

Teaching Touching Safety

Primary Level, Grades K, 1, 2 (ages 5 to 8 years)

Lesson Plan 6: Recognizing risky adult behavior

Getting started with Lesson 6:

- Principle:** Identifying grooming behaviors of potential abusers. Specifically:
- 1) Adults who give gifts without permission and instruct the child not to tell anyone about the gift or where they got it, and
 - 2) Knowing when to refuse to go where an adult is trying to take you or to refuse to do what an adult asks you to do.
- Catechism:** Man is obliged to follow the moral law, which urges him “to do what is good and avoid what is evil” (cf. GS 16). This law makes itself heard in his conscience. **#1713**
- “To love is to will the good of another.” (cf. *MK 7:21*) All other affections have their source in this first movement of the human heart toward the good. Only the good can be loved. Passions “are evil if love is evil and good if it is good.” **#1766**
- Goal:** To assist parents, guardians, and other caring adults in teaching children how to know that there is a difference between surprises, secrets, and tattling on someone, and also that they have the right to say no and to tell somebody when an adult asks them to keep a secret from their parents or guardians.
- Objectives:** Upon completion of this lesson, children should be better able to:
- Distinguish between a surprise, a secret, and tattling on someone.
 - Recognize that those who ask them to keep secrets from parents are not safe adults.
 - Know that they can and should tell a trusted adult if anyone asks them to keep a secret or makes them feel uncomfortable.

Dealing with the primary age: "Activity" Is the Key Concept

Small children have a natural curiosity, a lively and vivid imagination and are growing less self-centered and becoming more conscious of others. Their attention span is short, approximately 20 minutes. They build on concrete experiences, love to learn, and are highly inquisitive. However, they rely almost entirely on others to define what is good and bad for them.

When establishing the guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate behavior, parents and teachers should make every effort to create an environment where children are free to ask questions. This early experience of honesty and trust will set the stage for each child's life-long relationships with significant adults. In addition, it will create an atmosphere of open inquiry where questions are encouraged. Children will begin to listen to and learn to trust their own instincts and to begin to learn how to evaluate potentially risky situations.

At this age, children are beginning to differentiate positive and negative aspects of everyday life and are beginning to question the adult's expectation of blind obedience. At the same time they are learning how to

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respect and care for their own bodies. They are learning about eating properly and about hygiene, as well as beginning to test the limits for activity.

Caregivers need to be open, honest and available to answer questions correctly with language children can understand. This is the time to discuss possible grooming techniques so that they learn to recognize them and stand up for themselves when they are with adults and others whose behavior is questionable.

Vocabulary words:

- Secrets — Something that is hidden from others or that is known only to one or to a few.¹
- Surprise— Something that leaves a person feeling wonder, astonishment, or amazement, as at something unanticipated.²
- Tattle— To gossip about another by revealing their plans or activities in a sensational way or spreading rumors about another person.³
- Uncomfortable — Experiencing physical discomfort that leaves one ill at ease or uneasy, sometimes causing anxiety.
- Confusing — To cause to be unable to think clearly, to make unclear or incomprehensible.⁴
- Secluded — Kept apart from social contact with other people, hidden from view.⁵

Supplies and Preparation:

Educators, catechist, youth ministers, and other caring adults should prepare by reviewing the entire lesson plan and by reading *Teaching Touching Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and other Caring Adults*. Then review and do the teacher preparation exercise in lesson #5. During the class, follow the instructions to complete as many of the activities as possible in your allotted amount of time.

Activity 1: Play the introductory video to begin the lesson.

Activity 2: Review the material from Lesson #5.

Activity 3: Review the rules for doing with adults and/or doing what adults say to do and what to tell your parents about it.

Activity 4 Look at the pictures of places adults ask children to go and discuss each with the children based on the rules.

Activity 5: Work on the Maze Activity.

Prayer: A suggested prayer is provided at the end of the lesson. If you wish, you may use this prayer to conclude this lesson with your students.

¹ The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

² Id.

³ Id.

⁴ WordNet ® 2.0, © 2003 Princeton University

⁵ Id.

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Activities 4 and 5: Learning the rules for going with adults or doing what adults say to do and what to tell your parents about it.

Preparation: Download the pictures of areas where children go with adults for this activity. Review the text content with each picture so that you are clear about the reasons that a location is okay or not okay.

NOTE TO TEACHERS: The downloadable resources include several pictures of the locations that are described below. Some of them are safe and some are unsafe. Each one also has a separate page of text that includes the material that is provided in the lesson plan. It describes the scene and gives you bullet points that identify the reasons that a location is safe or unsafe. Mount the pictures on cardboard, poster board, or some other substantial surface with the picture on one side to show the children and the text on the other side, facing you. In this format, you can hold up the picture and talk with the students about it without needing to remember everything there is to say.

Classroom discussion:

NOTE TO TEACHERS: The activity has two parts. First are pictures of safe and unsafe places to go with adults. Second is the maze that includes several possible stops along the road. Do not do the maze until you have completed all the course work for this session.

Talk with the children about the rules for going with adults or doing what adults say to do.

The Rules:

1. Never go anywhere alone with an adult (other than your parents) without your parent's permission.
2. Adults other than your parents can ask you to do something that everyone else is doing such as chores, and expect you to do it. However, if they ask you to do something else, you do not have to do that without your parent's permission.

NOTE TO TEACHERS: This is a new key concept for this age group. Many have been told—in one way or another—to do what adults tell them to do. Some have been told that they don't have to do what anyone tells them except their parents. The idea of this rule is to give children some concept of what is an appropriate request. So, for example, if an adult tells them to help clean up a mess made with toys or food, the child should do that because that is the type of chore that everyone needs to do and in which others are participating. However, if the adult asks the child to do something that is not a usual chore such as going home alone with a teacher after school without parent's permission or going into areas where children are not allowed such as locked rooms that are not being used for classes, the child can and should refuse to do so.

3. When you are asked to do something by an adult other than your parents, tell your parents what happened, even if the person tells you not to tell.

Picture 1—A school bus full of kids, teachers, and parents going on a field trip to the zoo.

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Text: Is it safe or unsafe to go on the bus?

It is safe because:

- There are lots of people around.
- It is out in the open where everyone can see each other.
- There are children and adults on the bus.
- The trip is to a public place—the zoo.

Is it safe to go off on your own once you get to the zoo?

- It is important to stay with the group on group outings.
- Children can get lost when they go off by themselves.

Picture 2—A picture of an individual walking off across the park alone with the young girl.

Text: Is this a safe or an unsafe situation?

It is unsafe because:

- They are walking away from the area where other children are playing.
- No one else is going with them.
- They are headed toward an area where there is nothing but trees and bushes.
- The adult is directing where the child should go.

NOTE TO TEACHER: Listen carefully to the children's responses in this discussion. Their comments may give you some insight into the ways that they could be vulnerable to a potential offender. Knowing this can help you know what to emphasize in the discussion. For example, if a child says, "You should not go off with the man unless he is your friend or someone you or your parents know really well." This is NOT the standard for someone being safe, but it does point to how offenders build relationships during the grooming process and overcome a child's resistance.

Remember that the definition of a 'safe' friend is a person who:

- Won't hurt the child without a good reason and won't confuse or scare the child intentionally, i.e. medical exams, vaccinations, throat swabs, etc., and
- Respects the child's wishes and the wishes and rules of the parents, guardians and caretakers when it comes to matters of personal safety—including touching safety.

Picture 3—A room with a "DO NOT ENTER—No Children Allowed in this area" sign on the door.

Text:

Is it safe or unsafe to go into this area?

It is unsafe because:

- The sign is a warning that children are not supposed to be in the area.
- If a child went through the door and got hurt or lost, people might not find him or her quickly.
- Sometimes rooms are off limits to protect children so it is important to obey the signs.
- You don't know why you are not supposed to be there. It might be a place that has tools or other things that could harm you.

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Picture 4 — A merry-go-round in the park with lots of kids and an adult offering a hand up to the child.

Text:

Is it safe or unsafe?

It is safe—if the merry-go-round is stopped. It is not safe if it is still going around and around.

- Sometimes adults, because they are bigger, can do things that children are too small to do. The adult may be able to step up on a moving merry-go-round, but children are too small and it is too dangerous to try that.
- When the merry-go-round is stopped, everyone can get on and ride.
- There are lots of people on the ride—children and adults both—and everyone can have fun if they hold on tight and don't fall off.
- Some children are too small to ride alone on a merry-go-round. They are not big enough to hold on to the pole and stay on the horse. If you are too small to hold on to the pole and stay on the horse, always have a trusted adult ride with you and stand beside you while the merry-go-round goes around.

Activity Part 2: The maze.

Directions: Draw on the chalkboard or on poster board a maze with a “start” and a “finish.” The maze should tell the story of a “walk” through a neighborhood or park. Use the pictures from Activity 1 (as found online) to illustrate safe and unsafe situations. Ask the children, as a group, to guide you through the maze (allow them to discuss their selections along the route and be sure to address the reasoning for their choices as well as to encourage “safe” choices. Older children are more likely to work it out for themselves than are the five-year-olds in your class.

Supplies: Poster Board or cardboard.
Pictures from the website for Activity 1.
Tape or safe adhesive material.
Coloring pages for children (the maze with stops at safe and unsafe locations.)
Colors.

Prayer to end the lesson:

Angel of God,
My guardian dear,
To whom God's love
Entrusts me here,
Ever this day be at my side
To light, to guard,
To rule, to guide.

Amen.

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