

# Trust and Secrets

## Touching and Other Inappropriate Behavior

Young people should never be asked to keep secrets from their parents. This includes but is not limited to secrets about touching. Set aside time to talk with your child about secrets. Make sure to use the proper terminology for body parts, including genitals. Say: ***I am here for you, and I will support you. You can always tell me if someone makes you feel afraid, worried, or confused. Please let me know about any time someone made you feel this way even if it happened a long time ago or if that person is no longer in your life. You can tell me anything.*** Explain that it's OK to tell an unsafe secret even if it means breaking a promise made not to tell.



## Identifying Trustworthy Adults

Let your child know that the best way to tell if people are trustworthy is by how they act. The job someone has, the position he or she holds, or a familial relationship does not automatically make that person trustworthy. Ask: ***Who are some people you consider trustworthy?*** Avoid identifying trustworthy people for your child as someone you might consider safe may not be in the eyes of your child.

## Guided by God's Gift of Emotions

Our emotions are a gift from God that can help us respond to various situations. Talk with your child about how feelings can signal danger, and discuss ways your child might respond. Let your child know that he or she can tell you about any situation, especially those that are frightening, confusing or potentially unsafe. Say: ***It is never too late to talk about how something made you feel, even if a lot of time has passed since the situation happened.***

## Telling an Unsafe Secret

Remind your child that he or she never has to keep any secret that causes, anxiety, worry, or confusion. Review the "Telling an Unsafe Secret" handout with your child, sharing ideas as needed. Invite your child to verbalize some of the responses for you. Decide where to keep the completed handout. Say: ***Telling is always the right thing to do. There is nothing you could ever tell me that would stop me from loving you.***

