

FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- o Boys as well as girls are victims of sexual assault.
- o No child can seduce an adult. A child is not capable of consent, an adult is.
- o Almost no child would lie about an incident; a child should be believed.
- o Statistics show that one out of every three girls and one out of every 5 boys will be victims of sexual abuse before they reach the age of 18.
- o About 80% of offenders are known to the child.

PRINCIPLES

Our bodies are sacred and holy because we were fashioned in love by God. Instill your child with a sense of self-worth and dignity at every opportunity.

We are blessed with families and loving communities to help us grow. The task of keeping children safe is shared by families, extended families, teachers, church, their neighborhood and community.

Each person has dignity and must be treated with respect. We show our respect for each other in our language, behavior and interactions with each other.

Touch is an integral part of being human. Safe touch is that kind of touch which is good for the person's body, makes one feel cared for, loved and important. Unsafe and unwanted touch makes a person feel uncomfortable and unhappy. Inappropriate touches are against the law.

Because of the dignity of each person, our right to respect includes the right to privacy, especially privacy for our bodies. The areas of our bodies covered by a swimsuit are private.

EFFECTS ON VICTIMS

Approximately 40% of all victims and survivors suffer after-effects serious enough to require therapy in adulthood. After effects can include: - Inability to trust -Fear of intimacy - Depression -Suicidal and other self-destructive behaviors -Low self-esteem - Anger -Isolation -Alienation from others - Drug and alcohol dependency -Eating disorders.

FOR PARENTS

God gives us the gift of free will. We must learn how to discern the consequences of the choices we make each day.

Some actions or behaviors are wrong or sinful. Behavior or actions that harm self or others physically, psychologically, emotionally or spiritually are wrong. Some suffering caused by bad choices is not willed by God and is not the fault of innocent persons.

In parenting, work for open, clear, honest communication. Secrets can be very harmful to us physically, emotionally and spiritually. Always question secret play and games and determine how the secret helps or harms others:

Healthy relationships can help us to understand ourselves, God and others. False friends mistreat us or take advantage of our trust and friendship. People who manipulate or misuse our friendship are not friends.

Children must be provided with basic information to enable them to be safe and protected by the adults in their lives. Children must identify, with the help of their parents, a number of trusted adults to whom they can go for help if necessary.

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Child sexual assault ranges from molestation to incest, to rape or murder; from an encounter with a man who exposes himself, to fondling by a next-door neighbor; from the taking of pornographic pictures, to years of repeated sexual abuse by a family member. Child sexual assault is any negative, exploitive or coercive sexual experience involving a person under the age of 18.

WHAT TO DO IF:

YOUR CHILD IS APPROACHED OR VICTIMIZED

- Believe what your child has told you.
- Reassure your child that telling you was the right thing to do.
- Let your child know that it was not his/her fault, that the offender was wrong.
- Try not to let your feelings overwhelm the child.
- Be aware that, if the offender is family or friend, the child may feel both fear and guilt about the offender.
- Do not confront the offender in front of the child.
- Let the child talk as much, and as often as he/she needs to do. Assure the child that you will protect and support him/her.

GIVING YOUR CHILD SELF ESTEEM

- . Speak Love--Say "I love you" and "You're important and special to me."
- . A Hug A Day-Children need to feel your love through positive physical touch.
- . Quality Time Is Quantity Time-Love is something you do, so do more with your child.
- . Take Their Place-Put yourself in your child's place.
- . Go With Your Gut-If someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable, go with your gut and trust your child's instincts.