

Assembly – Sexual Ethics

<http://www.myfishbites.com/assemblies-sexualethics.php>

Note this page may be blocked on some internet filters but the content is not explicit.

What are 'sexual ethics'? As presented in this assembly, sexual ethics is about treating other people around you respectfully. Sexual ethics is about not abusing other people sexually, through images or verbally. It is basically about respecting other people in the right way. This isn't an assembly about sex.

However, respect sometimes does mean we help other people out carefully and responsibly if they are in trouble or if we feel they might be being abused by other young people, family or other adults.

There is a lot of pressure around sex but there are also lots of mixed messages from people, so we need to listen carefully to what is being said and to listen to good advice.

Facts around sexual ethics

Sexting affects a large number of young people under 18. Technology makes it more common, girls are more widely the victims of sexting and around two-thirds of sexting comes from other under 18s.

- 38% of young people said they had created a sexual image or video. Around a quarter said they had sent one to someone else by text. Another survey suggested 39% of teens admit sharing personal images.
- 53% had received a sexual image or video, of which a third had received it from a stranger.
- Around 15% said they had shared a sexual image or video with a stranger. According to another survey, 55% have given out personal info to someone they didn't know.
- The NSPCC head (in 2013) said, "It is almost becoming the norm that a young person in a relationship should share an explicit image of themselves."
- 29% of teenagers have posted mean information, embarrassing photos or spread rumours about someone else.
- 61% of all sexters say they were pressurised to do this at least once.
- The average age for exposure to porn is 11 years old.
- Children as young as 11 are victims of 'revenge porn', with around 30% of victims aged 0 to 19.
- The effects of revenge porn are described as, "Hugely distressing, damaging and violating experience. The effect on victims is often pervasive and long-lasting (with) ... feelings of guilt and shame, which can negatively affect an individual's sense of self-worth and self-esteem... Some feel so isolated and overwhelmed they consider suicide." (Laura Higgins, Revenge Porn Helpline)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-24539514>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-36054273>

ACPO Child Protection and Abuse Investigation (CPAI) Group survey, 2013 via <http://www.riverside-performingarts.org.uk/snaphappy/facts-about-sexting-did-you-know/>

Sexual harassment of women (and men)

Another area that has come under the spotlight recently is the sexual harassment and abuse of especially women – but also men. Hollywood has gone through a process of looking in on itself after allegations that a famous director and Hollywood 'mover and shaker' called Harvey Weinstein had been involved in sexual harassment with at least 50 women. Other stories quickly followed. Allegations were of groping women, touching them inappropriately and even of rape.

The problem for Hollywood is that for many years they have created a culture and a film industry that wrongly says you can do anything you want to anyone without any real consequences. Many thousands of sexual and pornographic movies have been released from the heart of Hollywood - in some ways helping create the very problem they are now rightly fighting to solve. What Hollywood is experiencing now is a reflection of Hollywood itself.

The first case of 'sexting' abuse?

Back in the time of Jesus, there was a woman who had been accused of being unfaithful by sleeping with another man. It seemed that she had even been caught in the act. Of course there were no smartphones and no internet, so those who'd set themselves up as being the authorities did the same kind of thing as people do today. They dragged her into the street and put her on public display to shame her, laugh at her, abuse her and wanted to kill her by throwing rocks at her. This was a common form of punishment in those days called stoning and it happened for all kinds of so-called crimes.

We may think 'how terrible, we've gone beyond that kind of behaviour.' But have we? When people abuse others sexually or send images to people or use revenge porn, they are doing exactly the same thing. They are putting other people on display, often to shame them. And sometimes, this leads to people taking their own lives.

Jesus came along and looked at the woman and just felt a sense of deep care for her. He didn't condemn her. He looked at the shouting crowd and told them that if there was anyone had never done anything wrong, they could throw a stone. He then started writing on the floor. Some people think he may have been writing some of the things that people do wrong. Whatever, the crowd gradually disappeared because they knew that they were hypocrites – they were condemning a woman for doing wrong yet they all did things wrong. We have to be really careful of doing this today. When people do things we don't like, we need to not condemn them and pretend we have got all the answers.

Jesus looked at the woman and said 'I don't condemn you. Nor can these other people condemn you. Go and be free to live right in the future.' He didn't leave the woman where she was, but showed compassion, forgiveness and opened up the possibility for a better future.

How To Truly Respect Others

As young people you are under a lot of pressure to do certain things and to think like other people. But we can all make a difference and make a change in the world around us. We can't do everything but we can do something.

There's a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have.

In the Bible in the sixth chapter of a book written by a historian called Luke, he records that Jesus had a pretty radical message for doing good:

"Treat others the same way you want them to treat you."

He didn't stop there. Jesus was way more radical than this – he also said this:

"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

Jesus treated people with respect – bringing help, healing, life and love to those who needed it. This included people who were blind, those with diseases, people who had been ill all their lives and were suffering. He spoke to a woman at a well and didn't condemn her but showed her kindness and spoke the truth in love and she was restored from brokenness to being well. It's a good model to follow.

We should also think about those who do bad things and abuse others because very often there is also a cost to them. We said earlier that there are consequences to doing wrong and there are. By not doing wrong, we protect ourselves from bad consequences in all areas of life.

In January 2018, the actor Mark Salling, who starred in the TV series 'Glee' was found dead at his home, with reports suggesting he had taken his own life. He was due to be sentenced for up to seven years in prison for having child porn images on his computer. Sadly for Mark Salling, the consequences were more than he could bear.

Living Right

So the message to us is that we should treat others the way that we should want to be treated – as long as the way that we want to be treated isn't a bad way!

Lads – the way to see the girls and women around you is not as sex objects, but as if they're close family – like sisters. It is not OK to pressurise others to send sexual images or to have sex. They are not there to be abused but to be respected and treated right.

If we live our lives trying to get what we can from people and just abusing them to show how powerful or strong we are, what it really shows is how weak we are. A real man is one who respects others. Yes, we can disagree with people but we should do that without being nasty.

So when we think of sexual ethics and our everyday lives, we need to respect people, treat them well and not abuse them. If we lived all of our lives this way we wouldn't have many of the problems we do have.

If we choose not to send or receive sexual images, choose not to abuse others sexually, choose not to get involved in bullying or shaming others, we can protect ourselves from bad consequences.

As a Christian, I believe that Jesus doesn't want to tell us what to do but wants to help you to live the best life you can and be free of anything that weighs you down. He said he came to set people free not to condemn.

Action

If you have sent anything or received anything please don't feel bad. Nothing in this assembly is about making anyone feel bad. This is about protecting you from making bad decisions by advising you (not telling you). But it's also about offering hope if you have been a victim and for you to know that there is always a way back, there can always be forgiveness and can always be a good future.

If any of these issues have affected you, it's really important to know that people will listen to you, won't judge you, won't embarrass you but really want to help you because they care about you. Please speak with an adult you trust, or someone in your school who is the designated person to speak to about this, or speak to your parents or those who look after you. But please tell someone and let them help you.

For More Advice

Link – <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sextin>

An Idea to Help from The Met Police

Courtesy of Safer Communities Sexual Violence and Abuse Partnership, Lincolnshire. Originators of the 'Ask for Angela' poster campaign part of the #NoMore sexual violence and abuse in Lincolnshire awareness Campaign. www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/nomore

#ASK FOR ANGELA

“ HI I'M ANGELA,

ARE YOU ON A DATE THAT ISN'T WORKING OUT? DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE NOT IN A SAFE SITUATION?

IS YOUR TINDER OR POF DATE NOT WHO THEY SAID THEY WERE ON THEIR PROFILE? DOES IT ALL FEEL A BIT WEIRD?

IF YOU GO TO THE BAR AND ASK FOR 'ANGELA' THE BAR STAFF WILL KNOW YOU NEED SOME HELP GETTING OUT OF YOUR SITUATION AND WILL CALL YOU A TAXI OR HELP YOU OUT DISCREETLY – WITHOUT TOO MUCH FUSS ”

www.met.police.uk/AskforAngela

Call **101** for non-emergency enquiries, to report an incident or get help.

If you're deaf or hard of hearing, use our textphone service on **18001 101**.

Call **999** if it's an emergency or a crime is in progress.

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