

GRADE 8 - CLASSROOM

SAFE & SACRED CHILDREN'S PROGRAM



MODESTY AND REPUTATION
Parent Handout

Modesty and Reputation

Grade 8 - PARENT FOLLOW-UP SESSION

With children who attended the parish/school session

Instruction for the Parents

Your child attended a session on Safe environments themed “Modesty and Reputation” with a focus on personal safety.

The classroom session was intended to open discussions with you, the parents, on these topics.

You are encouraged, sometime during the coming week, to set aside 30 minutes for a discussion with your child. This packet contains the material you will require to prepare for this discussion as well as step-by-step guide with suggested discussion questions.

Session Overview

The teacher discussed with the students how they are created in the image of God and how this should reflect in their lives and actions.

The concept of modesty was discussed. The importance of modesty both in their dressing, as well as in their online posting was discussed.

The teacher encouraged the students to think about the importance of their reputation. The students thought about what they would like to be described as.

The session ended with a reading of I Corinthians 6:19-20 and a prayer.

Background Information for Parents

The topic of the session today was modesty and reputation. As you talk to your child about modesty and reputation, here is some information that is important for you to know. Today's teens face challenges related to modesty and reputation as they interact with others both in the real world and the online world. How they respond to these questions and challenges has an impact on their safety. These values of modesty and reputation will help your child make safe choices throughout their life.

A. Pedophiles

Adults who seek out children and young teens for sex are called predators, pedophiles or molesters. Over 96% of these adults are male (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2011). The molester might use tricks, bribes or threats of force to lure a child into being alone with them. Sexual abuse includes any act ranging from exposing private parts (exhibitionism) to observing another's private parts or sexual activity (voyeurism), touching or rape. The preferred target age is generally whenever the child is starting puberty and beginning to develop.

B. Molestation by Peers

Approximately one-third of sexual abuse happens at the hands of other children or teens. As with adult perpetrators of abuse, there is some kind of authority or power held over the victim even though the perpetrator is also a minor.

Children and teens who molest other children need professional help. They are more likely to respond to treatment as a youth, rather than as an adult who has a longer history of molestation in their child, teen *and* adult years.

C. Signs of Sexual Abuse

A child being abused **may show absolutely no signs of abuse at all**. So, when an adult is told about any of the four kinds of abuse from a child or teen, the adult is morally and in some states legally bound to report to the authorities by dialing 911.

Remember that your job is not to act as a judge or juror, it is simply to report *the disclosure or warranted suspicion of abuse whether you believe it or not*.

- Hint or indirect message - The child exhibits repetitive fear of being with a particular adult or older child. "I just don't like him anymore."
- Seductive or sexual behavior with other children or adults.
- Physical symptoms of irritation of genital or anal areas. Girls may have repeated urinary tract infections. Conversely, many children who have been abused have none of these typical signs.
- Self-destructive behavior.
- Acting younger than normal: bed-wetting, thumb sucking or behaving much younger than their actual age.
- Sudden drop in grades or difficulty in school with problematic behavior not exhibited before.

D. Grooming:

In the English language, grooming refers to the act of getting ready. In the context of sexual abuse or child trafficking, grooming refers to the act of an adult "preparing a child for sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking in the future" by building an emotional bond or connection with the child.

How to be alert to potential signs of grooming:

Parents can never be too alert to these signs. Here are some possible visible signs:

- Children start going to unusual, distant and/or deserted places to meet friends

- Begin having older friends – whether male or female
- Suddenly very secretive
- Recent new possessions such as mobile phones, clothes, or other “fancy” accessories
- Access to alcohol or drugs.

E. How online sexual abuse takes place:

- Groomers may convince children to share text or inappropriate pictures on social media.
- Children participate in explicit video chats, or use video cams or smartphones.
- Groomers may engage children in sexually explicit chats via video chat, or texting known as sexting
- Grooming can happen online or offline. Many young people, and even adults, do not recognize when they are being groomed or targeted. Some people may genuinely think they are in relationship. Sometimes, victims feel shame or guilt and are afraid to seek help.

F. Process or stages of grooming:

Grooming is a slow process during which predators bring their targets or victims into secret sexual relationships. According to forensic psychiatrist Dr. Michael Welner, there are six stages to the process of grooming. These are:

Targeting the victim:

Children who do not have strict parental monitoring (their parents do not know where they are and who they are with at all times) are considered easier targets.

Gaining trust:

During this process, the predator slowly wins trust and confidence, convincing the victim to keep everything completely secret.

Filling a need:

This is when the predator pretends to be concerned or caring, paying constant attention, with phone calls, text messages, possible meetings, and gifts.

Isolating the intended victim:

This is done through offers to babysit, coaching, tutoring, etc, ensuring that the victim spends enforced time along with the predator.

Sexualizing the relationship:

This is when the predator convinces the victim to perceive themselves as mere sexual beings and view their relationship with the predator in a sexual way.

Maintaining control:

The predator always looks to maintain complete control over their victim. The victim is convinced to believe that they are at fault and fear revealing anything to anyone will isolate and humiliate them. This control by the predator ensures continued secrecy.

Parent-Child Discussion

Modesty:

Ask your teen their thoughts about modesty. What do you think about the word modesty? Do you think that it is relevant to you? What did you understand from what your teacher said today?

Allow time for your teen to share their thoughts about modesty. Allow them to share their concerns, their ideas and their perspectives.

Remind them about what was said in the class:

Modesty is a virtue that safeguards us as the precious gift God made. Immodesty says, "my body is the best thing about me – the best part of who I am. Don't look at me as a person, but see me as an object."

Ask your teen: What is the best thing about you? How can you draw attention to it?

If your child's answer is something physical, talk about some of their strengths and talents. Help them understand that they are far more than what they look like. Also remind them, that physical appearance is only temporary and will change with age, and its best to grow in things that are internal and long lasting.

Say:

What are the kind of clothes that will draw attention to who you are on the outside and distract people from what you really want them to see in you?

Can we go to your wardrobe and decide on any 2 pieces of clothing that fall in this category, that you can give away? It will be a symbol of how you want people to see you for who you are, and not what you look like.

Reputation

Say:

During class, you heard stories about 2 teens. Let's go over those stories again.

Belinda believes that it's important to do the right thing no matter who is looking. She tells her parents about where she is going and what she is doing. Belinda considers others and thinks about her futures reputation before posting online, and does not use the phone or internet when she is upset or angry. People around Belinda know that she stands for what is right.

Matt is a loving person, and enjoys having a good time. He is always trying new things, and he loves sharing with others. Matt makes friends easily.

One day, someone posted a mean rumor about Belinda on the internet.

No one believed the rumor. Everyone knew that Belinda would never do such a thing and it must be false.

The same day, someone posted an untrue rumor about Matt.

When people saw the rumor about Matt, they were shocked, but then they believed it. They had not agreed with some of the choices they've seen Matt make before, and it was understandable that this could be true.

Neither Belinda, nor Matt are perfect. When a storm came in the form of a mean and untrue rumor, it impacted Matt's reputation, but Belinda's reputation was able to stand firm.

Say:

In class you were asked to draw a tree to show what your reputation was like. Let's take a look at your picture.

Say:

Why did you draw your tree like this? What do you think your reputation is like?

Allow time for your teen to explain. Encourage them and let them know that they can build their reputation.

Say:

What were the things that you decided that you would do to build your reputation?

Allow time for your teen to explain whatever they have written in their activity book. Help them to think about what they need to do, and the details of how they will do it. Let them know that they have your support.

Sometimes, teens may feel that their parents spoil their reputation by oversharing about their children to their friends. If your teen is struggling with this, apologize and let them know that you will support them and help them build their reputation.

Let's look at something your teacher said towards the end of the session:

Remember, modesty and reputation are not about putting on a show for others. They are about genuinely living wisely, and making smart choices about what we share, what we say, and what we do so that people don't misunderstand us.

How do you understand this? Do you agree?

Allow your child to share their thoughts about how it's important to be genuine and not put on a show for the sake of looking good on the outside.

How can we talk about things in an honest, but careful way, so when we make mistakes, it does not spoil our reputation?

Discuss how you as a family can support each other when your teen makes a bad choice, or is going through a hard time.

Let's take a look at your name and what you described yourself as. Why did you choose these words?

Encourage your child, and tell them that each time someone calls their name, they can now remember what they stand for, who they are.

Prayer:

End with a time of prayer, asking God to help make good choices about modesty and reputation.



OPTIONAL

Modesty and Reputation

Grade 8 - Classroom Session

Your feedback is valued!

We hope that the materials were helpful in facilitating discussions with your children on these sensitive issues. Please answer the following questions to help us improve and update the curriculum.

Please email to: bblanchette@dioceseoffresno.org

1. What were the topics that were most helpful to both you and your child? How has it helped you?

2. On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), please rate the following:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Usefulness of the material for discussions | <input type="radio"/> |
| Quality of information in the curriculum | <input type="radio"/> |
| Real life application | <input type="radio"/> |

3. How can we make this curriculum more useful to you?

4. Did you face any difficulties while discussing the topics? If so, please describe.

5. Would you recommend this to other parents? Why or why not?