

(Approx. 45 minutes)

Opening Prayer:

Read Matthew 9: 18 - 26; A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew...

Glory to you, O Lord. The Gospel of the Lord...Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us pray: Loving and gracious God, help us always to remember to think first and stay safe. Help me to be a loving steward of Your creation. We pray this in Jesus' name...Amen.

In this reading, people were coming to Jesus in an emergency for help. The man's daughter had died and the woman who was bleeding felt it urgent to touch Jesus' cloak. These are situations where someone has to decide, very quickly, whether to act or not and what to do.

Each of us has dignity because we are all made in God's image. Others deserve our help if they are truly in need. When we help those in need, it is a sign of respect for their human dignity in caring for them. Often times, they need our help right away.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta was a saintly person who cared for the poorest of the poor people in India who were sick and dying. She spent her whole life helping those who urgently needed her help because she had deep respect for their dignity. She was named 'Blessed' by Blessed Pope John Paul II and will eventually be canonized a Saint.

Sometimes people who want to hurt children or do not respect our dignity will pretend there is an emergency to lure you to go with them. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta can be our 'Saint Hero' and pray for us to know what to do in this situation. She can pray that we remember to think first and stay safe.

What are some examples of family emergencies?

Car accident, serious illness, house fire, etc. (Allow for multiple answers.)

Pretending it's an emergency, approach different students with the following Emergency Lures: (Don't give the student too long to decide if they will go.)

- "Your mother was in a car accident and has been taken to the hospital! Come with me - quickly!"
- "Your father broke his leg at work and he sent me to bring you to the hospital!"
- "Your house is on fire! All your things are burning! Hurry and come with me!"

Could these things really happen?

Yes. Emergencies are a fact of life. They happen to people every day.

How would you feel if someone told you that your mother or father was hurt or that your house was on fire?

Scared; worried; confused; panicked (Allow for various answers.)

Remember that God gave us two tools to use to help protect us from those that would hurt us or not respect our dignity. Do you remember what they are?

Our brain and our instinct.

If someone came and told you there was one of those emergencies, do you think your brain would be working properly?

Probably not.

Families used to use Secret Code Words for emergencies in the past. Does anyone have a Secret Code Word you are supposed to use in case of emergency? You don't have to tell me the word, just raise your hand if you have one. (*Show hands*)

Can anyone think of a reason a code word might not be such a good idea?

Being friendly, someone could easily find it out; you may forget to use it if someone tells you there is an emergency; you may be so worried that you decide not to use it.

What's more effective is to have a Family Plan of Action. This is a plan you create and practice with your family in case of an emergency. What kind of things do you think should be considered in creating a Family Action Plan?

- *Who would be responsible for you/siblings if one or both of your parents was hurt or had an emergency?*
- *Who would get in touch with you in that case?*
- *Who would you call if there was an emergency? Where could you go?*
- *(Allow for other answers. Reinforce correct responses.)*

The people who love us and respect our dignity want to help keep us safe even in an emergency. God loves each of us and sent people into our lives who love us to help us be safe. Preparing for emergencies with our loved ones helps us to think first and stay safe.

What do you think you should do if someone tells you there is an emergency in your family?

Don't go with them just because they said it was an emergency; don't panic; run or call home to be sure there is really an emergency; ask a trusted adult for help; call 911 if necessary; remember to follow your Family Action Plan.

Remember to always use your tools from God and trust your feelings, your instincts. Even in an emergency, they can help protect us from those who would not respect our

dignity. If you feel uneasy about a situation, it's best to be very careful and ask a trusted adult for help.

(Use more scenarios, like the ones at the beginning, for practice of what to do as time allows.)

Let's remember:

- People who do not respect our dignity will sometimes use fake family emergencies to lure kids into danger.
- Don't just go with someone because they say there is an emergency; ask a trusted adult for help.
- Work together as a family to create a Family Plan of Action in case of emergency.
- Our 'Saint Hero', Blessed Teresa of Calcutta can pray for us to think first and stay safe remembering to use our tools and our Family Plan of Action in an emergency.

Closing Prayer:

Gather the children and affirm each one by saying the following prayer over each one:

"(Child's Name), you are God's holy creation. God loves you and calls you by name as His child. You are precious and honored in God's sight."

Then everyone join hands and pray:

Dear God, help us to use the tools you gave us to think first and stay safe as we say the prayer Jesus gave us... Our Father, who art in heaven..... Amen.

References:

Matthew 9: 18 - 26; Luke 8: 22 - 25; CCC 395; "Church in the Modern World", Ch. 4, #41.