

Reaching "Scout" Rank

9. Complete the pamphlet exercises. With your parent or guardian, complete the exercises in the pamphlet *How to protect your children from child abuse: A parent's guide*.

1. CHILD ABUSE AND BEING A GOOD SCOUT

When a boy joins the Scouting program, he assumes a duty to be faithful to the rules of Scouting as represented in the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan.

The rules of Scouting don't require a Scout to put himself in possibly dangerous situations—quite the contrary, we want Scouts to “be prepared” and to “do their best” to avoid these situations.

We hope that you will discuss these rules with your Scout and be sure that he understands that he should not risk his safety to follow the rules of Scouting.

The Scout Oath includes the phrase, “To help other people at all times.” The Scout Law says that “A Scout is helpful,” and the Scout slogan is “Do a Good Turn Daily.” There are many people who need help, and a Boy Scout should be willing to lend a hand when needed.

Sometimes people who really do not need help will ask for it in order to create an opportunity for abuse. Boy Scouts should be very familiar with the rules of safety so that they can recognize situations to be wary of. For example:

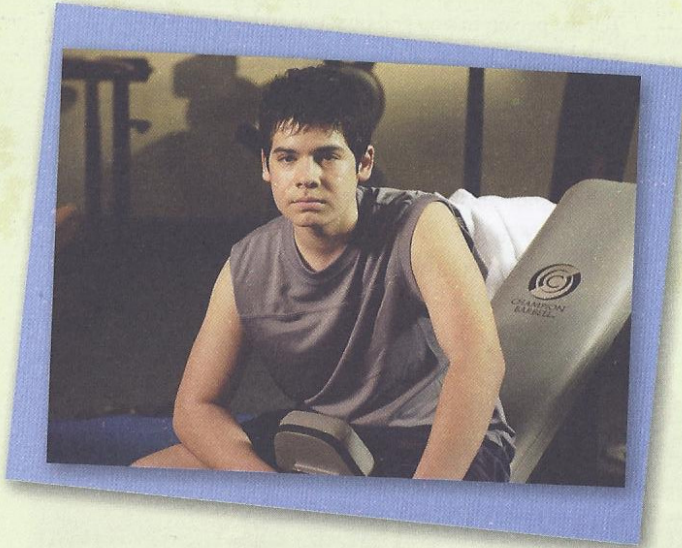
- ▶ It is one thing to stand on the sidewalk away from a car to give directions, and something else to get in the car with someone to show them the way. A Scout should never get into a car without his parent's permission.
- ▶ It may be OK for a Scout to help carry groceries to a person's house, but he should never enter the house unless he has permission from his parents.

The Scout Law also states that a Scout is obedient—but a Scout does not have to obey an adult when that person tells him to do something that the Scout feels is wrong or that makes the Scout feel uncomfortable. In these situations, the Scout should talk with his parent about his concerns.



2. PRACTICING THE “THREE R’S” OF YOUTH PROTECTION

The following stories will help your son understand how to use the “three R’s” of Youth Protection. These situations might be more detailed than you feel comfortable with; however, if children are going to learn about sexual abuse, they must be able to identify and discuss specific acts.



Jeff's Story

I am a 12-year-old boy in the sixth grade at my middle school. Every afternoon after school, I go to a recreation center until my mom gets home from work. One of the guys who works at the center has been spending a lot of time with me lately. He's really nice, and he told me that he would teach me how to wrestle. He said that wrestling would be a good sport for me because it has different weight classes, and I'm so small I would be wrestling other kids my own size. I've got to admit that I like to wrestle. But there's something bothering me. This guy who's teaching me to wrestle wants me to come to the center on Sunday when no one else is there. He said that we would have the place to ourselves, and he could really teach me a lot. I'd like to, but I've been noticing that when he's teaching me, he holds me down and sometimes grabs me between the legs. He makes like it's a real funny joke, but I'm not so sure that I like it.

What is risky about this situation?

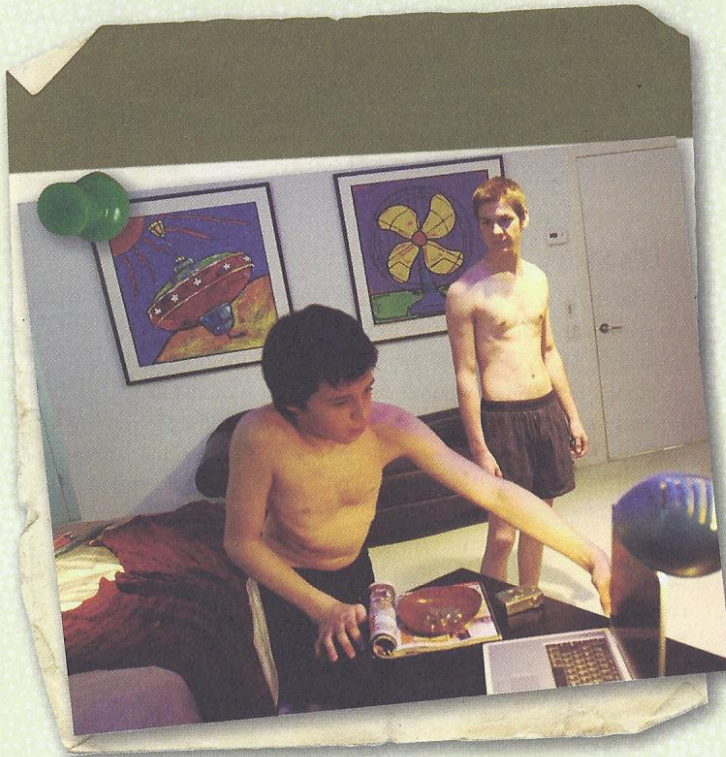
- History of unwanted touching of private parts.
- Touching will probably become more serious if allowed to continue.
- Individual coaching on Sunday would put Jeff alone at the center with a possible molester.

How would you resist?

- Tell the person to stop grabbing you and do not wrestle with him any longer.
- Make sure that you are not alone with him, and if he grabs you, yell "Stop that!" loud enough so that everyone will hear.

How would you report this situation?

- Tell the individual's supervisor and ask that someone else help you with wrestling.
- Ask your parents to file a report with the police. What he is doing is abuse and it is illegal.



Mario's Story

I am a 13-year-old boy with a problem—my 17-year-old uncle, Joe. Joe stays with me when my parents go out of town. The last time, he started to act really strange. He wouldn't let me out of his sight. Even when I took a shower, he insisted that I keep the bathroom door open. When I turned around, Joe was taking a picture of me in the shower. He told me there wasn't any film in the camera and that it was a joke. I don't think it was funny, though. On the last night he was there, he told me to come into his bedroom and watch TV with him—only it wasn't TV, it was sex stuff. He told me not to tell anyone because if I did he would be in trouble *and so would I*.

Does the fact that Joe is a member of Mario's family and only 17 years old mean that he could not be a possible child molester?

- Remember that a child molester could be anyone. Most are family members or someone else the child knows.
- Many child molesters begin molesting others when they are teenagers

Does the fact that Joe has not touched Mario mean that sexual abuse did not happen?

- Joe violated Mario's privacy by taking a picture that Mario did not want taken—this is one form of abuse.
- Showing Mario pornographic videos is a form of sexual abuse and is usually a forerunner of sexual contact.

Should Mario get into trouble if he tells on Joe?

- Mario should not be blamed. He did nothing wrong.
- Anytime that sexual abuse occurs, the abuser is the one who is responsible.

Steven's Story

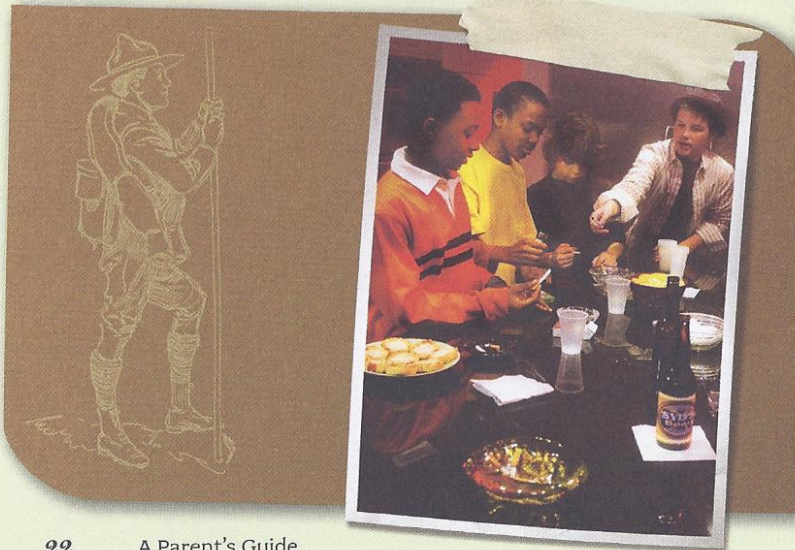
My name is Steven. I go to junior high school and make pretty good grades, so I'm not stupid. But the other day something happened that made me feel really dumb. A group of guys decided that they wanted to start a secret club. Only a few kids would be able to join their club. It was a fun thing, and the only way that you could join was to be asked by one of the members of the club. Well, one of my friends belonged and asked me to join. I was really flattered, and I really wanted to join. He told me that the club was meeting in one of the storage buildings on campus and that we could get high and have some fun—then he grabbed my crotch and laughed.

What do you suppose Steven's friend meant when he said, "We could get high and have some fun," and then grabbed Steven's crotch?

- Secret clubs are often used by child molesters to gain access to unsuspecting boys.
- Using drugs and alcohol to lower resistance to sexual abuse also is quite common.

Suppose that Steven went to the club meeting and ended up being sexually molested by one of the other guys there. How do you think he would feel?

- A lot of boys feel very embarrassed when they realize that they have been fooled. Often they are afraid that others will think that they are homosexual if they have been sexually abused by another guy.
- Embarrassment might cause Steven and other boys in his situation to not report their abuse.





Family Meeting (Not Part of Joining Requirement)

A child must feel comfortable telling his parent about any sensitive problems or experiences in which someone approached him in an improper manner, or in a way that made him feel uncomfortable. Studies have shown that more than half of all child-abuse incidents are never reported because the victims are too afraid or too confused to report their experiences.

Your children need to be able to talk freely about their likes and dislikes, their friends, and their true feelings. You can create open communication through family meetings where safety issues can be talked about by the entire family. The Youth Protection materials could be discussed in a family meeting.