

You may be **THINKING** or feeling some of the following...

- I am misunderstanding his actions. Maybe he didn't really mean to kiss me on the lips.
- I feel badly for thinking he is doing something wrong.
- Even though it feels wrong to me, it must not be because he is my pastor and he wouldn't do anything wrong.
- I like feeling special and enjoy the attention he gives me. I like him.
- He makes me feel so grown-up and important.

Reasons why you may be **AFRAID** to tell...

- I don't want to get him in trouble.
- I don't want to be in trouble.
- I don't want him to be mad at me.
- He told me not to tell.
- I don't want to hurt his feelings. After all, I think I love him.
- People will be mad at me for telling on him.
- I am embarrassed and don't want people to know.

This might be confusing and you may not want to talk about it, but there is help and hope for you. Your feelings are greatly confused right now and you don't want to hurt the person doing this to you, but this is not love. You do not have to keep quiet while being abused by your youth pastor, Bible worker, school dean, elder or deacon or anyone in the position of spiritual authority.

THE Hope of Survivors

A ministry of compassion providing support, hope and encouragement for victims of clergy sexual abuse and misconduct.

We want you to know that we are here to help you. You won't get in trouble for telling. The person who hurt you might, but that is because what he has done is wrong, not because you did anything to him and not because you told on him. Pastors and others who teach us about God and His Word are supposed to be kind and caring. They are not to touch us in inappropriate ways or encourage us to keep secrets from our family and friends. Good pastors are important because they can really help you grow in your relationship with Jesus, but if the pastor is doing something wrong to hurt you, he is not being a good pastor.

He says he loves me in a special way, just like God loves His children. He tells me I'm special and no one else knows him the way I do. He wants to show me how much God loves me by being with me and helping me feel loved.

God loves each of us, but God would never do anything that is wrong and no one who teaches God's Word should do anything to hurt someone either.

If you need help now, please contact us:
www.TheHopeOfSurvivors.com
Help@TheHopeOfSurvivors.com
P.O. Box 16, Thompsonville, IL 62890
(618) 983-6434 or (866) 260-8958

My pastor makes
me feel
SPECIAL!



How can that
be **WRONG?**

I like the **ATTENTION** my youth pastor gives me. He says I'm special and that makes me feel good. I just wish he wouldn't hug me so much.

Everyone wants to feel special and loved. Sometimes, when we don't receive healthy love and affection at home, we're more likely to seek it elsewhere. While a youth pastor or Bible teacher should be loving and kind, there are times when hugging and touching can be wrong.

If you are being hugged when you don't want to be, or in a way that makes you uncomfortable, tell him to stop or ask your parents to talk with him about it. It's ok for you to say no to something that hurts you or makes you feel awkward, even if it's the pastor who is asking you to do it.

I feel like what he's doing is **WRONG**—and that I'm to blame. After all, he's my Bible teacher and everyone looks up to him.

It may seem like everyone respects him but if he is doing something wrong, it is not your fault. If he is isolating you from others, trying

to get you alone to spend "special time" with him, trying to hold you, kiss you or touch you in some way (especially in a sexual way), you need to know that it is not your fault and that he needs to stop.

He said this was "our little **SECRET.**" I don't want to be a tattletale, and I don't want to make him mad. I can handle this myself. Besides, who would believe me?

No adult should ask you to keep a secret, unless it is a nice surprise like a birthday gift or something like

that. If you are being asked to keep your meetings, or what takes place during those times, a secret then something is wrong.

Tell someone. Tell your parents, tell a close friend, call The Hope of Survivors, but do tell. There will be someone who will believe you and will help you. You do not need to face this alone. Other adults can manage his anger. You don't need to be concerned about that.

He **THREATENED** to hurt me and my family if I told on him. I can't tell!

If you have a close relationship with your parents,

tell them what's happening and how it makes you feel. You **MUST** tell. This is abuse and it needs to be stopped. Your family can protect you and make sure that the person who is abusing you is stopped and held accountable for his actions. If you are too afraid to tell anyone you know, contact The Hope of Survivors for help.

He says God made me for him, and that I make him **HAPPY.** Is this what God wants of me?

No, it is not. God would never want any harm to come to you and He would never want someone to abuse you or hurt you in this way. God loves you and He wants to protect and heal you. He has someone special for you that will never hurt you.

WHAT is WRONG behavior?

- Hugging you too often or too closely
- Kissing you
- Constantly looking at you
- Having you sit close to him or on his lap
- Asking you to touch him
- Telling or asking you to keep his secrets
- Talking inappropriately about sex
- Touching or caressing you sexually
- Passing you notes, calling you a lot, emailing (or text-messaging) you often, sending you pictures of himself or asking you for pictures of yourself.

If your youth pastor or someone else who is a leader in the church is doing any of these things, please tell someone. Call us. We can help you.

He **LOVES** you, he **LOVES** you **NOT!**

