

*Diocese of Honolulu's Children & Adolescent Protection Program*

Lesson Plan

*Break the Silence: Kids Against Child Abuse*

Grades 4 – 6

Objectives:

- To define physical and sexual abuse, and neglect (& emotional abuse)
- To demonstrate how some adults can exploit the trust of children by using fear and manipulation to control them
- To encourage young people to tell an adult if they are being abused and to continue to tell until they get help
- To show some methods available to help children and families change their lives and break the cycle of abuse

Overview (for Facilitator):

Jayne Seymour hosts this program which reveals the realities of child abuse. Physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect (& emotional abuse) are explained in terms that children can understand and identify with. Four young people speak candidly about their abuse and their abusers and describe how adults can use fear, manipulation, and neglect to hurt children.

All of these stories have promising endings, however. With the help of social workers, therapists and foster families, each of the victims was supported and is now leading a normal life. Two important points are made in this video – first, children should tell an adult if they are being abused, or if they know someone who is, and second, it is very important that adults listen to children. Only when the silence is broken can the cycle of abuse end.

Opening Prayer: *Jesus Blesses the Children*

Reflection: Explain that during Jesus' time, children were thought of as property. Children had no rights. Even until the last century, children had no rights in this country. Often, children had to work long hours in factories and in the fields - because they supported their families. Jesus taught that children are special and need special care. Because of their specialness, children have rights.

Introduction:

Explain that the topic of this week's special religious education class will be preventing child abuse. Ask the group how many of them have had a special class at school about personal safety or child abuse. [Listen carefully to their responses, because many children already have ideas, some accurate and some inaccurate, about what sexual assault is.]

Explain to them that their church is supposed to be a place where you learn about God's love for you and the many gifts God has given you. A special gift from God is your body. Therefore we will spend some time learning more about protecting yourself and what to do if you need help.

Ask children to think of ways adults could hurt other people, [emotionally, physically, sexually, etc.] and list them on the board. Write the word child abuse on the board and explain its meaning to the class. Child abuse refers to an act committed by an adult which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or a child's welfare.

Ask why adults may seek to hurt others. [You might prompt the discussion by mentioning the cycle of abuse (abusers were often abused themselves), alcoholism, drugs, etc.]

Ask students in what ways abuse might affect the victim. You might prompt the discussion with asking any of the following questions. How might an abused child change after such an experience? How would this abuse affect how the child felt about him or her self? How might it affect their work in school?

Finally, ask, what would happen if the victim of abuse never told anyone about being abused? What would happen if the child told a teacher or other adult about the abuse?

Video:

Explain that the video that we will be viewing will address the questions they have just discussed together. Tell them that they young people they will be meeting in the video are sharing real and personal stories of their abuse to help others who might be facing the same or similar problems.

The first type of abuse that we are going to look at is Physical Abuse.

[Start video at beginning. Stop video at end of Curt's story. Scene ends with the phrase: "I think that's how all parents should be."]

Define physical abuse. Physical abuse occurs when an adult injures a child and it is not an accident. It can include: assault, shaking or slapping, burning or scalding, kicking, strangling.

Ask: Why were Curt and his sister allowed to go back to their parents? **Answer: His father had quit drinking, and a therapist helped the family learn how to communicate and taught the parents how to discipline the children without hitting them.**

The second type of abuse that we will see in the video is Sexual Abuse.

[Start video. Stop video after Anthony's story. Scene ends with the phrase: "...so that you can get the abuser away from you and he can never hurt you again."]

Ask: What did Xochitl's mother do when she told her that she was being abused by her stepfather? How did that make Xochitl feel? **Answer: Her mother didn't believe what Xochitl told her and ignored her. It made her feel sad and alone.**

Ask: What were some of the signs about Anthony's behavior his family noticed that alerted them that something was wrong? **Answer: His grades went down, he wet his bed, he had nightmares and started sleeping with his parents.**

Ask: What happened to the men who had sexually abused Anthony and Xochitl? **Answer: They were both punished and sent to jail.**

Define child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse is when someone is forced or tricked into sexual contact. This includes obscene phone calls, fondling, intercourse, anal or oral sex, prostitution, and pornography.

Explain about private parts. When we began this lesson today, we heard a scripture story about children being a special gift from God. Your body is a special gift from God. No one else's body is quite like yours. Your body belongs only to you, and you can do wonderful things with it like skateboard, play soccer, dance hula, etc. Because your body is special, you need to take care of it by eating good food, getting plenty of sleep, taking baths, and wearing clothes. Some parts of

your body are private and are not to be shared with others. Your private parts are those parts covered by your bathing suit.

The third & fourth types of abuse that we will see in the video is Neglect & Emotional Abuse.

[Start video. Stop video after Xochitl speaks. Scene ends with the phrase: "...kids have the right to say no..."]

Define neglect. Neglect is when an adult does not take good care of a child. This includes: not feeding, clothing, or educating a child, letting the child be unsafe (examples: health hazards in the home, allowing a child to be truant), or not taking a sick child to the doctor.

Ask: How was Rachel neglected? **Answer: She was left alone for hours and sometimes days at a time. Her sick grandmother had her do chores around the house. She was bounced from one relative to another.**

Ask: What advice des Rachel give to children who are abused? **Answer: She tells them not to give up, to realize that there are people available to help children in need and to look for those people.**

Define emotional (verbal) abuse. Emotional (verbal) abuse is when an adult hurts a child by saying things that make that child feel bad about him/herself. This can include: calling people names or making a child feel like nothing is good about him or her.

Summarize:

Spend a few minutes recalling what has happened during this lesson. In the lesson today, we met four children who experienced abuse in their lives. We talked about the four types of abuse: physical, sexual abuse, and neglect (& emotional abuse). We also saw that with the help of social workers, therapists and foster families, each of the victims was supported and is now leading a normal life.

Two important points are made in this video – first, children should tell an adult if they are being abused, or if they know someone who is, and second, it is very important that adults listen to children. Let children know who the “trusted adults” are in the program that they can talk to or go to for help. [Pastor, D/CRE, catechist, etc.]

Ask the students if they have any additional questions or concerns.

Optional Activities:

- *Decisions, Decisions, Decisions*
- *Test*

Closing Prayer:

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine. When you pass through the water, I will be with you; in the rivers you shall not drown. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned; the flames shall not consume you. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your savior. Because you are precious in my eyes and glorious, and because I love you. (Isaiah 43:1-3a, 4a)