Date:

### Title: Creating a CASE for Safe Environment

Materials List

* Printer paper
* Markers
* Pencils
* Newsprint signs, PowerPoint, or other method of having “warning signs” visually
* “red flags” (red construction paper slips work)

### Leaders:

Teens:

Adults:

### Objectives:

* The youth will appreciate the Church’s teaching on human dignity and recognize their own dignity.
* The youth will understand boundaries they have (physical, emotional & behavioral).
* The youth will understand the plight of sexual abuse and develop practical methods of protection.
* The youth will understand that the vast majority of adults care about and want what is best for them.

Overview (*a break-down of events)*

* Gather as a group
* Opening Prayer
* Made in the Image and Likeness of God
* We have Boundaries
* When Crossing Boundaries Crosses the Line
* Closing Remarks / Debriefing
* Closing Prayer

Before you Begin

*You will want to review the Creating a Safe Environment policies so you are familiar with them. You will also want to have already developed appropriate rules for your gatherings that reinforce those policies.*

*Ensure your space has the necessary room for the community builder and break-out sessions for small groups.*

Opening Prayer: (5 min)

Led by:

A reading from the First Letter of St. John.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

The Word of the Lord.

*Lord, Jesus, help us learn today how we are made to walk in the light with you. Help us discover the beauty of being made in your image and how to respect the wonderful gift of one another you have given us. We ask this, as we ask all our prayers, through Christ our Lord.* ***Amen.***

Made in the Image and Likeness of God: (20 min)

Led by:

Begin this section of the lesson by inviting everyone to choose a partner and invite them to stand back to back. Play the following game:

Telephone Drawing:

One partner will be given a simple drawing and the other partner will be given a pencil and a blank sheet of paper. The partner with the drawing will have 5 minutes to describe the drawing to their partner, who will then attempt to re-create the drawing exactly.

After this game, pose the question: How is “likeness” different than a mirror image? The “likeness” of something resembles an entity without having to be an exact copy of it. A caricature is a “likeness” of someone. A photograph is an image.

What does being made in the image and likeness of God mean for us?

* We show God to others, much like the drawing you created shows a likeness of the original to the viewer
* We are not God, but we resemble elements of God, just like no copy is exactly like the original
* We recognize that everyone we meet is also made in the image and likeness of God.

When we recognize others to be made in the image and likeness of God we are compelled to treat one another with respect and love. God loves each of us. He created us with love and for love. We all have great dignity and value and God values us despite our own sinfulness. God calls us to value each other in the same way. This is called respect. Respect is a virtue that leads us to doing right and avoiding doing what is wrong.

Discussion:

Choose to either break into small groups or lead a large group discussion

on the following questions:

1. How do you show respect for yourself?
2. How do you show respect for others?
3. When have you strived to treat another as a child of God?

How was it received?

1. What have you been treated as “made in God’s image”?
2. What might look different if more people treated others with respect?
3. How can you tell if someone is being disrespectful?

When someone is disrespectful to us it hurts because they have not acknowledged the immense worth and dignity that we have as a child of God.

We have Boundaries (20 min)

Ask everyone to stand up with their partner once again and play the following game:

Mirror Push

Divide into pairs. Each person faces their partner and holds their hands up to each other palm to palm without touching. The goal is to “push” the other person without touching him/her and without being touched. You must mirror their actions and they must mirror yours.

As Christians, we are called to imitate Christ. We try to be the mirror that shows Christ and Christian love to the world. Notice how, in the game, we tried to mimic the movement of the other person. We weren’t exact, but we tried. Christian life is similar. We try to mimic Jesus. We not only SHOW Jesus in the world, we ARE Christ in the world. But that doesn’t always work…Remember trying to push the other person over? Remember having someone try to push you over? People are not God. Some people try to exert control over others and force them to act, feel or believe inappropriately.

We show our respect for ourselves and others by respecting one another’s boundaries. There are boundaries we put in place for ourselves and there are boundaries that are put in place by authority figures in our lives like parents, teachers and lawmakers. Boundaries are physical, emotional and behavioral limits. Because we are imperfect human beings, we require boundaries in our relationships. Boundaries provide us with the promise of being in a relationship where both people are committed to preserving respect and upholding the dignity of another.

Is it always easy to understand boundaries? Do we all have the same boundaries? Let’s play this game to determine where we stand:

Raise a Red Flag:

Hand out a red paper flag to everyone in the group. Pose the following questions and invite them to raise the red flag if they believe the situation crosses or is ABOUT to cross a boundary:

Physical Boundaries:

1. Your best friend gives you a fist bump
2. Your mom gives you a kiss on the cheek
3. Your band teacher rubs your back
4. Your youth minister gives you a hug
5. The little old lady in the pew behind you shakes your hand during the sign of peace
6. A friend puts his or her arm around you at a football game, without asking
7. A coach pats you on the bottom when you come off the field
8. A participant at youth group sits “overlapping” with you on the couch
9. Your sibling punches your arm on the school bus
10. A person comes up behind you in the hall and places their hands over your eyes without saying a word

Emotional boundaries

1. Your boyfriend/girlfriend gets jealous if you talk to someone else
2. Your boyfriend/girlfriend tells you that he or she loves you
3. Your mom says “I’m not mad, I’m just disappointed”
4. A family member threatens you when you don’t do what he or she says
5. A priest scolds you in the confessional
6. Your dad is proud when you succeed
7. Your friends cheer you on at your game or recital
8. Your math teacher laughs when you make a mistake
9. A person in your class sends you an inappropriate text
10. Your friend blames you for things that go wrong in his or her life

Behavioral boundaries

1. Your friend starts changing his or her clothes in front of you
2. Someone offers you weed
3. Your best friend’s parent offers to get you into an R rated movie
4. Your neighbor pulls over and asks you if you need a ride home
5. Your friend’s dad leaves a pornographic site up on the family laptop
6. Your mom signs you up for a volunteer project
7. Your youth minister says EVERYONE must play the game
8. Your camp counselor wrestles with you
9. Your principal tells you to put your hat in your locker
10. Your gym teacher tells you that everyone must shower after Phys Ed or you will not get a participation grade for the day

Review this game by taking some of the questions to the extreme. For example, maybe it is ok for a boyfriend or girlfriend to tell you they love you but not on day 2 of a relationship and maybe it is ok for mom to kiss you on the cheek but not in the middle of your hallway at school. We set different boundaries for ourselves and have different levels of comfort. Learning to respect what may be comfortable for you and is not comfortable for another is a key skill in life.

**When Crossing Boundaries Crosses a Line** (20 min)

Sometimes an individual tries to manipulate another into believing that he or she should cross his or her own predetermined boundaries. This technique is often used to get people to cross their sexual boundaries. For us to be safe, we must be able to identify warning signs of red flags becoming dangerous situations. These can be especially dangerous if that individual is an adult. While most adults care for you and want what is best for you, it is important to for you to be aware of some warning signs:

* A person gives you alcohol or drugs
* A person tries to be alone with you or asks you to keep a secret and then threaten you if you reveal it
* A person tries to win you over with gifts, special praise or consideration
* A person uses conditions you might want to get you do something they want
* A person asks you too many personal questions or shares too much personal information with you
* A person touches you too closely or for too long
* A person makes a comment about your body or that of someone else that is inappropriate
* A person invites you to look at pornography
* A person tries to isolate you from your support system
* A person uses persistent means of being in communication with you
* A person asks you to text a picture of yourself
* A person uses their authority to manipulate you

HOW TO RESPOND:

1. Inform someone that you know and trust about what is happening to you. KEEP TELLING until something happens to change your situation

IF A PERSON COMES TO YOU WITH INFORMATION ABOUT ABUSE:

1. Try to be understanding and listen
2. Encourage that person to tell a friend or a trusted adult
3. Don’t make promises you can’t keep
4. Offer to go and tell someone WITH that person

Closing Prayer (5 min)

Led by:

Trusting that God walks with us and cares for us, let us pause to pray for anyone who has experienced abuse.

—pause—

And let us pray for one another tonight, that we might know of the support we offer each other as the Body of Christ in the world today. May we always help one another and be a comfort to each other whenever we need.

For all of this, we pray in the words Jesus gave us:

Our Father ….

**Postcards for parental discussion after the session.**

What did you think of the session topic tonight? Did it make you think?

What did you learn about the different boundaries?

*Physical Boundaries = Who can touch you along with how much, and where.*

*Emotional Boundaries = How you feel and how others make you feel.*

*Behavioral Boundaries = What you will and will not do.*

So what type of physical contact is okay with adults in every-day situations?

What’s the difference between your emotional boundaries between you & your

parents and you & your best friend or you & your teacher?

What helps you define your behavioral boundaries?

They told you that most adults care about you and are not going to hurt you, right?

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**Sample Opt-Out Letter**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As Catholics, we believe every human person is made in the image and likeness of God, and for this reason we believe in the dignity of every person. Every person’s dignity needs to be respected, and when this is not done we believe the Body of Christ is hurt.

As part of the Diocese of Rochester’s ongoing commitment to provide safe environments for children and teens, we are offering a session entitled *Creating a CASE for Safe Environment* to middle school students in our parishes. *Creating a CASE for Safe Environment* is a locally developed session for middle school students designed to empower teens to recognize unsafe behaviors and situations and to provide them with strategies to respond.

This program will help teens:

* Appreciate the Church’s teaching on human dignity and recognize their own dignity.
* Understand boundaries they have (specifically physical, emotional, and behavioral boundaries)
* Understand the plight of sexual abuse and develop practical methods of protection.
* Understand that the vast majority of adults care about and want what is best for them.

*Creating a CASE for Safe Environment* is not intended to replace your important role as parent. You have primary responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of your children. Rather, this session is designed to assist you in this responsibility by giving children information and skills that you may not be able to offer them.

If you do not want your child to participate in this program, please fill out the form on the opposite side. If you do not return a form, we will accept your assent to provide this ministry to your child. Regardless, if your child participates or not, please know that the parish and the Diocese of Rochester will continue to strive to provide you with information and materials to help you educate your child in this area of our faith.

I understand that *Creating a CASE for Safe Environment* is the program selected by the Diocese of Rochester to fulfill one portion of the education component of the USCCB’s *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, specifically with regard to Catholic Middle and Junior High Schools.

I DO NOT give permission for my child to participate in the *Creating a CASE for Safe Environment* lesson. I am opting to ensure his/her formation in this area myself, and I recognize that my child’s school, parish and the Diocese of Rochester are available to provide resources to help me.

Name of Student

Name of Parent/Guardian (printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

**Post Lesson Assessment**

No. of Youth:

What went well?

What needs to change for future use?

Is there anything that needs immediate follow-up?

Other points of note: