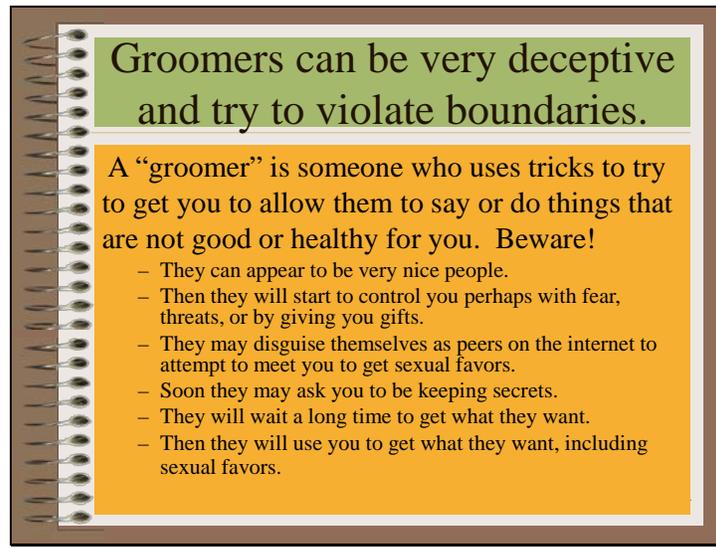
For Example, to have a friend, you need to be a friend!

- ◊ Be trustworthy and honest
- ◊ Don't gossip
- ◊ Learn how to apologize properly:
 - I'm sorry I hurt your feelings. It won't happen again. What can I do to make up for it?
- ◊ Choose friends who share your values
- ◊ Bring your friends home for your family to meet.
- ◊ Don't be afraid to say "no" to a friend or stand up for what you know is right.
- ◊ Be willing to model your Catholic values.

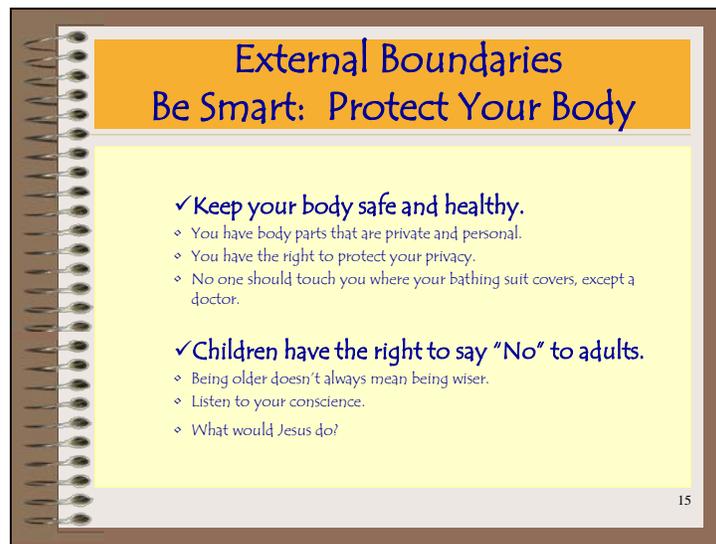


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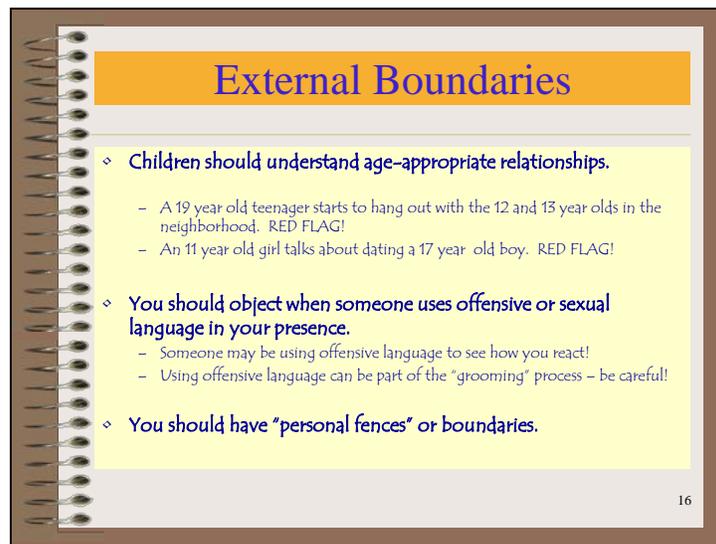
- Emphasize again how important good and loving friendships and relationships are to our well-being and happiness.



- Help your child to understand that in this case, the word grooming is being used to describe efforts made by someone who wishes to take advantage of, hurt or harm someone and uses lies, deception, control to ultimately get them to do what they want the “victim” to do. Review and expand as appropriate all items/concepts on this page.



- Emphasize and clarify. This page and the two following pages present ways and examples of how a child can stay safe and protect themselves by maintaining good and healthy boundaries, externally and internally.

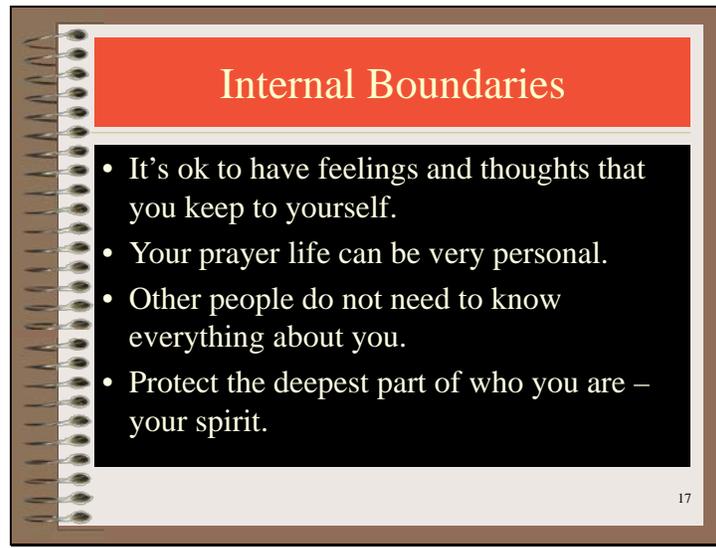


External Boundaries

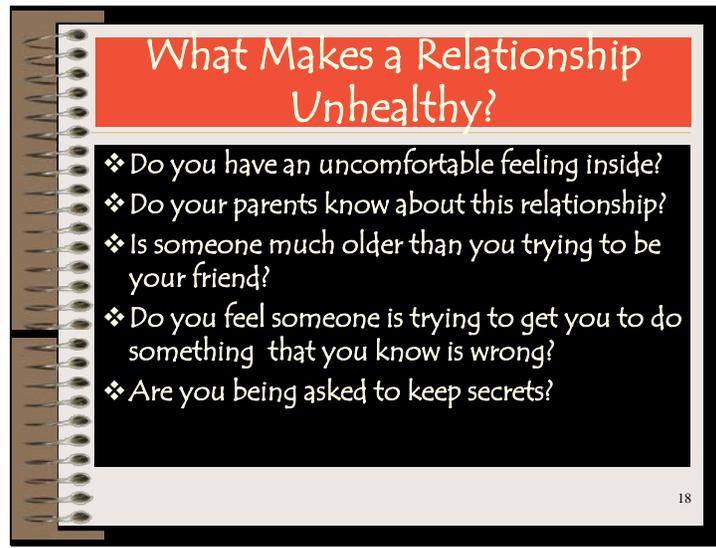
- ◇ **Children should understand age-appropriate relationships.**
 - A 19 year old teenager starts to hang out with the 12 and 13 year olds in the neighborhood. RED FLAG!
 - An 11 year old girl talks about dating a 17 year old boy. RED FLAG!
- ◇ **You should object when someone uses offensive or sexual language in your presence.**
 - Someone may be using offensive language to see how you react!
 - Using offensive language can be part of the "grooming" process – be careful!
- ◇ **You should have "personal fences" or boundaries.**

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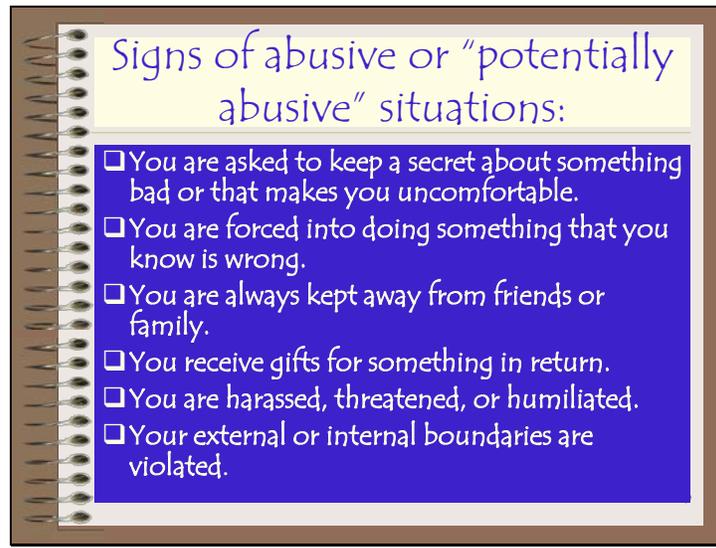
- Be certain that your child understands the expression "RED FLAG"
- Talk about why these would be red flag situations



Explore the meaning of these statements with your child. Do they understand what they mean? Assure them that if ever they want to speak about their internal feelings that you are available to listen and help but that they should be careful about with whom and how freely they share their internal feelings and thoughts so that no one betrays their trust or uses those feelings/thoughts to shame or harm them.



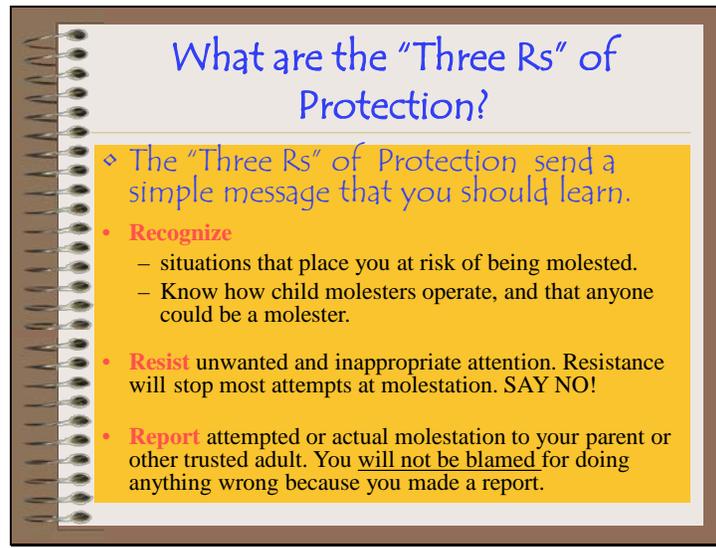
- Explore and discuss the difference between keeping confidences and keeping secrets. Emphasize that no confidence or secret can be kept if the individual or others are in danger or harm could come to them.



- Be certain that your child understands these points and the vocabulary used to explain them before moving on.



Emphasize: Abuse is never the child's fault. The pictures are of students reporting to a teacher, police officer, and guidance counselor. They should always report any uncomfortable situations as soon as possible to a trusted adult and they should know that they can never do anything that gives anyone the right to harm them in any way.



Emphasize this point and try to repeat the "Three Rs" concept marker by repeating it often in your discussion of this information.



Thank you for taking time to review and emphasize this important information with and for your child. Please complete the assessment (this may be done together, and you may go back in the pages to find and reinforce answers that may not be remembered). Then, print, or scan the page and return it to the Director of Faith Formation at your parish by the due date specified. You may hard-copy mail the completed assessment, or email as an attachment or fax it to your Faith Formation Leader. All methods of transmission are acceptable.