

8 Things Children Can Do To Help Create and Maintain Safe Environments at Church and at School

Rules tell children what to do and what not to do. Children should be taught that if they follow the rules they can stay safe. Given the unique needs of children and teenagers in relation to the rest of the Christian community, it is not surprising that in the Church we place the needs of our children and teenagers first.

Children can help maintain a safe environment by following certain rules. Children need to know that:

1. They can and should discuss anything that happens to them that makes them feel uncomfortable, confused, or upset in any way. They would usually talk to one of their parents, but they can also talk to a teacher, a school nurse, or another adult they can trust. When someone touches them in a way they do not want to be touched, they can tell that person to stop.
2. Most people are only allowed to touch certain parts of their body, like their hands or their shoulders. But NO ONE should touch the private parts of their body unless they are helping you keep these parts healthy. Private areas are those parts of their bodies covered by a swimsuit. If they are touched in a way they do not want to be touched they must tell their parents or an adult they trust. They need to remember that if an adult touches them in a place they do not want to be touched, that adult is wrong. It is never a child's fault when an adult does something wrong.
3. They do not talk to or ride in cars with people they do not know. They do not accept gifts from adults they do not know. When accepting gifts they tell their parents.
4. When they go on field trips, they stay close to each other and they do not wander away from their parents or teachers. They always remember to have permission slips signed by their parents or guardians that allow them to go on field trips. If there is no permission slip, then there is no field trip.
5. If they see a friend doing something that could be bad for their friend, they tell their friend to stop. If he or she keeps doing it, they tell their parents or another adult. If a friend tells them that another person is making him or her feel uncomfortable, confused, or upset in any way, they tell this to an adult who can help, like their parents or a teacher.
6. If someone around them makes them uncomfortable or worried, they should tell their parents or another adult they trust.
7. They do not wander off alone to lonely or secluded places. They always keep an adult they trust within sight. Before they leave the area of the adult in charge, they must ask permission of the adult.
8. They treat other people the way they would want to be treated. They do not treat other people as objects. They do not use other people to get what they want.