



GRADE 9 - CLASSROOM

COMPASS CHILD PROTECTION CHILDREN'S PROGRAM



LIFE IS PRECIOUS
Parent Handout

Life is Precious

Grade 9 - PARENT FOLLOW-UP SESSION

with children who attended the parish/school session.

Instructions for the Parents

Your child attended a lesson which talked about the sensitive topic of suicide in a gentle and positive way, around the theme “Life is Precious.”

You are encouraged, sometime within the next week, to set aside 30 minutes for a discussion on this material with your child. This packet contains information to guide your conversation, as well as a step-by-step guide with suggestions.

Session Overview:

- The teacher introduced that life is precious with a reference to verses in the Bible- Psalm 139: 13-14 and Jeremiah 29:11.
- The teacher discussed various stories of teens going through a hard time in their life.
- The teacher introduced the term suicide and explained some warning signs they may notice. Ways in which they could get help were explained.
- At the end of the session, the class read the Bible verse **Psalm 139: 1-7**, followed by a prayer.

Background Information for Parents:

Suicide is an action directed at oneself that ends their life. A person may experience suicidal thoughts, attempt or commit suicide when they are in deep physical or emotional pain. A person who considers, attempts or carries out suicide does not necessarily want to end their life, but rather wants to end their internal feelings of struggle and pain.

Information and Strategies that were taught to your child during their class:

Suicide was defined as when someone “gives up” and ends their life. It was explained that people do this when they go through a hard time, and they don’t see a way out.

A person may be going through a hard time, and doing so alone. They may even be hurting themselves or having suicidal thoughts, and others may not know. It is important to know the signs of suicide so that you can know if someone is at risk for it. If you notice the signs, you can help that person get the help and support they need.

- Talking or writing about suicide.
- Expressing suicidal ideas through art.
- Comments that life is meaningless.
- Statements of feeling trapped or suffering unbearable pain.
- Feeling as a burden to loved ones.
- Staying by themselves rather than hanging out with family or friends.
- Obtaining or boasting about a weapon.
- Giving away prized possessions.
- Contacting loved ones to say “goodbye.”
- Researching methods to commit suicide.

Any person who has one or more of these signs needs support and help. Even if they are not planning suicide, these signs indicate emotional distress that a person is going through.

Here's what you can do if you notice these warning signs.

GET HELP!

Planning suicide is just one symptom of many more complicated emotional struggles. You must report the situation to a teacher, parent, school principal, priest or other adult who can help the person to get through the difficult time.

While it is important to be kind and gentle, don't attempt to be the only support for that person. They need a community around them, and might even need help from a counseling professional.

What if you go through a very difficult situation and feel like giving up? What would you do?

You must get help and talk to someone you can trust.

You can also contact National Suicide Prevention Lifeline online or 1-800-273-TALK (8255) *Students may have added this number to their phone.*

If you ever come across someone who has hurt themselves and their life is in danger, what should you do?

First, you must call 911, then you must get help from adults or anyone around you.

PARENT-CHILD DISCUSSION

Following are thoughts and questions to help supplement and support your conversation with your child:

1. Discuss dealing with life's challenges:

Say:

Today in class, your teacher discussed about how life can be challenging. You did an activity where you thought about how you feel today.

How did you feel then? Is there anything you would like to share? How are you feeling now?

Help your child share openly.

Let's look at the scenarios that you discussed in class. What are your thoughts on these? Have you ever met someone who has been in similar situations?

Go over each scenario on the page "scenarios" and discuss them with your child. Talk about what they would do if they or their friend was having a hard time like that. Remind them to get help from an adult and not take it up on their own.

2. Talk about the Suicide:

Your teacher introduced the word suicide. Have you heard it before? What are your thoughts on it?

Let your child explain suicide in their own words, and add or clarify as needed.

Let's review this list on the signs of suicide. Have you seen a friend or a classmate or anyone else displaying any of these signs?

Go through the signs one by one, taking time to discuss any as needed. It is also possible that sometimes, the signs may not be recognizable at all, or that a person may be very good at hiding their pain.

You may add from your personal experience or people you have met in your life. (Be careful not to share anything confidential)

3. Talk about how life is precious:

Go through the bible verses in the activity book. Talk about how your child is precious to God and to you. Talk about how God's presence is with them, and also how you are there with them to support them through any difficult things in life.

4. End with a prayer:

Now it is time to pray, and ask for God's protection and help in difficult times. Pray for strength to help others who may be going through a difficult time. You might use the prayer in the activity book.