

Dear Parents of Children in Grade 8,

The Diocese of San Diego is committed to providing a safe environment for all who worship, work, or participate in education and formation opportunities in our parishes and schools. The problem of child sexual abuse is a serious one; a child suffers sexual abuse somewhere in our country every thirteen seconds.

As the primary educators of your child, you are entrusted with the responsibility of providing appropriate information regarding how to keep your child safe from sexual abuse. Empowered parents can develop and maintain an environment of trust in the home that allows children to discuss any topic, any fear, and any experience they are having. Potential abusers will avoid children who have such an open and honest relationship with their parents because abusers depend upon secrecy to avoid suspicion.

In compliance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, the topic of safe environments will be introduced to your child on \_\_\_\_\_ in the following manner:

Your child's teacher/catechist will emphasize in class:

- That we are all created in God's image.
- Our bodies are special and sacred.
- Because our bodies are sacred
  - ♦ No one has the right to touch our bodies in a way that makes us feel weird, uncomfortable, scared or worried.
  - ♦ No one has a right to touch the private parts of our bodies – the parts covered by a bathing suit – unless it is for health or safety reasons. Your body belongs to you.
  - ♦ No one has a right to hurt us or to threaten us or someone we love.
  - ♦ No one has a right to ask us to keep a secret about our bodies from our parents or teachers
- If someone has touched us in a way that makes us feel weird, uncomfortable, scared or worried, we should use the **NO-GO-TELL Rule** (included on the following page).
- It is important to keep telling adults until someone you know listens and believes you and will take care of the situation.
- God helps by giving us the courage to say “NO,” by giving us strength to tell someone and by giving us information to protect ourselves.

Your child will be told that you will continue this discussion with him/her at home. Along with this letter are materials intended to help you with that conversation.