



Abuse How Can I Be Safe?

Liguori Kids Series Lesson Plans Introduction

The Liguori Kids pamphlets are written to help children in the elementary grades understand and talk about difficult topics. These accompanying lesson plans are designed to assist catechists, teachers, and parents with a 30- to 45-minute lesson for each Liguori Kids pamphlet. The lesson plans are very flexible and can be used in their entirety or in part, depending on the needs of the participants and the length of the session.

Some of the topics are well suited to younger children; others are more suited for children in the fifth grade and above. Most of the topics can be adjusted to reach nearly all students at the elementary and middle school levels. The comments in the “Overview of the Pamphlet” section at the beginning of each lesson plan will help the catechist determine the pamphlet’s appropriateness for various grade levels. In addition, the “Questions for Discussion” section is broken into two or three levels to facilitate meaningful dialog for both younger and older children.

Lesson plans follow this general format:

1. Overview of the Pamphlet
2. Opening Prayer
3. Related Scripture Reading
4. Guided Reading Suggestions
5. Questions for Discussion and/or Activity
 - For younger children
 - For older children
6. Closing Prayer

The catechist should feel free to adjust the format to meet the needs of the participants.

To establish an atmosphere of prayer and reflection, it is suggested that the catechist light a quality candle before reading the opening prayer at the beginning of each lesson. Explain to the students that the flame symbolizes Christ’s presence as the Light of the World at this gathering.

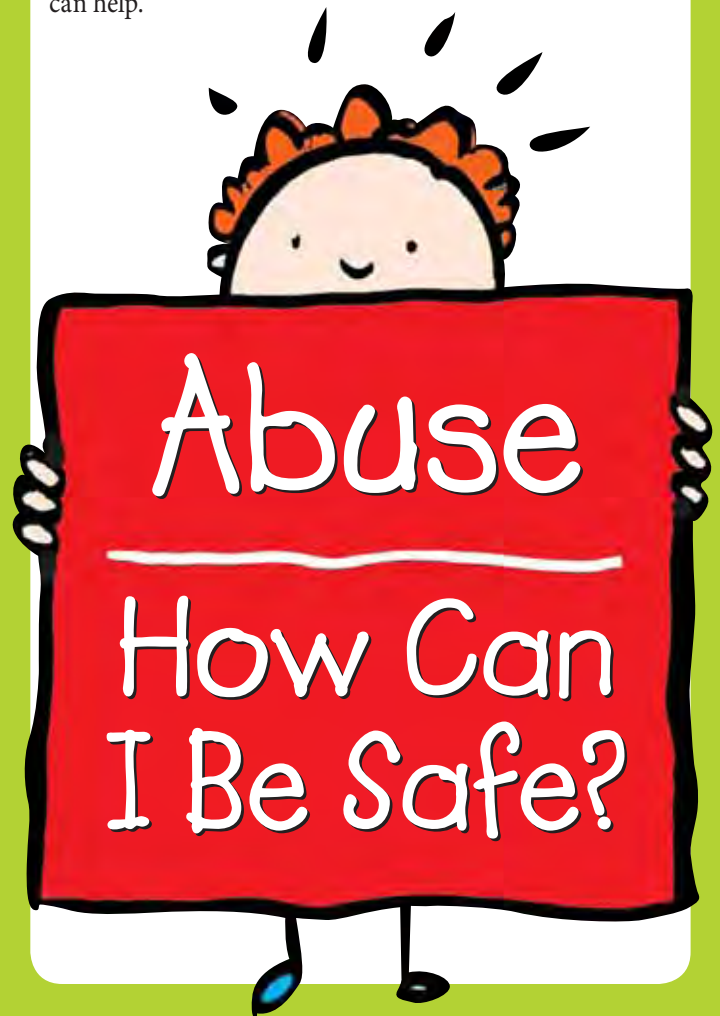
A student who has had the opportunity to prepare may read the related Scripture passage after the catechist reads the opening prayer. Make sure the Scripture passage is taken from a bible that is easily read and understood by the participants. It is also important to remember that, in this setting, no child should be forced to read aloud. Rely on volunteers and strive to maintain an environment that is comfortable and non-threatening for all participants.

Extinguish the candle after the Scripture reading or, preferably, after the closing prayer at the end of the lesson.

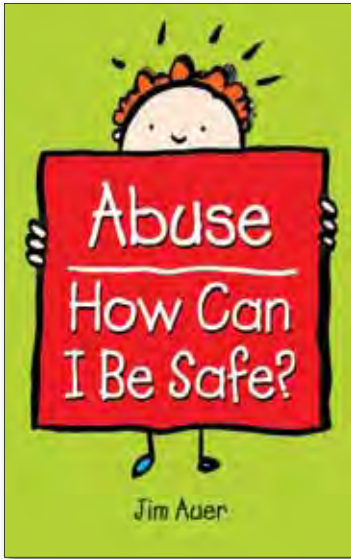
Overview of the Pamphlet

Abuse—How Can I Be Safe? is written for students of all grade levels. All children will benefit from a discussion of the information in this pamphlet. It will provide them with the knowledge and tools necessary to keep them safe during the years when they are most vulnerable to abuse.

Author Jim Auer first describes the different kinds of abuse—physical, emotional, and sexual—experienced by some children. He then frankly discusses how and why abuse happens. He carefully distinguishes between behaviors that are abusive and those that are not and then gives children realistic options for dealing with abuse should it occur to them or to someone they love. Most importantly, Auer stresses that abuse is NEVER the fault of the person being abused and that there are adults who can help.



Opening Prayer



(If possible, light a candle just before reading the Opening Prayer.)

Lord, how can it be that sometimes people we love very much sometimes hurt us? How can it be that sometimes people we trust rob us of our innocence and peace? Sometimes, our world makes no sense at all. And that's when we must remember to look to you. You are the Good Shepherd, the one who seeks to protect

us always. Open our eyes and ears to the ways in which you reach out to us, even when our lives are in shambles. Help us to understand that you come to our aid through those we *can* trust—family members, teachers, or true friends. Lord, may we never lose faith in your power to save us. We ask this in your name. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 23

The Lord is My Shepherd

This comforting psalm is so well-known that students may not listen to it carefully. Ask the participants to close their eyes and imagine the beautiful valley of the Good Shepherd as the psalm is read aloud.

Guided Reading

This pamphlet begins by defining *abuse* and describing different types of abuse—physical, emotional, and sexual. The author is very direct, yet very gentle, in his discussion of this sensitive topic. If the guided reading is being done with a group, the possibility exists that one (or more) of the participants is a victim of some kind of abuse. It is very important that the presenter be aware of any student who appears very uncomfortable with the discussion. A child who is not comfortable with the discussion might be better served on an individual basis outside of this class. As author Jim Auer states, “Often an abused child needs and even loves the person who is hurting him or her.” For this reason, professional help and guidance should be sought immediately.

Ideally, the participants involved in this discussion are *not* victims of abuse and this pamphlet will help protect them by keeping them well-informed and aware of where to go for help. The section of the booklet called *How Abuse Happens* (p. 9) is especially important. Read these paragraphs carefully and give additional examples of situations where a child can be manipulated into an unhealthy relationship with an abusive adult or older child.

The information on how to stop abuse (beginning p.15) is also extremely important. Auer emphasizes that abuse is not the fault of the victim and this should be stressed by the presenter. Take time to answer the questions of the participants at this point. Sometimes it is very difficult for children growing up in healthy homes to understand why an abused child remains silent. While the text is easy to understand, gives excellent examples, and answers many questions, take time to ask for additional questions or comments. The questions that follow will serve to facilitate further discussion if time allows.

Questions for Discussion

1. God must often appear cold and uncaring to the victims of abuse. How might you assure a discouraged friend that God does indeed care? How does God extend love and protection to children who live in abusive situations? (Emphasize that God will give courage and wisdom to the abused child who seeks help. God will offer protection through concerned adults who are able to take appropriate action.)
2. In your home, school, and neighborhood, what adults would be best to turn to for help if you find yourself, a brother, a sister, or a friend experiencing abuse? Talk specifically about trustworthy adults who could and would protect you from further harm.

Closing Prayer

Lord, my Good Shepherd, I have learned through today's (tonight's) reading and discussion that you are *always* at my side. Even when I feel so alone and am surrounded by darkness, you are there beside me. You may come to me through my teacher, through the nurse at school, through a grandparent or aunt, or through a trusted friend. I may not see you at first, but if I call your name and hold tight to my faith, you will come to me, comfort me, and protect me always. Good Shepherd, be with me, for in you I place my trust. Amen.



For more titles in the Liguori Kids series
visit www.liguori.org/kids