

What can Parents do to Reinforce the Messages?

First, talk to your kids about their physical, emotional, and behavioral boundaries. Find out what they learned in the program.

Physical boundaries are defined by:

- ▶ Who can touch you.
- ▶ How much they can touch you.
- ▶ Where they can touch you.

Emotional boundaries are defined by:

- ▶ How close you feel to a person.
- ▶ How much time you spend with a person.
- ▶ What information you share with a person.

Behavioral boundaries are defined by:

- ▶ What you will do.
- ▶ What you won't do.

Second, pay attention to someone who crosses a child's physical, emotional or behavioral boundaries.

Physical boundary violations mean touching too much or touching in ways most adults would not touch a child. Some examples are:

- ▶ Roughhousing or wrestling
- ▶ Tickling
- ▶ Accidentally touching inappropriately
- ▶ Too many hugs or hugs with too much body contact

Emotional boundary violations mean treating the relationship with a child as if it were a romantic or intimate adult relationship. Some examples:

- ▶ Spending too much time with a minor
- ▶ Calling too much
- ▶ E-mailing too much
- ▶ Getting involved in too many of the child's activities
- ▶ Acting too possessive

Behavioral boundary violations mean involving a child in activities that his or her parents would not allow the child to do. Some examples are:

- ▶ Ridiculing the beliefs of a minor's parents
- ▶ Allowing a minor to do things against the wishes of parents
- ▶ Offering a minor cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs
- ▶ Allowing a minor to look at pornography
- ▶ Allowing a minor to visit inappropriate Web sites
- ▶ Giving a minor gifts without the parents' permission
- ▶ Asking a minor to keep secrets from his or her parents

Third, be aware that fears about being in trouble or disappointing parents can keep kids from telling. Let your children know they can tell you anything and you will always love them.

Can I get more information?

The diocese provides workshops for parents and other adults as part of its Safe Environments program. A schedule of workshops is posted on the diocesan Web site. The workshops are free of charge.