



***Diocese of Fort Worth  
Teen Leader Safe  
Environment***

***Educational Program  
for Teen Ministry Leaders***

**PRAESIDIUM RELIGIOUS SERVICES**

*Our Passion. Your Protection*



## Other contact information

Victims' Assistance Coordinator  
817.602.5119

The Sexual Abuse Hotline  
817.945.9345

Very Reverend E. James Hart  
The Catholic Center  
817.945.9313

Or write...  
Diocese of Fort Worth  
Victims' Assistance Ministry  
The Catholic Center  
800 West Loop 820 South  
Fort Worth TX 76108

## Why do we need to know all of this information?

*You are unique.*

*You may have responsibilities with children or serve as a peer leader,*

*You are an employee or a volunteer in an organization, and*

*You are still a minor who may be vulnerable in ways you do not realize.*



## Do You Know You Exercise Power As A Leader?

*As a ministry leader,  
You have the power to affect a  
child's or young person's life  
positively or negatively.*

*You have the power to SHARE  
your faith and SHOW your  
faith to the children or youth  
you are ministering to.*

### *Negative ways to use my power...*

- *Ignoring a child in need.*
- *Making a joke about someone's physical body.*
- *Touching a person in a way that would make them feel uncomfortable.*
- *Forcing someone to do something they don't want to do.*

## What actually happens when someone is sexually abused?

*It could be any sexual activity,*

- *Hugging or kissing in a romantic or sexual way.*
- *Taking nude or almost nude pictures.*
- *Showing pornography.*
- *Showing or touching genitals.*
- *Sexual intercourse.*



## But who is protecting the little kids or the teens I work with?

*You are. You are a protector of children and youth.*

*As a member of the team working with children and youth, you are responsible for helping to keep them safe.*

*That means you have to know the rules about working with children and youth defined in the Code of Conduct. Make sure someone explains to you what you are and are not allowed to do with kids/youth.*

*Just knowing the rules is not enough. You have to make sure that you follow the rules too. And that means all the time.*

## Wait a minute, what are boundaries?

*Boundaries are the lines you draw for yourself about what you will and will not do.*

*Boundaries can be physical, emotional or behavioral..*



## Is there anything else that is against the law?

*Yes, in the United States, people are not allowed to create environments that make people feel uncomfortable about being men or women.*

*That means flirting, talking about the way someone looks, the clothes they are wearing, or any kind of “dirty jokes” are not allowed.*

*You are also not supposed to do any of these things that could make others feel uncomfortable either.*

## Physical Boundary Violations

- 1. Touching too much.*
- 2. “Accidentally” touching in private areas.*
- 3. Wrestling or tickling too much.*
- 4. Holding you, an older kid, on the lap.*
- 5. Hugging too much or with too much body contact.*



## What if something happens at the place where I am working?

*It's against the law for anyone to approach you for sexual contact at the place where you are working.*

*That would be true even if you were not under 18.*

*There are laws against "Sexual Harassment."*

*That means the place where you work should feel safe and comfortable for you.*

*You should not feel like anyone at your work is trying to have sexual contact with you.*

*The same is true for you. You are not allowed to do those things to anyone else.*

## Emotional Boundary Violations

1. *Ridiculing the beliefs of your family.*
2. *Calling or Emailing too much.*
3. *Giving too many gifts or secret gifts.*
4. *Acting too possessive.*



## But what if I have already been sexually abused?

*If you have experienced sexual abuse already, you need to know that it was not your fault.*

*You also need to know that God loves you and would never have wanted sexual abuse to happen to you.*

*If you are still being abused, now is the time to talk with someone who can help keep you safe.*

*Sometimes it helps kids feel better to talk with someone, even if the abuse has ended.*

## Behavioral Boundary Violations

1. *Talking about sexual activities.*
2. *Showing you pornography.*
3. *Giving you alcohol or drugs.*
4. *Getting you to lie or keep secrets.*



## But what's the big deal if someone violates my boundaries?

*It's possible that when an adult or older youth violates your boundaries that it could lead to sexual abuse.*

*Once someone has violated your boundaries you may feel like you have to have sexual contact with them even if you don't want to.*

*You may feel like you owe them something. You may think you would get in just as much trouble as they would if you told.*

*But it's not true. It's not your fault and there are adults who want to help you.*

## Okay, so what do I do if someone violates my boundaries?

1. *Avoid the person.*
2. *Tell the person you're not allowed to do what they want you to do.*
3. *Tell the person you don't like what they're doing.*
4. *Tell your parents, a trusted adult or a friend what has happened.*



## Behavioral Boundaries

*Behavioral boundaries are where you draw the lines about,*

- *What you will or won't do,.*
- *What set of rules you follow.*

**The truth is, I feel like I went along with the person. What now?**

*First, you need to know that child molesters are very clever at making kids think it was their fault.*

*Second, just because you may have done some things you are ashamed of or wished you hadn't... doesn't mean the abuse was your fault.*



## Emotional Boundaries

*Emotional boundaries are where you draw the lines about,*

- *Who you share personal information with,*
- *Who you talk to about your feelings, and*
- *Who you spend time with.*

## What is against the law for someone to do at my job?

1. *Telling you or acting like you will lose your job or get into trouble if you do not have sexual contact.*
2. *Telling you that you will get a raise or a good evaluation if you do have sexual contact.*



## Physical Boundaries

*Physical boundaries are where you draw the lines about,*

- *Who can touch you,.*
- *How much they can touch you, and*
- *Where they can touch you.*

**What am I supposed to do if anyone starts doing those things to me or with me around?**

1. *Avoid the person if you can.*
  2. *Tell the program director,*
  3. *Talk to your parents,*
  4. *Tell your boss's boss..*
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1. *If you don't get the help you need or if the problem continues, call the bishop's office or send a "Notice of Concern" to the Diocese.*



## But how can an older kid be sexually abused?

*Usually, sexual abuse of an adolescent or a teenager starts with boundary violations.*

*An adult or older kid can push boundaries before the sexual activities even start.*

## What should I do if I notice someone violating a child's boundaries?

1. *Be sure that you do not violate boundaries with younger kids.*
2. *Tell an adult you work or volunteer with if you see someone else violate a child's boundaries.*
3. *If you can't tell someone at church, tell your parents.*



## What is sexual abuse?

*Sexual abuse is when someone older or more powerful involves a child or adolescent in sexual activity.*

*Older kids, even teenagers, can be sexually abused.*

*Plus - It's against the law.*

## How can I use my power in a positive way?

- Help children feel good about themselves.*
- Help a young person through a problem.*
- Use language that shows dignity and respect for the person.*
- Maintain appropriate boundaries.*
- Listen from the heart so that others know you care about them.*



## What is the purpose of this program?

*To help you be a responsible staff person capable of protecting children and youth.*

*To teach you what you need to know to work with children or youth respectfully and safely.*

*To give you the information you need to protect yourself from sexual abuse, boundary violations and sexual harassment.*

*To allow you to be part of the Catholic Church's commitment to take a leadership role in preventing the sexual abuse of children and young people.*

## Notes:

