

## Teaching Touching Safety

**Junior High Level, Grades 6, 7, 8 (ages 11 to 14 years)**

**Lesson Plan 10: Speak up! Speak Out! Be Heard!**

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### 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
- Objectives:** Upon completion of this lesson, children and young people should be better able to:
- 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 a something important to communicate.

### Dealing with the pre-adolescent age—key concept is “transition”

The junior high school young person is experiencing a period of rapid growth. The emergence of interest in the opposite sex is occurring. These young people are concerned about physical change, body size, skin, and hair length. Concepts depend a great deal on body image as young people complain of being either too physically mature or too physically immature. Peer groups play an important role in shaping attitudes and interest. Parents and caregivers need to regularly assure young people that changes are normal though the rate varies from person to person.

Parents, catechists, teachers, youth ministers, and other caring adults must also listen to young people and observe what's going on with them. Let young people be themselves. Let them explore their self-expression—and know who they are with, what they are doing and remind them of the importance of protecting themselves during this time in the young person's life. During this time, young people are completely self-absorbed and many are naturally less communicative.

### 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 five. This is optional information as a refresher on grooming that may be useful when presenting this lesson.

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**Junior High Level, Grades 6, 7, 8 (ages 12 to 14 years)**

## **Lesson 10: Speak Up! Speak Out! Being Heard!**

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

**Activity #2:** Classroom Discussion – Speaking Up, Speaking Out, and Being Heard

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

**Supplies:** Opening DVD  
Prayer Handout/Poster  
DVD Player and TV  
CD player

**Prayer:** **[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 students or the students in the class. Use the same prayer for opening and closing the lesson. Light the candle and have someone lead the other young people as they recite 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 students join in saying the prayer together. **[NOTE: It is great to have music playing while the students enter the classroom. However, be sure that the last song played, during the opening prayer is slow and thoughtful. Spirited songs will leave you with spirited students.]**
- Have music playing in the background as the students come in to class. Ask everyone to be seated and get quiet. Play one last song 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 students who suffer abuse that they may feel God’s loving arms enfold them and take away their pain.
    - For all those who harm students that they may seek forgiveness and turn away from harming others.
    - For all parents and others who care about children and young people that they learn how to protect them and make sure that they are safe from intentional harm.
    - [Ask for other intentions that the students 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.

**Activity #2:** Classroom Discussion — Speaking Up, Speaking Out, and Being Heard

**Directions:** In this section we want to add to the conversation from Lesson #9 regarding the value of speaking up and speaking out and communicating the “facts” to someone, especially when it is important to communicate. This part of the lesson deals with “Being Heard” by reminding the students 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 hard it was to decide to tell parents something bad even when it is about someone else. They may discover that they sometimes (maybe often) talk themselves out of telling someone – even when they think it could be important to let adults know what is happening. 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. At this point in their lives they are also beginning to become more and more independent and to think of themselves as capable of handling things on their own. This feeling they can handle bad situations is a risky one when child sexual predators are involved. Through this conversation, keep reinforcing that these predators are highly skilled adults who are using the young persons’ need for independence to trap them. Speaking up, Speaking Out, and Being Heard will undermine that objective and keep young people safer.*
- *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.*
- *Most of the time when people think of communication they think about talking to someone or telling someone something; however, there are many 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 be a challenging discussion, because students at this age may try their best to make a joke of the discussion. The objective is to get them to start to consider there are a variety of ways to get someone’s attention without talking. Making hand signals, holding up a sign, texting shorthand, traffic signs, signs for such places as bathrooms, signing for the hearing impaired, and pantomime are some examples of ways to “talk” to people without using verbal communication. **NOTE: Ask for a volunteer to demonstrate this way of communicating, and give the student a contemporary song title or movie title to act out through charades. Remember, no words at all. Use this activity two or three times as time allows demonstrating that the students can communicate without words but getting the message across is as difficult as finding the right words to tell something to a trusted adult.***
- *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 and will be able to bring them to mind again. Someone may speak sign language or know someone in the deaf community. If so, invite him or her to talk about what it is like to have only hand signals or written words to communicate with the deaf person. Is communication clearer or more difficult?*
- *What about other ways to express words besides talking? Drawing a picture can tell a story or share their feelings. The point is to use examples of non-verbal communication to demonstrate to students that they sometimes can let someone else in on what is happening to them without even using words – particularly if they are scared or have been threatened.*
- *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).*
- *Reporters use words and photographs to communicate the story they want to tell. As we have seen, there are also non-verbal ways to communicate. However, there are also ways to use words other than simply sharing the facts as a reporter might do. What are some ways we use words that communicate that are different from the “reporting” we talked about in Lesson 9? Some ways to demonstrate using words in a different way that the kids might mention are: texting, emailing, IMing, putting up a sign or writing a note. They may not think of things like writing stories or poetry to express feelings.*
- *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, scared, confused, or in a possible dangerous situation. Use whatever you need 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.*
- *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. Take this opportunity to help the students understand that when someone is trying to harm them in any way, particularly a predator, they have many tools at their disposal to communicate with the trusted adults in their lives and have the means to let the trusted adults know that something bad is happening. That’s just what God wants them to do – no matter what the predator says or threatens. **TRUST THE ADULTS IN YOUR LIFE THAT LOVE YOU AND ARE TRUSTWORTHY.***
- *Let’s share a prayer as we complete our lesson today to remind us that we are God’s special creations.*

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

**Directions:** Remind your students that these lessons are designed to give them the tools to protect themselves when difficult or even dangerous situations arise. Tell them that in today's lesson we will be talking about *when* to disclose a dangerous event or situation and *who* to tell when something bad, uncomfortable, scary, or confusing happens to you. Remind them that knowing what to do when someone intrudes upon their boundaries or violates the touching rules can mean the difference between staying safe and getting hurt.

**One of the essential elements your students must learn is the touching rule that states: you must tell a trusted adult if someone violates the touching safety rules.**

Sometimes reporting this type of inappropriate behavior is the hardest part. Ask your students why disclosing this sort of behavior is so difficult. Listen for the following reasons:

- I don't want to get anyone in trouble.
- I think I can deal with it myself.
- I don't want to upset my parents and teachers.
- I'm not sure *exactly* what happened.
- The person asked me not to tell, and I don't want to be the one who told.

**After students have given a number of reasons, continue the discussion by making the following points:**

- Telling a safe adult about someone's inappropriate behavior does not get the person into trouble. The person's own inappropriate behavior is what gets them into trouble.
- Even if you can deal with the way the situation affected you, telling a safe adult means that the violator has to deal with his or her own inappropriate behavior. And, perhaps, by revealing an incident, you'll be helping to protect someone else from harm.
- The people who love you will always be upset when bad things happen. It is not your job to protect the adults in your life from being upset. They're not upset at you. They're upset because they love you and someone did something to you.
- Even if you don't know for sure what happened, it is important to tell an adult you trust.

### **Prayer to end the lesson:**

***(Since this prayer was handed out in the last session and the students took it home, have those who don't have their copy read it off the poster this week as you pray together.)***

*(Remember that this is a variation of an Old Catholic Traveler's Prayer to be said before beginning the journey. Remind the students that as they grow up, they are on a kind of journey through life. Each time they leave their own home or their own room to go out on their own, they are traveling. Prayer can help prepare them for the journey and guide them along the way.)*

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.

### **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

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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.