

Intermediate Level, Grades 3, 4, 5 (ages 9 to 11 years)

Lesson Plan 10: Speak Up! Speak Out! Be heard!

Getting started with Lesson 10:

- Principle:** Supporting children in learning to speak up, speak out, and make sure they are heard when they are confused or scared or when something happens that makes them uncomfortable or uneasy.
- 1) Choosing the right time and the right person to talk to about things.
 - 2) Knowing what to say and how to say it so that adults pay attention
- 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**
- Goal:** To assist children and young people in being able to speak up when they are confused or scared, to speak out when something happens that makes them feel uncomfortable and to make sure that they are heard when they talk to adults in their life about something that is important.
- Learning Goals:** To teach children and young people some guidelines about speaking up and speaking out when they experience situations that make them feel scared or confused or when they feel uncomfortable or uneasy with someone or something that is happening. Empowering children by providing communication skills that can be used in a variety of situations and focusing their application to circumstances that place them at risk related to their personal safety.
- Children and young people can learn age appropriate skills for that empower them to communicate powerfully.
 - Children and young people can start to learn to identify times, places, and people that provide the best chance for them to be heard when they have something important to communicate.
- Parent Notice:** Send out a letter to the parents and guardians outlining the goals and objectives of this lesson. Let parents and guardians know that the lessons this year will concentrate on developing communication skills. For this age group, it will focus on starting to identify the when, where, and to whom of communicating something important to the adults in their lives. The lessons will also give the children some beginning tools to help them know “how” to communicate confusing, scary, or simply important information.

If applicable, schedule a meeting before the first lesson for parents to come together and see the materials for both sessions. During the meeting go through the lesson plan and show the parents the activities, coloring pages, story boards, etc. that the children will be creating as well as the important elements of the lessons.

Parents and guardians are the primary educators of their own children. This right of adults to educate their children, particularly in the area of morals, values, and human sexuality, is also recognized by the Church as “an educational duty.”¹ These lessons in the *Teaching Touching Safety* program will provide children with some tools they can put to use every day in any number of ways. Of course, we will connect the dots for children between speaking up, speaking out, being heard and the importance of telling a trusted adult when someone does something that makes them feel scared, confused, or uncomfortable. In addition, we will be reminding the children that bullying tactics by children and adults in their life are also actions they need to tell others about. However, the communication skills at the heart of these lessons will be useful for much more than reports resulting from following the Touching Rules.

Dealing with the intermediate age—key concept is “energy”²

These children are away from home more often and need to start recognizing that safety issues can arise when they are off with friends or at other events and places.

They like to be in constant motion and are always on the go. Groups are important. This is the “gang” age with friends of the same sex and the time in which team sports flourish. Capable of intense loyalty to others, they usually have a best friend to confide in. They can talk through problems and can think through their past actions to find a justification for their behavior. For example, they will have

¹ Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum educationis*, Proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, October 28, 1965, Article 3 at 44.

² DeBord, K. (1996). “*Childhood Years: Ages six through twelve.*” Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service.

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explanations and justifications for being late, not completing homework, still being on the phone after lights out, etc. They will also take time to search for the information they need to resolve some questions for themselves and they are capable of developing plans and setting goals.

Although truthful about big things, they are less so about the smaller things, often making up alibis or shifting the blame to others. They have a strong sense of right and wrong or fair or unfair. They can argue and hold strong debates. Caregivers can be more effective when dealing with this age by including them in the discussion while establishing rules or guidelines.

The best approach to this age group is through non-competitive games in which the children can establish individual goals. At this age, more explanation is necessary when rules are given. Children need to begin to learn to trust their own ability to make decisions; therefore, criticism should be designed to teach. For example, when something goes wrong or does not turn out the way that the child wanted, rather than tell the child what went wrong or how to do it differently, ask, "how could you do that differently next time?" Let the child begin to think through and reason out solutions.

Parent Notice: If the lessons are not taught in consecutive classrooms, send out a letter to the parents and guardians outlining the goals and objectives of the Touching Safety Lessons. Make sure that each parent has a copy of the *Teaching Touching Safety Guide for Parents, Guardians, and other Caring Adults* and recommend that they read it carefully before the lessons begin. Let parents and guardians know that the lessons will reinforce the message in the book for parents and guardians in age appropriate material.

Parents and guardians are the primary educators of their own children. This right of adults to educate their children, particularly in the area of morals, values, and human sexuality, is also recognized by the Church as "an educational duty."³ These lessons in the *Touching Safety* program will provide children with some tools they can put to use every day in any number of ways. Of course, we will connect the dots for children between speaking up, speaking out, being heard, and the importance of telling a trusted adult when someone does something that makes them feel scared, confused, or uncomfortable. In addition, we will be reminding the children that bullying tactics by children and adults in their life are also actions they need to tell others about. However, the communication skills at the heart of these lessons will be useful for much more than reports resulting from following the Touching Rules.

Vocabulary words:

- Communication - The imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs.
- Trust — Reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc., of a person or thing; confidence
- Heard — To listen to; give or pay attention to what is said.

Supplemental material is available as an additional resource for this lesson plan starting on page 5. This is optional information as a refresher on grooming that may be useful when presenting this lesson.

³ *Declaration on Christian Education, Gravissimum educationis*, Proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, October 28, 1965, Article 3 at 44.

Intermediate Level, Grades 3, 4, 5 (ages 9 to 11 years)**Lesson Plan 10: Speak Up! Speak Out! Be heard!**

Activity #1: Play the introductory DVD to begin the lesson.

Activity #2: Classroom Discussion: Speak Up, Speak Out, and Be Heard.

Activity #3: Classroom Discussion: Learning when and who to tell

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.

Supplies and Preparation:

Opening DVD
TV and DVD Player
CD Player
Music CD (Suggestions Provided)
Hand out sheets from the lesson plan
Two brown paper lunch bags or two bowls

[NOTE TO TEACHER: If you have a typical prayer service that you use to start class, use it for this session also. If not, please consider the suggestions provided and create an appropriate prayer opening for the class.]

Suggested prayer formats:

- Place a small table at the front of the room next to the teacher. Cover it with a beautiful scarf. Place an open Bible on the table along with a candle and, if available, a flower or a symbol that represents all children or the children in the class. Use the same prayer for opening and closing the lesson. Light the candle and have someone lead the other young people in reciting the prayer on the poster.
- Form a circle of silence around a lighted candle and listen to (or sing along with) an appropriate Christian song in the background such as: "You are Mine" by David Haas, "Here I Am, Lord" by Dan Schutte, "You Are Near" by Dan Schutte or another that you find appropriate. Invite the children join in saying the prayer together.
- Have music playing in the background as the children come in to class. Ask everyone to be seated and get quiet. Listen to the music and offer this prayer and intentions:
 - Loving God, we come before you today to ask your guidance and wisdom so that we may know and do your will and walk with you each day. We offer these intentions as we begin our prayer together today.
 - For all children who suffer abuse that they may feel God's loving arms enfold them and take away their pain.
 - For all those who harm children that they may seek forgiveness and turn away from harming others.
 - For all parents and others who care about children that they learn how to be protectors of children and make sure that all children are safe from intentional harm.
 - [Ask for other intentions that the children wish to bring.]
 - For these intentions and all those that we hold in our hearts, we ask this in the name of Jesus your son. Amen.

Activity #1: Show DVD if appropriate.

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Activity #2: Classroom Discussion: Speak Up, Speak Out, and Be Heard.

Discussion: Review and expand the material from Lesson #9. (5-10 minutes) Point out that sometimes it is hard to tell someone about something that is upsetting or makes you feel uncomfortable until you take a minute to think about the facts. Remind the students about the six questions reporters ask when researching a story and let them know that thinking about those six questions can help you figure out what to say to your parents or another trusted adult when something bad happens or you are scared or confused.

In this section we want to add to the conversation by reminding the students that in addition to speaking up and speaking out, it is important that you make sure your message is heard and that there are several ways to get the attention of someone and communicate what needs to be said – especially if words are not enough.

- *In our last lesson we talked about how hard it is to talk to adults about something that happened that is bad or leaves us feeling confused or scared. We thought about the six questions that reporters ask when they are researching a story. Then we listened to a story and wrote out what we might say to share what happened with our own parents or another trusted adult. Your assignment since then was to notice how many times you think about telling your parents about something and then decide not to tell and to pay attention to how often you hold back telling something when you think it will be upsetting to someone.*
- *How many of you did that? What did you notice? Use this opportunity to have the students start to see how often they hold back and decide not to tell something – even when they think it is important to talk about it to someone. Until the students can start to see “why” they don’t tell, conversations about how to tell an adult something that is scary, confusing, or bad will have virtually no impact.*
- *Now that you have started to realize how important it is to speak up and to start with the facts about what is happening that is upsetting or confusing, let’s take a few minutes to talk about how you make sure that what you need to communicate is heard by people.*
- *Have you ever tried to tell someone something and they just don’t get it? Sometimes they even interrupt you because they think they know what you are going to say – even if they are wrong. How does that feel? Invite the students to start to really think about how frustrating it is to try to tell someone something when they won’t listen or think they already know.*
- *Most of the time when people think of communication they think about talking to someone or telling someone something but there are lots of ways to communicate what you want to say or what you are feeling. In this part of the conversation, there is an opportunity to have the children begin to identify ways of communicating that don’t rely only on words. Sometimes these other forms of communication can be valuable when the goal is to be heard.*
- *What do you think are some ways to let someone know something without talking? This may take some discussion and, in particular, it may take some demonstration on the part of the teacher. For example, during this discussion you might consider several expressions of different types of communication. Simple examples might include a simple wave – says “Hello” or “Goodbye” without words or a fist punching the air, which communicates happiness, winning, excitement, or fun without words.*
- *What can you do to tell someone how you are sad or mad without talking? Encourage the kids to think about how they let someone know they are happy, or sad, or mad, or excited without saying anything. They know how to get someone’s attention. To demonstrate these ways of communicating without word, whisper an emotion or feeling to one of the students and have him or her act it out while the other students try to guess what is being expressed.*
- *Have you ever seen people in the deaf communicate to each other? Do you know any signs? If you know any signs such as “thank you” or “I love you” or “finished,” teach the young people the signs you know. Many of them may have learned these signs as young children.*
- *What about other ways to express words besides talking? You can also have the children draw a picture to tell a story or share their feelings. The point is to use examples of non-verbal communication to demonstrate to students that they can let someone else in on what is happening to them sometimes without even using words.*
- *Another way we communicate to tell people something without talking is with signs. What are some signs that send a message everyone understands? Use posters provided with the exercise to show the children some common signs such as traffic signs, the sign for restrooms, and for disabled parking spots.*
- *Another example of visual signs that communicate is letters and numbers. Other examples of the use of letters and numbers include highway and other road signs, numbers on the front of houses, license plates, initials, email, texting and IM shortcut communications such as LOL (laugh out loud), TTFN (ta-ta for now) and BFF (Best friends forever.)*
- *Obviously, the best way to communicate is to talk to someone. However, sometimes talking is not the most effective way to let someone know that you are hurt, or scared, or confused, or in what could be a dangerous situation. Use whatever you need to use to make sure you are heard when this happens. That might mean being*

silent. For example, if you are someone who talks a lot, being very, very quiet might get someone's attention faster.

- A journalist uses words and pictures. You have lots of other forms of communication at your disposal. As we finish this lesson, we are going to take a few minutes to practice getting someone's attention without simply talking to them. Each of you will draw a slip out of each bag. One will have the emotion, feeling or situation that you need to tell someone about and the other will be the way of communicating that you must use to get the message across. Have the students come forward one at a time and draw a slip of paper from each of two brown paper bags. (The sheets with the situations and the ways of communicating are part of the supplies for the class online. Cut the sheets up and fold them to create the slips of paper for the children to draw.) Have as many students as you have time to include participate in the activity.
- God expects us to speak up for ourselves and to tell someone we can trust when something is wrong or upsetting to us. When we let others know about bad or confusing things that happen we are doing what God's wants for us and being how God wants us to be.
- Let's share a prayer as we complete our lesson today to remind us that we are God's special creations.

Activity #3: Classroom Discussion: Learning when and who to tell

Directions: The next question for the students is *who do you tell?*

Ask your students to name some of the adults in their lives who they trust. Next, have them consider the following points to help them figure out who to tell when something like this happens. They should consider telling:

- People who have proven themselves trustworthy in the past.
- People respected and trusted to behave honorably by your family.
- People who listen to you and treat you with respect.
- People who respect your wishes and your parent's rules.
- People who you know have your best interests at heart.

The best choice would be to tell someone who matches all of these points.

It is important for students to begin to confront the challenge of speaking up when something like this happens—regardless of how threatened or uncomfortable they feel. In situations like this, the adult will work very hard to make the victim believe that he or she is responsible and that nobody will believe the child if he or she speaks up.

Note to Teacher: Many children believe that when it is their word against that of a teacher or another adult, the adult will always be believed. It is extremely important that you help dispel this myth and help foster an environment where children feel empowered to report this sort of behavior when it first occurs.

Prayer to end the lesson:

My holy Angel Guardian,
Ask the Lord to bless the journey that I undertake,
That it may benefit the health of my soul and body;
That I may reach its end,
And that, returning safe and sound,
I may find my family in good health.
Guard, guide and preserve us throughout the day and night.

Amen.

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Supplemental Resource Material for Teachers

The complete grooming process employed by a child molester is usually three-pronged and involves physical as well as psychological behaviors. In person, the process may take months, even years to accomplish with regular face to face contact but through the Internet, predators can break down the young person's defenses in a very short amount of time, particularly if the young person is vulnerable or uninformed about the risks of the Internet.

The three aspects of the typical grooming process are *physical grooming*, *psychological grooming*, and *community grooming*. All three are going on at the same time.

In the case of Internet seduction, the *physical grooming* becomes part of the process much later in the game. In fact, by the time the molester has an opportunity to touch the young person it may be too late to protect the young person from harm. There is no "build up" in the levels of intimacy of touch when the Internet is the contact point. Young people solicited through the Internet are often abducted by the molester when a face to face meeting is arranged or there is any kind of physical contact. **On the Internet, the physical grooming and community grooming are left out of the initial process and the psychological grooming has some new twists.**

The most important aspect of grooming through Internet contact is the *psychological grooming*. The molester establishes a relationship online by pretending to be someone in the young person's age group. Through conversations about things the young person is interested in, the molester will lure the young person into chat rooms and, eventually, is often able to convince the young person to defy parents, grandparents, and guardians and meet the molester outside the home. The young person is convinced that the molester is trustworthy and believes this person is a friend, someone that really likes and understands the young person. The young person may be convinced the online friend is the same age and has the same issues. Molesters know it is important to talk to children and young people on their level. They communicate in a way that children and young people understand and convince the young people that they are someone who can be trusted —someone just like them. On the Internet, this psychological grooming is particularly effective because none of the natural barriers of distrust or apprehension that might arise for a child are present. The physical appearance and real age of the molester are hidden from the child's view. The Internet provides a wall for the molester to hide behind and the child can't see the molester or the wall. Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to this approach because of their natural tendency to trust others.

Threats about not telling or threats about harming someone or something the young person loves are not needed in this situation. The young person's resistance is broken down through the communication process. Remember, the young person often thinks that he or she is talking with another young person. There is really nothing to tell mom and dad. After all, they are older. They would not really understand. Sometimes the young person is conflicted; however, most of the time, unfortunately, what really happens is that the young person bonds more to the molester.

On the Internet, there is no grooming of the community. In fact, the intention of the molester is to bypass the community altogether. In online seduction, the molester wants to remain hidden from view. He or she will create a relationship with the young person that goes around the parents, grandparents, or guardians and encourages the young person to keep the conversations secret. This works because the young person believes the person on the other end of the communication is telling the truth.

The behavioral warning signs of a potential predator are evident in online communications, but they are much more difficult for adults to identify. There is a wall between the parents/adults and the predator that distorts everything about the relationship. This is why it is so important for parents/adults to be aware of the communications their children and young people are engaged in on the Internet and look for the signs that something is off.

Among the ways the behavioral warning signs show up in new and different ways on the Internet are:

1. *Always wants to be alone with children.* On the Internet, the predator has one on one access to children and young people through email and chat rooms. Email communications though are more risky. Parents can read email on the computer. Chat rooms are places for private, real time, conversations that are more difficult and sometimes impossible to recover and read. Predators will invite children and young people to join them in chat rooms for "private" conversations.
2. *Give gifts to children, often without permission.* In person or on the Internet, predators find ways to give gifts to children and young people and tell them to keep it secret. The gifts may be as simple as candy or soda that parents won't allow. However, gifts are often more than that, particularly when they come from someone who made contact with the child over the Internet. In that case, the gift is likely to be entirely inappropriate. Gifts such as perfume, flowers, lingerie or expensive items that parents cannot afford or a bouquet of roses or a box of lingerie for a girl.
3. *Allows a child to engage in activities that parents would not allow.* When meeting with children and young people online, predators lure them into online chat rooms and encourage secrecy. This activity is extremely effective at driving a wedge between the child and their parent(s). Child molesters look for children that are alone after school. They prefer to contact the young people between the time school is out and the time parents come home from work. This is another factor that

convinces children and young people that the person “talking” to them is someone their own age. Why else would he or she be home and able to chat or email after school?

4. *Uses sexually explicit language and tells dirty jokes.* If parents/adults are monitoring children and young people's communications online, they can often see that this is happening and intervene. If, as is often the case, children and young people are allowed on the Internet unsupervised, it is possible for knowledgeable parents to recover this information; however, it may not be discovered early enough to protect a child or young person from harm.

Knowing the warning signs means little where the Internet is concerned if parents are not monitoring their children's Internet activities. Find out where they are going on the Internet. Read email messages. Check out their social networking site(s). Put limits and filters on any computer children and young people can use and check regularly to make sure that filters are in place and working.

Generally, the grooming process is complex. On the Internet it is much more difficult to identify and interrupt. This lesson is designed to focus on two things those children and young people can do to protect themselves from predators on the Internet. Two simple rules that can be the difference between safety and danger for children are: 1) keeping personal information private and 2) young people need to follow their parent's rules in order to stay safe. Concentrating on these two warning signs will reinforce the message from parents and other caring adults about Internet dangers while keeping the opportunity of the Internet available for everyone to enjoy.