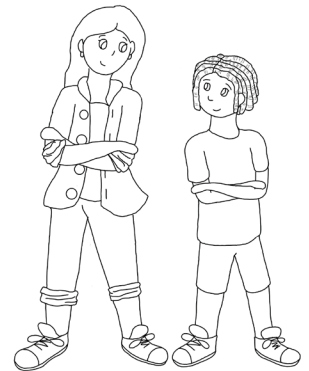




Safe and Healthy Relationships Youth Guide | Family Follow-Up Session 1



Dear Family Members,

You may be wondering, “Why is our church teaching my child about safe and healthy relationships? Is this something they should be engaging with in Confirmation Class or Youth Group? What are they going to talk about?”

Cherish All Children has been providing education, tools and engagement with adults and youth since 2005, working with you to support raising children into safe and healthy relationships, free from sexual exploitation and trafficking. We began as a ministry within the ELCA and then joined with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota in 2017 to continue supporting churches and community groups in keeping young people safe.

Our work has evolved as the needs of young people have changed – especially with the increase of internet use through social media, gaming, school-issued devices and all the other ways youth connect online. Further, the pandemic created greater isolation for many youth, opening the door more widely for exploiters to target youth. We believe our faith communities offer a unique opportunity to connect with youth in a safe space while reinforcing their value as a child of God. Opening these conversations with safe adults and engaging in skill-building activities with their peers at church can support you as family members in continuing these conversations at home.



We are committed to preventing all forms of sexual violence, and we know that prevention education is a powerful tool. Here is an image from one of our community partners, the [Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault \(MNCASA\)](#), showing the reality of why this work is so critical.

The four sessions your child will participate in were created with great care by Joy McElroy, director of Cherish All Children, and Deacon Erica Larson, Faith Formation leader in the Minneapolis Area Synod, ELCA. Thanks to young adult artist Sarah Zaepfel for their artwork!

Please reach out with any questions to info@cherishallchildren.org.

Session 1: Healthy Relationships

**PARENTS/CAREGIVERS:
WHO TALKED WITH YOU ABOUT HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP?**



Healthy and Unhealthy Relationship Qualities

In this first session, youth will explore the qualities that lead to a healthy friendship or relationship. Working in small groups, they'll identify healthy and unhealthy relationship qualities and learn some of the red flags that may indicate something is not quite right or might be heading in the wrong direction.

What is Consent?

Youth will view a short video about consent, chosen from three options provided to the leader, based on the youth's age and maturity level. We define consent as "permission for something to happen or agreement to do something." Discussions can become quite involved on this topic, as youth have often seen or experienced differing levels of consent in many aspects of their lives, whether with friends, family, online interactions, strangers or a dating partner.

Discussion Questions

Each session includes discussion questions the leader can choose from. You can use these at home, too! Ideally, these sessions will open the door for you to have open and relaxed conversations with your child as they navigate their relationships.

- What have you learned from those you look up to about healthy relationships? What's the best example of a healthy relationship that you know? What makes it so good?
- What makes us vulnerable to entering into unhealthy relationships?
- What would our world look like if we intentionally honored each other, simply because of our worth and value as human beings and children of God?
- What is one thing you learned during this session that you want to remember?

Closing and Resources

The leader is encouraged to close with prayer and a Reflections Box for anonymous comments.

Youth are also provided with websites to visit and social media to follow for more information and support, relative to each session's topics. You can view the full session and resources at

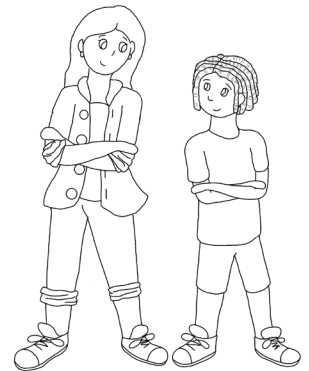
lssmn.org/cherishallchildren/safeandhealthyrelationshipsguides.



Safe and Healthy Relationships Youth Guide | Family Follow-Up Session 2

Dear Family Members,

We hope you had a chance to chat with your child after their first session on Healthy Relationships! If not, any time is a good time to begin these conversations!



Today's session is all about online safety. We want to recognize the ways a young person's online world is an important part of their socialization and connection to friends, family and growing up, while also giving them the tools to keep themselves safe. Key objectives of this session include youth learning and spotting potential dangers online, having an open space to talk about this, and identifying safe people to reach out to if needed.

An opening statement the leader may share with the youth is,
"Relationships and friendships can be confusing sometimes, and when you're talking to someone online, it can be even more complicated."

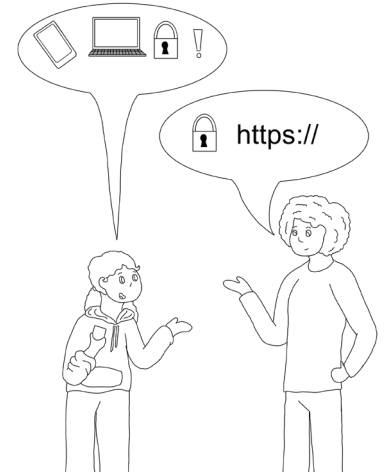
While we may not fully understand the ever-changing landscape of the online world – social media, gaming, DMs (direct messaging) and more – young people need us as their safety net. Even if it doesn't seem like it as they push us away at times (this is part of normal developmental growth), youth are longing for connection. The more we are able to connect young people with safe and healthy adults who can guide them in this complicated world of relationships, the better equipped they will be in keeping themselves safe. Building healthy relationship skills is important for both in-person and online relationships.

You, as a parent, grandparent, caretaker or other family member, may also need some support in understanding some of the warning signs of someone who seeks to exploit a young person. Oftentimes, they work over a period of time to build a relationship with the youth and even extend that to other family members, using a grooming process to gain trust. Again, this can happen both online and in person. Cherish All Children offers adult education to understand this issue better, whether through a presentation or by providing trustworthy resources. The internet is inundated with disinformation about sexual exploitation and trafficking. We can help young people through this maze by carefully informing ourselves with factual information, dispelling myths and unwarranted fears. You don't need to have all the answers, just be ready to openly enter the journey with your child.

Please reach out for additional information to info@cherishallchildren.org.

Session 2: Online Safety

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS:
DO YOU FEEL EQUIPPED TO HELP KEEP
YOUR CHILD SAFE ONLINE?



Do You Know...?

This session begins with youth learning terms related to online exploitation including catfishing, sexting, sextortion, revenge porn and grooming. Youth may already know about these, so discussing them openly in the safe space of youth group gives them a chance to talk about any experiences they've encountered and prevent them from happening in the future.

Video: "Your Photo Fate"

Youth view a short video showing how quickly a sexual photo shared in confidence can spread across school, social media, to family members and even the dark web where an exploiter may sell the photo. Discussions focus on what could have been done differently to change this situation, what role they can play and who can help if this happens. Skill building occurs as youth write in their guides and discuss what they will say to someone asking them to share something they are not comfortable with.

Staying Safe Online – Five Things I Can Do

Working in small groups, youth will reflect on what they've learned today and come up with a list of what they can personally do to stay safe online.

Discussion Questions

The leader can choose from the following questions, and you can also use these at home to continue open and relaxed conversations with your child as they go through these sessions.

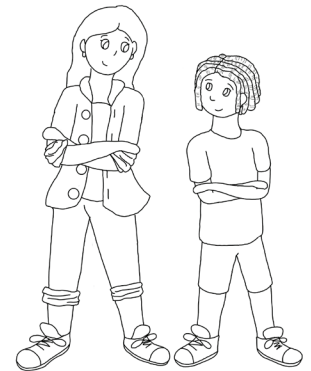
- What are some red flags you can be aware of with someone you meet online?
- Do you know who you would go to if you needed to talk about something uncomfortable or unsafe happening online?
- What impressions and ideas about sexuality do we get from video games, social media and other online content?
- What is one thing you learned during this session that you want to remember?

Closing and Resources

The leader is encouraged to close with prayer and a Reflections Box for anonymous comments. Youth are also provided with related websites to visit and social media to follow. You can view the full session and resources at lssmn.org/cherishallchildren/safeandhealthyrelationshipsguides.



Safe and Healthy Relationships Youth Guide | Family Follow-Up Session 3



Dear Family Members,

Your child has now engaged in two sessions to learn about and participate in activities around safe and healthy relationships. Hopefully you've had some good opening conversations at home as well, and these will become a normal part of your relationship as your child develops.

Today's session continues discussions from the online safety work they did last session, helping young people understand what sexual exploitation and trafficking are, and how these happen both online and in person. This session might bring up more difficult emotions if someone has experienced any form of sexual abuse or violence or knows someone who has. Youth are encouraged to take a break if needed and/or to talk with the leader later if they'd like.

As part of these sessions, the leaders are provided with a statement about being a mandated reporter to read at the start of each session. The words we have provided are, *"Together we'll be learning about ways you can keep yourself safe and engage in healthy relationships. It is also my job to help keep you safe. If you tell me someone is hurting you or someone you know, or if you are going to hurt yourself, it is my job to report this confidentially, and with your knowledge. Together we will find the support needed."*

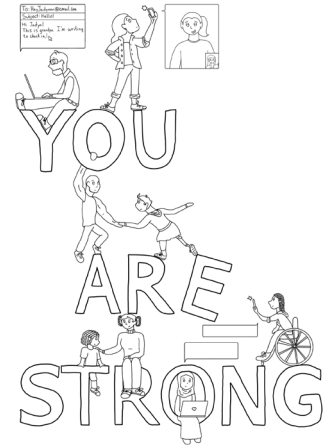
Leaders are provided with information on how to handle a potential disclosure from a youth who has experienced or is experiencing any form of abuse, exploitation or trafficking. Some of these key elements include listening with respect in a nonjudgmental way, reminding them of your responsibility as a mandated reporter and that confidentiality is a part of that responsibility, and that it is not your role to investigate the situation but to be a trustworthy supportive adult.

Cherish All Children believes it is our responsibility as people of faith to protect all God's children, and we are here to support you. Please reach out with any questions to info@cherishallchildren.org.

Session 3: Understanding and Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS:

DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE TRUSTING ADULTS (IN ADDITION TO YOU) THAT THEY CAN GO TO AND TALK ABOUT ANYTHING DIFFICULT THAT MIGHT BE GOING ON IN THEIR LIVES?



Vulnerabilities

In this session, we're discussing vulnerabilities in a different way than "being vulnerable with one another in a healthy relationship". We define a vulnerability as "something that can make it easier for someone to be taken advantage of or to be harmed physically or emotionally." Youth identifying some of their own vulnerabilities can help them understand themselves better, keep themselves safer and seek healthy and positive support when needed.

What is Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking?

These terms are defined for youth to help them identify situations they or their friends might get into that could lead to exploitation, whether online or in person, and to gain a deeper understanding of how to keep themselves safe or support a friend who might be at risk.

Who Are My Safe People?

Youth are given time to identify 2-3 safe adults and 1-3 safe friends in their lives – people they can go to and talk about anything difficult that might be going on.

Talking About the Harms of Pornography

Leaders are provided with information to share about the serious and increasing harm of online child sexual abuse material (known as child pornography). Youth are provided with the national CyberTipline to report incidences along with a link for support. Visit missingkids.org/gethelpnow/cybertipline.

My Strengths

This session ends with a strengths exercise, helping youth to identify how their strengths can act as a protective barrier to keep them safe in various situations in their lives.

Discussion Questions

There is one key discussion question for the leader to use if time allows in this full session and one additional for you to learn about who your child considers their safe people.

- What is one new thing you learned today that you could share with a trusted adult or friend?
- I see you talked about adults and friends you consider to be your safe people in today's session. I'd love to hear who they are if you're willing to share and support you in these relationships.

Closing and Resources

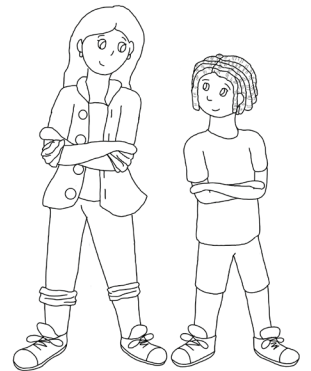
The session closes with prayer, the Reflections Box and resources for youth. You can view the full session and resources at lssmn.org/cherishallchildren/safeandhealthyrelationshipsguides.



Safe and Healthy Relationships Youth Guide | Family Follow-Up Session 4

Dear Family Members,

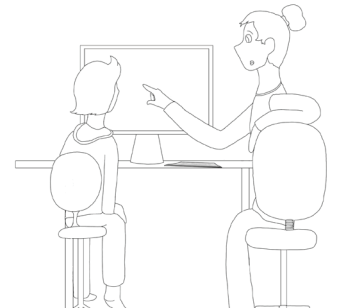
We sincerely hope these sessions have provided an opportunity to have open, meaningful conversations with your child about safe and healthy relationships. This session will help them problem solve and create their own safety plan, which includes identifying their support network. A list of numerous resources is also provided that may be helpful now and into the future. Continued blessings as you support your child through their development into healthy relationships.



Please reach out with any questions to info@cherishallchildren.org.

Session 4: Making a Safety Plan & Additional Resources

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS:
DO YOU HAVE THE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT
YOUR CHILD IN KEEPING THEMSELVES SAFE?



Challenging Situations

Youth will discuss real-life situations in small groups, giving them a chance to talk through how they might handle something that comes up at school, a party, online or even in youth group.

My Safety Plan

Youth answer questions in their guides that can help them lower their risk of being hurt by another person, avoid dangerous situations and know the best way to react if they feel they may be in danger.

Discussion Questions

- How do you communicate with another person when you see red flags in the relationship?
- How do you distance or protect yourself from unhealthy relationships?

Closing and Resources

The session closes with prayer, the Reflections Box and resources for youth. View the full session and resources at lssmn.org/cherishallchildren/safeandhealthyrelationshipsguides.



Important Phone Numbers and Websites

- **Emergency Number:** Always call this number first if you are in immediate danger.
911
- **MN 2-1-1 United Way:** Free, confidential information to access services such as food and housing support, mental health, substance abuse, youth programs and more.
211
- **Minnesota Safe Harbor Day One Hotline:** Statewide resource support for local shelter and services for potential or current victims of exploitation or trafficking.
dayoneservices.org
1.866.223.1111 or text 612.399.9995
- **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children:** Their mission is to help find missing children, reduce child sexual exploitation and prevent child victimization.
missingkids.org/home
1.800.843.5678 (1.800.THE.LOST)
- **National Human Trafficking Hotline:** If you or someone you know is in a potential human trafficking situation, call or text this hotline for help and services.
humantraffickinghotline.org
1.888.373.7888 or text HELP to 233733
- **National Runaway Safeline:** Offers expertise in all youth-related issues and provides resources, support and connections to help and hope.
1.800.RUN.AWAY (1.800.786.2929) or online chat nationalrunawaysafeline.org
- **NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness):** Provides advocacy, education, support and public awareness so that all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives.
nami.org
1.800.950.NAMI (6264) or in a crisis, text "NAMI" to 741741
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Free, confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.
988 call or text, 1.800.273.8255 or online chat suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- **RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network):** Partners with local sexual assault service providers across the country to prevent sexual violence and help survivors. Operates National Sexual Assault Hotline.
1.800.656.HOPE (4673) or online chat rainn.org English and Spanish
- **The Trevor Project:** Helpline for LGBTQIA+ youth providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services; also, support and resources for educators and parents.
1.866.488.7386, text START to 678-678 or online chat thetrevorproject.org