



Telling Our Children About Sexual Abuse

“Knowing about sexual abuse helps keep children safe and protects them from it. When adults talk openly with children about sexual abuse and discuss what the child can do if they are in a threatening situation, then they give the child permission to tell.”

So what do we tell them?

TEACH THEM ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS

Children need to be taught to trust their feelings. Talk about what makes them feel safe and happy. Talk about what makes them feel sad, angry, or scared. Talk about what that makes their bodies feel like.

GIVE PERMISSION

Give permission for them to tell someone they trust if they are scared. Tell them that if they tell an adult who does not believe them, that they should keep telling until someone does something to help them.

USE THE RIGHT NAMES

Use the right names for sexual parts of the body when you are talking to them about sexual safety. Teach them to respect their bodies and their privacy.

EXPLAIN

Explain that their bodies are theirs and no-one has the right to touch them in a way that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable.

REMOVE THE GUILT

Remove the guilt associated with being a victim by stressing that if someone touches them in a sexual way it is not their fault and they should tell someone they trust.

TALK ABOUT GROWN-UPS

Talk about grown-ups and explain that sometimes they do things that are not alright. Remind them to speak up if an adult does something to them that isn't okay.

HAVE A 'NO SECRETS' POLICY

Have a no secrets policy in your family. Surprises are good, but secrets are not. Encourage children to be open and honest with you.

For more information, please contact Jon Flood at the Conduct Protocol Unit on 02 9690 9325 or jflood@pcnsw.org.au.

NOTE: This information does not form part of the policy or process for dealing with or preventing abuse within the church but is provided as general information.