Ending Rape Culture and Child Sexual Exploitation Together

Time: 1 hr

Learning Objectives:

- Define and create awareness about the impact of Rape Culture
- Foster empathy with women and 2SLGBTQ+ people
- Discuss actions students, including male-identified individuals, can do to end Rape Culture
- Make decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience

Notes for Educators:

Rape Culture refers to the normalization of sexual violence through cultural narratives influencing all levels of social interaction. Rape culture can manifest as jokes, comments, TV shows, music, workplace interactions, and policy and law, among others. Consequently, male sexual aggression, sexualized violence and harassment against women and the LGBTQ2S+ community, and re-victimization and victim-blaming are presented as inevitable and normal events.

As direct effects of Rape Culture, survivors are not believed, experience victim-blaming, public shaming and social stigmatization. In addition, perpetrators are not held accountable, their aggressive behaviour remains unchallenged, and sexualized violence is considered part of the status quo.

Similarly, Rape Culture makes bystanders less likely to intervene as they will not identify sexual violence as a problem but rather as regular behaviour.

Students may bring up the topic of school uniforms/dress codes in this lesson. Be prepared for the conversation. If necessary, you may table the specific topic to another day and invite your administrator to discuss this with your students.

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Materials:

- Pieces of paper/notebooks
- Writing utensils for students

Reflection:

Write or post the following for students to reflect on prior to the lesson. Give students about 5 minutes to jot down ideas.

Romans 12:17 says "Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Is there ever a situation where it is okay to harm another person? (answer, prove, extend)

Activity one

Ask students to write down a list of things they would have to do to go for a walk at night as safely as possible. Share the list in pairs.

Discuss:

-Why is the list longer for female-identified individuals?

-What are some examples of violence and harassment that people can face in the street? How do they affect different genders?

-Why are female-identified people as well as LGBTQ2S+ individuals more likely to be harassed in public spaces?

-Why does street harassment and violence happen?

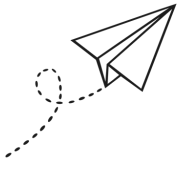
Activity two

Once you have covered the previous questions and addressed any comments watch the Time's Up: Let's End Rape Culture by Téa Baines and Noam Hazut video.

Answer any questions students might have about it.

By encouraging class participation define Rape Culture, it's characteristics, the common behaviours associated with it, examples they might have seen in media (video clips, social media, etc.) and their impact on women and LGBTQ2S+ individuals.

Discuss how individuals who participate in or subscribe to rape culture are enabling sexual violence with their actions.



Activity three

Split the class into groups of 2-3 members of mixed genders. Ask half of those groups to address one of the following two sets of questions and the other half the other set. Once students have had the chance to discuss, ask groups to voluntarily share their answers for each question:

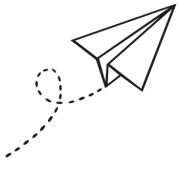
1.

- How do women and LGBTQ2S+ individuals feel when facing behaviours associated with Rape Culture (For example: Victim-Blaming, experiences of violence being dismissed, the continuous portrayal of sexual violence and exploitation in video clips, music, etc.)?
- How can Rape Culture impact your relationships with others?
- How should women and LGBTQ2S+ individuals feel when:
    - Walking alone in the streets (Possible answers: Safe, not scared)
    - Consuming media (Possible answers: Not objectified, inspired by positive representations of their identities)
    - Being in a relationship (Possible answers: Not objectified, respected, valued for who they are, not compared)
    - Sharing experiences of sexual violence? (Possible answers: Believed, heard, respected, with a voice to decide what happens next)

  This entire section should focus on building empathy towards those negatively impacted by Rape Culture and Child Sexual Exploitation. By focusing on how women and the LGBTQ2S+ are affected, stress the role students play in challenging Rape Culture.

2.

- What feelings or attitudes may contribute to men harassing women in public spaces/street? (Possible answers: asserting power through intimidation, misconceptions about someone's intentions, appearing "cool" in front of his friends, expectations on being sexual, expectations that men can't control their sexual urges)



- Are those attitudes learned? Where are they learned? (Possible answers: these are learned from media, family, friends)

- How do these attitudes affect men? (Possible answers: Their relationships will be negatively impacted, they might hurt people they respect and love, their mental health might degrade, they might measure their value based on outdated and unhealthy expectations of what it means to be a man)

- What can men do to challenge these behaviours and end rape culture? (Concepts to explore: accountability, healthy and meaningful relationships, respect, equity, consent)

  Use this section to discuss male-allyship, the role of male-identifying students play in challenging Rape Culture and how doing this can ultimately affect their communities and own lives positively.

Wrap-Up

Use some time at the end of the session to highlight the importance of consent as a key element for building healthy relationships as well as the role that men can take in addressing Rape Culture. As members of our Catholic Community, we are called to support one another and not to judge others. From media consumption to the language individuals use, there is always something we can all do to promote the rights of survivors, challenge victim-blaming, demand media representation of consensual and healthy relationships, and achieve gender equity and inclusiveness.

