

Lesson Plan

Grades

4 - 6

Diocese of Honolulu
Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments
Lesson Plan for Grades 4 - 6
Based upon video "Believe Me"

Theological and Biblical Concepts

As a source of comfort, God has been compared to a shepherd. Jesus begins talking about power and the value of children. In Matthew 18: 10 – 14, Jesus uses the metaphor of God as a shepherd who searches diligently for the one lost sheep. In some Christian traditions, this scripture is only taught as a metaphor of God seeking out sinners or sheep that have strayed from the fold. However, anyone who experiences the feelings of being alone, separated from God and others, or being hurt by others knows what it feels like to be the lost sheep. The lost sheep could be anyone who experiences any kind of hurt. Children who have experienced child abuse may feel they are separated from others, including members of their own family. They may feel like the lost sheep. In this scripture, the image of God as a shepherd presents God as a source of comfort.

In Matthew 23:37, Jesus uses the metaphor of God being a mother hen who gathers her brood under her wing. This image of God as a mother hen also presents God as a source of comfort.

For children, the images of God as a shepherd or as a mother hen can be a source of healing and comfort. These images are very important to those who have experienced some kind of hurt. God desires that people be safe and cared for. Not only is child abuse against the law, it is against what God wants for children.

Reid, Kathryn Goering. Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: A Curriculum for Children. Cleveland: United Church Press, 1994.

Video Synopsis:

Todd remembers a time in his childhood when being believed was a very important issue. Although he sometimes made up tall tales, most of the time he told the truth. It became very important to tell the truth and to keep on telling the truth, when his grandfather played secret touching games with him when they were alone. Encouraged by a talk at school about everybody's right to "say no" to touches that make you feel uncomfortable, he finally tells his mother. Because of his stretching the truth on other issues, and because it is her father, she does not believe him. Todd meets two trolls and the Grindelsnitch, puppet mentors, down by a bridge near his school. They talk with him about secrets and the need to keep telling. They use analogies to a house on fire, stressing that you would tell until someone heard you and got help. He tries to tell his father and his sister. Todd finally tells the school nurse and she hears him clearly and helps him.

"What Tadoo". KidSafety of America: 1995

Background Information for Adults:

Prior to showing "Believe Me" it may be helpful to be aware of the following facts on sexual abuse:

- *Children can be molested at any age, from infancy through adolescence. The average age of a molested child is estimated nationally to be eight years old, but many cases of children ages two and three are being reported.*

- *In most cases of sexual abuse the offender is seductive or manipulative, rather than violent.*
- *Most sexual abuse involves more than one incident. The average length of sexual abuse is one to three years. The child usually adapts his lifestyle to avoid the sexual offense.*
- *Child molesters can be male or female, rich or poor, white collar or blue collar, elderly or adolescent. They may even disguise as police officers or other trusted individuals by obtaining clothing or other official accessories.*

"What Tadoo". KidSafety of America: 1995

Materials needed:

"Believe Me" video, KidSafety of America (20 minutes)
 Copies of gathering and closing prayer
 Television
 VCR

Emotional climate:

Create an emotionally-supportive environment of acceptance for the children. Ideally this material is to be presented as an enrichment/extension of your existing Catholic human-sexuality program.

Lesson Objectives (45-60 minute lesson)

The viewer will:

- Understand the importance of continuing to tell until someone believes you.
- Realize that even a beloved family member can be an abuser.
- Discover that touching that makes a child feel confused, uncomfortable, or scared is bad.
- Learn that sometimes it's hard for a parent to believe a child is being abused because of the parent's relationship to the abuser.
- Recognize that even though abusers frequently tell children to keep the abuse a secret, the abused child should always tell an adult about it.
- Understand how awful it feels not to be believed.

Take Attendance: Only children who have a Parental/Guardian Permission Form on file may participate. Teachers need to report to their principal or DRE/CRE how many children attended this class. Every school and parish is mandated to report these statistics annually to the diocese.

Gathering Prayer

Introduce the Lesson

1. Do you always tell the truth?
2. How does it feel when you tell the truth and nobody believes you?
3. If you told your parents that someone had done something bad to you, do you think your parents would believe you?
4. Who are some adults you can talk to that you trust?

5. What makes a secret and secret?
6. Is it okay to share a secret if the secret makes you feel bad?

Set Ground Rules

Say: "To allow everyone to learn these important lessons, here are our rules:

- Listen carefully to me and each other. Listening and not interrupting the speaker is important so that everyone understands what is being said.
- Asking questions is important.
- I (facilitator) am here to listen to you if you want to talk about anything in this lesson."

One advantage to having a team teach this material is that with more than one teacher in the classroom, one teacher is available to pay attention immediately to a child while the other teacher can continue the lesson. It is also very important that trusted adults are available for children after the session.

Video: "Believe Me" (20 minutes)

Suggested After-Viewing Discussion:

1. Did Todd want to spend time with his grandfather?
2. What did Todd's mother say when he told her about the secret touching game?
3. What did Todd do when his mother did not believe him?
4. How can you tell when a secret is good and when it's bad?

Say: "It is never okay for grown-ups or older kids to touch your private body parts (body parts that are covered by a swim suit), except to keep you healthy and clean. If someone touches your private body parts and asks you to keep it a secret, tell someone about it right away. If the first person doesn't believe you, tell someone else! Anytime you feel mixed up about a touch, tell the person to "Stop." Talk about it with a grown-up you can trust.

Beland, Kathy. *Talking about Touching for Parents and Kids*. Seattle: Committee for Children, 1988

Distribute Handout

Closing Prayer: Distribute and/or read to children.

Gathering Prayer

Matthew 18:10 - 14



“If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the hills and go in search of the stray? And if he finds it, amen, I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not stray. In just the same way, it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost.”

God, you knew us before we were even born and call each of us by name. You love us and know where we are at all times. You are our shepherd and do not want us to be lost. Send us your Spirit that we may follow you in faith, live in hope, and share your love with others. Amen.

Closing Prayer

God of hope,
We hear all the time about people who cause trouble and confusion.
Help us to remember that there are many people in our world who reach out to others.
There are people who go out of their way for others each day.
Help us to know that our world has hope because of Jesus Christ,
who brings all of us new life.
May we learn to be people who bring that hope to others.

We ask this through your Spirit of love. Amen.

Reid, Kathryn Goering. Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: A Curriculum for Children. United Church Press, Cleveland: 1994.
“What Tadoo”. KidSafety of America: 1995
http://www.daniellesplace.com/html/bible_themes_o_-_p.html
Mathson, Patricia: *Bless This Day*. Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame:2002

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For You to Take Home

Today we learned:

- It is never okay for grown-ups or older kids to touch your private body parts (body parts that are covered by a swim suit), except to keep you healthy and clean.
- Everybody has a right to say “no!” to touches that make you feel uncomfortable.
- If someone touches your private body parts and asks you to keep it a secret, tell someone about it right away.
- It is important to tell until someone believes you.

Parent and Child Discussion Topics

How You Can Protect Yourself

Do not:

- accept rides from strangers.
- be afraid to say “no” to an adult or older child who wants to touch or take photographs of your private parts or asks you to touch their private parts.
- give out any personal information on Internet chat rooms and don’t ever make arrangements to meet someone you have communicated with over the Internet.
- leave your drinks unattended at a party or accept any substance from someone you don’t know.

Do:

- trust your feelings.
- tell a trusted adult immediately if someone does hurt you or touch you inappropriately.