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**Lesson Plan: Ages 14-17 Grades 9-12**

**Objective: To help teens to set appropriate boundaries in their relationships with both adults and peers. To develop skills for addressing situations where boundaries are crossed.**

Opening Prayer: 1 Corinthians 13 (The gift of love)

**Knowing How to Distinguish Good/Bad in Relationships (25 minutes)****How do you know when you are in a good relationship?**

- A good relationship is life-giving. The other person encourages you to grow. It does not demand all your time and attention; you are proud to be with the other person in the circles of your family and friends; you maintain your individuality while in a couple relationship; it is respectful; you feel a comfortable sense of belonging.

**How do you know when you are in a bad relationship?**

- A bad relationship stifles you. It is demanding and possessive. You feel isolated from friends and family and embarrassed by the other person's behavior; you feel trapped and lose a sense of yourself; there is a loss of control over your own choices; it is not respectful of personal boundaries; you feel "disconnected" from yourself, friends and others.

Put young people in groups of two. Ask them to create a scenario of a pair of friends, a couple, or an adult/teen relationship in each of those two categories above (good relationship and a bad relationship). Share their scenarios with the large group as time allows.

**Recognizing Boundaries in Peer and Adult Relationships (15 minutes)**

*Boundaries are the physical and emotional limits a person establishes in his/her relationships. Examples of physical boundaries include the comfortable physical distance we determine when we interact with people, when we allow people to touch, hug or kiss us, the sexual boundaries we set. Different cultures determine different physical boundaries. Some cultures accept greeting of others in physically demonstrative ways-with hugs and kisses, even with those they do not know; others accept only minimal eye contact in meeting someone new. It is important to know the culture you are dealing with for appropriate physical boundaries. Most boundaries reflect our personal preferences or our values. Emotional boundaries include limits we establish on what personal information we disclose to others, and how we respect others' self-esteem and feelings. Emotional boundaries are crossed by manipulative behavior, name calling, sarcasm, ridicule, put-downs. Some people reveal a lot of personal information immediately, while others take longer to get to know. Some people welcome and even expect others to probe into their lives, while others are more "private," choosing to reveal themselves gradually with time and trust.*

In good relationships, each individual is respectful of others' boundaries and does not cross them. In bad relationships, boundaries are ignored and people feel uncomfortable and even violated. Sometimes an individual tries to manipulate the other into believing he/she should cross his/her own pre-set boundary. This technique is often used to get others to cross over sexual boundaries.

**What are some warning signs that someone is trying to cross your physical or emotional boundaries?**

- A person gives you alcohol or drugs.
- A person tries to get you alone or asks you to keep a secret, or threatens if you reveal this.
- A person tries to win you over with gifts, special praise or consideration.
- A person uses conditions to get you to do something you might want. For example, "If you want a good grade, you need to have sex with me."
- A person tries to isolate you from your support system (like friends and family).
- A person is persistent in trying to talk you into what they want, despite your saying "no."

You have a right to have your boundaries respected and a responsibility to respect others. It is important to recognize when a person is trying to cross your boundaries and stop it immediately, even if that person is someone you know.

### **Refusal and Assertive Skills for Safeguarding Boundaries (20 minutes)**

- Give each group these scenarios and ask them to address each. Then choose pairs to role-play each of the three in front of the group.

1) A girl/guy wants to date you. S/he is constantly at your locker, at your lunch table and always around, trying to get your attention and get you to accept their invitation for a date. You are feeling your boundaries are being crossed and need to let this person know.

2) Your girl/boyfriend has been putting you down both in private and in public around friends. S/he makes fun of your mannerisms by accentuating them and laughing; s/he makes negative comments about your looks and tells you that you are lucky you have him/her because no one else would want you. You recognize your emotional boundaries are being violated and you need to address this.

3) An assistant coach you admire seems to favor you over the others. S/he appears when you are alone in the locker area and has “accidentally” touched your breast and buttocks on a few occasions. You don’t want to hurt her/his feelings and you know s/he has control over whether you start on the team or not. But her/his behavior is making you uncomfortable as you recognize that boundaries are being crossed. You need to deal with this.

4) Your employer calls you at home and talks about her/his personal life and gives you gifts. It is well known among the other employees that s/he favors you. It seems s/he is coming on to you, even though you are 15 years younger. One night s/he asks you to work alone with her/him until late and promises to bring you home. This makes you uncomfortable; especially when s/he urges you to tell your parents you are going to a friend’s house and will be home by your 1:00 a.m. curfew! You don’t want to lose your job, but you know you need to address this.

#### **Point out through the role play:**

- The need to be assertive and use “I feel,” and “I need,” statements.
- To get away from the person violating their boundaries.
- To tell a trusted adult who will help you determine whether or not to pursue this as harassment or abuse.
- The need to address the issue with someone, even if they are an adult in authority and have power over you.
- Teens may be sexually abused by either men or women.
- Teens are as vulnerable to lures as are children, since offenders know how to use lures so effectively and convincingly.
- To know beforehand clearly what your boundaries are, so you are not in a situation to have to determine them under duress.

#### **Internet and Cell phone Reminders:**

**What is “Sexting”?** Refers to teens that share nude photos via cell phones, other devices, and e-mail. It’s illegal! Sometimes it’s Flirting, Impulsive Behavior, Blackmail, and/or Bribery. IT’S ALWAYS A BAD IDEA. If the picture crosses a State line, the offence becomes a federal felony. If you pass a picture on, you are just as guilty, even if you didn’t know it went across a State line. “Sexting” ruins lives.

#### ***Social Etiquette for MySpace, Twitter, Facebook, etc.***

- Think about what you post. The net is forever! If you posted it, someone has it and it might come back to trouble you. (College, Job Interview, Relationship, etc.)
- Read between the lines. Maybe someone is searching for information on you.
- Don’t talk about sex with strangers. (A secret is something you tell another friend.)
- Avoid in-person meetings. The only way someone can harm you is if you are both in the same location.

**Closing:** Send them forth with a simple prayer blessing them with God’s love.

*A Member of the Division of Catholic Education*

## APPENDIX

### I. TRICKS/LURES USED BY SEXUAL PREDATORS

Below are a list of the most common tricks used by sexual predators to lure children into an abusive relationship. After each description is the ages group(s) that are most susceptible to that lure/trick.

**Bad News Trick** – The predator tells a child that something bad happened (sickness or death of a parent, fire...) and that the predator was asked to pick up the child and bring them home. (Ages 5-7, 8-10)

**Bribe Trick** – The predator offers something special that the child may want, then ask for sexual favors in return. (Ages 5-7, 8-10)

**Can I Help You Trick** – The predator may give assistance to a child when needed or may offer to help the family of the child by offering rides, or babysitting. This puts the predator in a position of trust for future abuse. (Ages 5-7, 8-10, 11-13)

**Drug and Alcohol Trick** – Drugs and or alcohol can be given to a child to make it easier to take advantage of the child. (Ages 11-13, 14-17)

**Game Trick** – Wrestling, tickling, accidental or deliberate contact with genitalia as part of the rule to a game played with a child. (Ages 5-7, 8-10)

**Help Me Trick** – The predator may ask for help from a child such as asking for directions, finding a lost pet, to carry heavy packages. (Ages 5-7, 8-10, 11-13)

**Internet Trick** – Predators will try to get personal information from the child. The predator may act as though they are the same age as the child to establish a friendship. They will often send the child sexual material, and will try to set up a meeting with the child. (Ages 11-13, 14-17)

**Position of Power or Authority Trick** – A predator may be in a position of authority such as a coach, police officer, priest or teacher and use this position to get children to be obedient to their request. (Ages 5-7, 8-10, 11-13)

**“You Are Special” Trick** – The predator gives special attention or favor to a child to gain trust and for future sexual abuse. (Ages 8-10, 11-13, 14, 17)

### II. INTERNET SAFETY

Technology has been a wonderful gift to expand the horizons of learning for children, teens and adults. But this same technology can expose children and teens to dangers. Sexual predators will often use the Internet to sexually exploit children and teens. They will often spend a great deal of time gradually seducing minors by establishing trust – they listen to children’s stories, connect with their interests, give advice. Then they may slowly introduce sexual subjects into the conversation or lure the child/teen into a face-to-face meeting.

Since some children and teens are curious about sex and sexually explicit material, going onto the Internet is an easy way for sex offenders to take advantage of the opportunity to exploit them. Predators may gradually desensitize children/teens in order to lift inhibitions around talking about sex.

Here are some simple rules for online safety:

**Keep your identity private.**

Never give your name, address, phone number, school name, birthday, photograph or any other personal information to someone online. Predators will do anything to gain access to your information and may use lures to do so. For example, they may say that you need to give them some information in order to gain access to a chat room or a site they are recommending to you! Don't fall for that! Or, they are astute in getting information from your screen name. Often people use a birth date in their screen name. This is a giveaway that you are a child or teen, which attracts the attention of the predator.

Realize that people are not always who they say they are! You may think you are speaking to a peer, when in fact, it is a predator in disguise, all the time gaining information from you they will use later. This is particularly true of "teen only" chat rooms - it's impossible to tell who is a real teen!

**Never respond to an e-mail, instant message, chat comments or newsgroup messages that are hostile, inappropriate or in any way make you feel uncomfortable.**

The best response is to simply get away from the site and make an adult aware of it. In public chat rooms, there is usually a monitor who will screen the comments, but not so in private chat rooms. Be wary when someone asks you to leave the public chat to join them in a private chat room. A private chat room gives a predator free rein to say whatever they want to you.

Never open a spam e-mail message as this may automatically get you into a database for future inappropriate messages. Always know your sender.

Be wary of those who try to isolate you by turning you against friends and family. This is a common lure to get children/teens to turn their allegiance to the predator.

**Never, ever, arrange to meet someone you meet online without parental permission and supervision.**

Always let a parent know of any invitation to meet someone. If your parent is assured that this might be a peer who wants to make a friend, meet the person in a public place accompanied by your parent. Never meet someone alone!!! If your parents say no, trust them. It's NO!

**Always talk with your parents to establish rules and expectations for going online.**

For your own safety, parents need to be able to monitor a child/teen's Internet activity. The computer should always be in a public place in the house. Parents may use some sort of chip or filter to deny access to certain types of material. Parents may put limits on the amount of time a child/teen is online, as well as for what reasons a child/teen can be online.

**Warning Signs for Parents!!!**

- Is your child spending large amounts of time online, especially at night?
- Is your child using an online account that belongs to someone else?
- Does your child quickly change the screen or turn the computer off when you come into the room?
- Does your child make phone calls to someone you don't know, receive mail or gifts from someone you don't know?
- Do you find pornography or inappropriate material on the computer?
- Is your child becoming increasingly isolated from the family and being drawn to the computer instead of interacting with friends?

Parents, learn everything you can about the Internet, and teach your children appropriate "netiquette"!

For more on Internet safety see:

[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

*A Member of the Division of Catholic Education*

[www.safekids.com](http://www.safekids.com)

[www.safeteens.com](http://www.safeteens.com)

N.B. The original sexual abuse awareness lesson plans were developed by the staff of the Diocese of Albany. We thank them for sharing their curriculum with us.