
Ages 11-13 (Grades 6-8)

Objective: To help youth recognize lures used by sexual predators via the anonymity of the Internet. To give young teens skills to avoid being victimized by Internet sexual predators.

Opening Prayer: “I have formed you and I know you, “says the Lord. (Psalm 136) Reflect on God who knows us better than anyone and calls us by name. No one is anonymous to God.

Presentation and Process: *Watching Out while Having Fun* (5 minutes)

- Ask young people what are some things they like to do for fun?
- When we decide to do something for fun, we tend to just do it and only think about the fun it will be. Rarely, if ever, do we think about the dangers that something fun might hold. For example, we think that rollerblading is fun, and it is! But it’s more fun when we are aware of and prepare for the dangers inherent in rollerblading. We need to know how to stop, what protective gear to wear, etc. If so, it can be great fun.
- What are some of the dangers to be aware of in the things you mentioned above? How many of you think surfing the net and meeting people online is fun?

***Internet Safety Scenarios* (15 minutes)**

Divide the group into three and give each group one of the following scenarios to talk about. Call the group back together after about 5 minutes to report on what they said.

- A. *You create a screen name by using your first name, last initial and year you were born to make it easy for you to remember. Is this screen name a good idea? Why or Why not?*
- B. *You are in a chat room and someone starts to talk to you. She says she is your age and lives in a nearby town. At the end of a long conversation, she says she wants to meet with you. You really want to make some new friends and are interested in meeting her. What to do?*
- C. *You are creating your own website. You want to make it in your personal style. What information should you put on it and what should you avoid putting on it?*

***Using the Internet Safely- What Are the Risks?* (15 minutes)**

Ask young people to come up with some “Ten Commandments” for online safety. Talk about the importance of parents in helping them to avoid the dangers of the Internet and to keep their online use safe and fun!

Some risks to young people using the Internet are:

- A. Exposure to inappropriate material.
- B. Viruses, Hackers and increased Spam.
- C. Harassment and Bullying
- D. Legal and Financial

How to keep safe:

1. Keep you and your family’s identity private- names, home address, school name, telephone numbers, etc.
2. 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.
3. Never, ever, arrange to meet someone you meet online without parental permission and supervision.
4. Always talk with your parents to establish rules and expectations for going online.

5. Remember that people online may not be who they seem or say.
6. Everything you read online may not be true.

Other Ways to Be Safe (15min)

The internet is just one way that people try to trick young people into a situation that is not safe. A sexual predator will use other ways to make friends with you in order to take advantage of you.

1. **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.
2. **Drug and Alcohol Trick** – Drugs and or alcohol can be given to a child to make it easier to take advantage of the child.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **“You Are Special” Trick** – The predator gives special attention or favor to a child to gain trust and for future sexual abuse.

What is Cyber bullying? Harassing people online.

Tips to stop Cyber bullying: Don't respond, Don't retaliate, Save the evidence, Talk to a trusted adult, Block the bully, Be civil, Don't be a bully, Be a friend.

What is Grooming? Persons who target young people online [children/youths/young adult] to manipulate (control, direct) them for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

- Groomers design what they say as they go along.
- They will use Flattery, Sympathy, Offer Gifts, Offer Money or Modeling Jobs.
- Their goal is to get the “victim” to feel loved and just comfortable enough to want the victim to meet them privately.
- Groomers have all the time in the world. They can take days, weeks, even months to “groom” a victim.

What is “Sexting”? Usually refers to teens that share nude photos via cell phones and other devices and the e-mails too.

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

Be sure to stress that the net/ web can be fun, educational and also harmful. If you are unsure of anything you might have done, you should tell a trusted adult immediately.

Send them forth with a simple prayer blessing them with God's love.

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

A Member of the Division of Catholic Education

www.safekids.com

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.