

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Protecting Yourself Handout: Grades 9-12

Learn to protect yourself from being a target of use/abuse.  
Match the sentences in the first column with their endings in the second column.

*Write the number for the sentence (found in the first column)  
in the blank column next to the correct ending (found in the second column).  
The first is done for you.*

1. Keep in mind and reflect often on the fact that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit...		saying no, getting away, and getting help from an adult you trust.
2. Be assertive in saying NO if you feel someone is acting inappropriately or making you a target of their use/abuse. Then...		alcohol or any other substance.
3. Realize that even if you have failed to be assertive in the past, it is never too late to begin to be assertive and you honor yourself by...	1	and therefore should be treated with respect.
4. Realize that even if you hurt the feelings of the other person, you have the right to say NO to him/her, to get away, and to get help when you are a target of use/abuse of any kind. No one has the right to...		you are confused, afraid, or uncomfortable; or if you do not feel the person is showing reverence for your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit.
5. Trust your feelings. You should say NO, get away, and get help if someone's conduct or attitude seems to be motivated by use/abuse in any way; if...		than for sexual pleasure.
6. Try to have a clear idea of Church teaching on the gift of sexuality, and align your sexual values, goals, and ideals in accord with this teaching. Then...		force, pressure, tease, or manipulate you into being a target of their use/abuse or into having sexual contact of any kind.
7. Date with the purpose of getting to know the essence of who the person is — the heart and soul of the person — rather...		yourself, for anyone with whom you are developing an intimate relationship, and for your future spouse — whomever that may be.
8. Avoid weakening your defenses with...		say no to anything that does not align with these teachings/values.
9. Pray for spiritual purity for...		get away and seek help from an adult you trust. Keep seeking help until you do find the help you need, even if this means seeking help from more than one adult.

(Continue to page 2.)

For the two safety awareness tips below, read the paragraph and check the appropriate boxes to answer the question.  
Then complete the final section.

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### Safety Awareness Tip #1:

To protect yourself from becoming a target of use/abuse, limit or avoid behaviors that sexually arouse. Even in short durations, sexually arousing behaviors are scientifically proven to release hormones that create feelings of happiness (a gift within the safety of marriage) but also increase a woman's (and a man's, to a lesser extent) feelings of trust, inhibit her reservations and increase vulnerability (creating a risk outside of marriage). Although the smell or sight of one's beloved can trigger these responses and not be totally avoided, keeping proper limits and guarding one's behaviors outside of marriage is necessary to protect one's self from becoming a target of abuse as well as to avoid temptations to use/abuse. Which of the following behaviors, therefore, should be limited/avoided by men and women, outside of marriage, who want to avoid use/abuse?

- ☐ Kissing for extended periods of time
- ☐ Engaging in cuddling and light kissing before determining whether someone can be truly trusted
- ☐ Any behavior that sexually arouses you or another and that can be reasonably avoided, especially in situations where trust is not yet sufficient to ensure that both individuals are committed to authentic love.

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### Safety Awareness Tip #2:

To protect yourself from becoming a target of use/abuse, limit risky behaviors that could put men and women at risk of becoming a target of use/abuse. Which of the following behaviors could put you at risk?

- ☐ Walking alone at night
- ☐ Accepting rides from others without parental permission
- ☐ Meeting alone with individuals you have "met" through social media
- ☐ Exercising immodesty in-person or in text/photos shared electronically (or in any format)
- ☐ Being alone with a date without parental permission, especially in a potentially dangerous place like a parked car or empty home
- ☐ Going on a date with someone having a reputation of using/abusing or being sexually active
- ☐ Single dating with someone you do not know well and without parental permission
- ☐ Accepting a drink you have not poured or that you have left unattended

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**NOTE:** Victims of use/abuse are **NOT** to be blamed for the use/abuse **whether they have employed/engaged in certain behaviors or not**. Walking alone at night in a dark alley, texting nude photos, or failing to say NO to abuse out of fear or confusion may be unwise choices that put a person more at risk. Yet none of these actions make the victim of abuse deserving of blame.

**"God writes straight with crooked lines."**

If fear, confusion, or even our own imperfect choices have somehow contributed to being used/abuse in the past,  
**God can still take our lives and make them beautiful.**

We simply need to tell someone and get the help we need.

**"We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures,  
we are the sum of the Father's love for us  
and our real capacity to become  
the image of His Son Jesus."**  
*Pope John Paul II*

No matter your feelings if you have been used/abused, the TRUTH is you are loved by God, you are made in God's image, and you are still capable of loving and being loved according to God's plan.

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### Who can you trust?

Below, write down the names of individuals you could trust to help you sort through questions, find answers, and get help when you are uncertain about issues around the topic of God's design for love (as Gift-of-Self) and the dangers of use/abuse:

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6. Try to have a clear idea of Church teaching on the gift of sexuality, and align your sexual values, goals, and ideals in accord with this teaching. Then...	4	force, pressure, tease, or manipulate you into being a target of their use/abuse or into having sexual contact of any kind.
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8. Avoid weakening your defenses with...	6	say no to anything that does not align with these teachings/values.
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- ☒ Kissing for extended periods of time
- ☒ Engaging in cuddling and light kissing before determining whether someone can be truly trusted
- \*\*\*\*(Reminder: even light kissing and cuddling inhibit a woman's reservations toward more intimate sexual activity.)
- ☒ Any behavior that sexually arouses you or another and that can be reasonably avoided, especially in situations where trust is not yet sufficient to ensure that both individuals are committed to authentic love.

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### Safety Awareness Tip #2:

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- ☒ Walking alone at night
- ☒ Accepting rides from others without parent permission
- ☒ Meeting alone with individuals you have "met" through social media
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- ☒ Going on a date with someone having a reputation of using/abusing or being sexually active
- ☒ Single dating with someone you do not know well and without parental permission
- ☒ Accepting a drink you have not poured or that you have left unattended (It may be drugged.)

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*Answers may include parents, teachers, counselors, parish staff,  
and peers whose actions are guided by the teachings of the Catholic Faith.*