

Year-1 Lesson for Grades 3, 4 and 5

- Preparation:** Educators, catechists, youth ministers, and other caring adults (instructor/catechist) should prepare by reviewing the first two pages of the lesson plan and by reading *Teaching Touching Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Other Caring Adults*. Then, follow the instructions to complete as many of the activities as possible in your allotted amount of time.
- Activity #1:** Play the introductory video
- Activity #2:** Review and discuss the vocabulary words and definitions
- Activity #3:** Review and discuss the touching safety rules
- Activity #4:** Learning to say “No!” in an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation
- Activity #5:** Create a safe touch poster
- Activity #6:** Identifying safe touches
- Prayer:** Two suggested (optional) prayers are provided at the end of the lesson. If you wish, you may use either of these prayers to conclude this lesson with your students.
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Preparation for completing this lesson:

- Principle:** Children must guard against those who may harm them through touch—sexual or otherwise. Young people must respect their own health and safety and the health and safety of others. These themes provide the core message of this lesson plan.
- Catechism:** The following cites from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are provided to help instructors/catechists consider the power of the Church's teachings in helping us rid society of child sexual abuse.
- “God fashioned man with his own hands [that is, the Son and the Holy Spirit] and impressed his own form on the flesh he had fashioned, in such a way that even what was visible might bear the divine form.” — #704¹*
- Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good. — #2288²*
- Goal:** The goal of this lesson plan is to assist instructors/catechists in teaching children how to prevent or reduce the risk of sexual abuse.
- Objectives:** Through this lesson the instructor/catechist reinforces the parent's message about touching safety and protecting private body parts. Upon completion of this lesson, children should be better able to:
- Recognize that we treat private body parts as “special” by keeping them covered. One reason is to help keep our private body parts clean and healthy.
 - Stand up for themselves more effectively.
 - Say “No!” when someone tries to touch them in a way that is uncomfortable or otherwise inappropriate.
 - Name their safe friends and safe adults.
 - Identify special safe adults
 - Respond in an appropriate manner to unsafe situations

¹ Liberia Editrice Vaticana (1997) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd ed.) Washington D.C. United States Catholic Conference.

² Ibid.

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

These children are away from home more often than earlier in life and they need to start recognizing that safety issues can arise when they are off with friends or at other events and locations. 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. Capable of intense loyalty to others, they usually have a best friend to confide in. 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.

Children at this age are beginning to ask about and understand their own physical growth. They want to discuss some of the virtues essential to friendship such as loyalty, communication, and responsibility. They are interested in the proper terminology related to body parts and wish to have trusted adults in their lives to discuss basic physiological processes with in a non-threatening way. Since children are influenced by what they see and hear in the media, it is important that caregivers talk with their children about the values and attitudes that are portrayed.

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Activity #1: Play the introductory video:

The introductory video for grades K through 5 is designed to open a discussion with children about touching safety and personal boundaries. The video is approximately five (5) minutes long and is not intended as a substitute for the lesson plan. It is merely an introduction designed to “break the ice” among those in the group and to get everyone talking about the relevant issues. The video will help get the students focused on the topic matter and allow the teacher to concentrate on the other activities within the lesson.

Activity #2: Review and discuss the vocabulary words and definitions:

Private body parts—The parts of the body that are normally covered by a bathing suit.

Boundaries—The invisible limits that separate one person from another and provide a sense of “self” as an individual that is different from others.

Rules—Statements that describe the approved or appropriate course of conduct.ⁱ

Peer Pressure—The influence, both positive and negative, exerted by one’s peers in social, educational, and other situations.

Secrets—Something concealed or hidden from others.ⁱⁱ A situation that is kept private or withheld from publication or public knowledge.

Respect—The state of being regarded with honor or esteem—being appreciative.ⁱⁱⁱ An attitude of admiration, honor and friendship.^{iv} Respect for oneself and others means assuming that each person has value and dignity.

Safe adults or friends—People who won’t hurt, confuse, or scare a young person intentionally or without a good or honorable reason. Safe friends and adults also respect young people’s wishes and the rules of their parents and guardians.^v

Unsafe adults or friends—People who intentionally hurt, scare, and confuse young people in order to satisfy their own personal needs, wants, and desires. Unsafe friends and adults disregard the wishes of the young person, the potential danger of various activities, and the also the family’s rules about appropriate behavior. They may be safe at some times and unsafe at other times.^{vi}

Special safe adult—People who may see or touch a child’s private parts, but only for the purpose of keeping the child clean and healthy. For this age group, that will most certainly be limited to a physician or other healthcare professional, and that person needs to have another adult present during any examination.

Safe touch—A touch that has a good purpose, is not intended to hurt, and is familiar and safe.

Unsafe touch—Any touch that can hurt or scare someone. Or, any touch that, although it starts out safe, becomes uncomfortable, confusing, or scary.

Using the word “No!”—Having the right to express an unequivocal refusal or denial.^{vii}

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Activity #3: Review and discuss the touching safety rules:

Directions: In preparing for this activity, review *Teaching Touching Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Other Caring Adults*. Help children to understand that they have a say in what happens to their bodies. The purpose of this exercise is to encourage children to think of possible touching safety rules. Beyond “keeping private body parts private,” there are very few consensus touching safety rules. For the most part, there are rules within the context of specific circumstances. Have the children write their ideas for possible touching safety rules on a blackboard or poster board. Language for older children may vary somewhat from the language used for younger children, but not dramatically. For example, some rules for this age group could be: “If someone tries to touch your private body parts, or wants you to touch theirs, you should:

- Say words that mean “No!” and get away from them as quickly as possible.
- You should also tell a safe adult what happened right away—even if or *especially* if the person told you not to tell or told you that you would get in trouble for telling.

Also, if a child suggests a rule that involves some form of physical retaliation, use this opportunity to discuss walking away from an unsafe situation and immediately telling a parent or teacher what happened.

Note: Teachers should also use this opportunity to talk about the grooming process and to point out that it is unlikely someone would start out by immediately trying to touch your private body parts. Child molesters generally take some time to gradually move toward the abusive behavior. Remind kids that any time they feel uncomfortable with an adult, they have the right to ask the person to stop what they are doing and to walk away. It is important to talk about this subject in a way that gives the child the information needed but does not scare the child unnecessarily.

- Discuss the ways an adult might try to trap or trick a child: Use the warning signs of a child molester as the basis for this discussion:
 - Allows children to do things their parents would not allow.
 - Gives gifts without permission from the child’s parents.
 - Asks children to keep secrets from their parents or guardians.

Activity #4: Learning to say “No!” in an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation:

Directions: Discuss the types of touching that make you feel uncomfortable. Start by making a list:

- For example, someone punches, kicks, scratches, or pinches you.
- Someone taunts or teases you by saying mean things about you.
- A person you don’t feel comfortable with wants to give you a hug.
- Your aunt wants to kiss you on the mouth.
- The babysitter comes in to the bathroom and offers to help you towel dry after a shower or bath.
- The coach pats you on the buttocks on your way out of the locker room.

Practice at least (5) five different ways of saying “No!” Create different scenarios, then have each child practice saying “No!” using different vocal pitches, facial expressions, body language, etc. Here are just a few samples to get you started:

- Say, “No! I don’t like that and I don’t want to be touched!”
- Say, “Stop it!” very loudly.
- Say, “Don’t do that!” and run away.
- With hand on hips, yell “No!”

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Activity #5: Create a safe touch poster:

Supplies: Safe scissors
Poster board
Glue
Old magazines
Felt tipped markers

Directions: Ask the children to make up a slogan or title for their safe touch poster and write it on the poster. Cut pictures out of the old magazines. The pictures should illustrate safe touches and demonstrate the slogan selected by each child. Children will glue pictures on their poster board to make a safe touch poster to take home to show to their parents or guardians.

Activity #6: Identifying safe touches:

Special Note: In preparing for this activity, review *Teaching Touching Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Other Caring Adults*. Share a definition for “special safe adults”—those who respect a child’s safety and help keep a child clean and healthy may see or touch a child’s private body parts, but only for reasons that the child’s parent or guardian approves in advance and only to help keep the child clean and healthy. Ask children to think of special safe adults who might have permission to see or touch their private body parts. For this age group, the number of people in this category will be quite small. It is important to firmly remind children that only those with a parent’s permission may touch the child’s private body parts, and only for the purpose of helping keep the child clean and healthy.

Directions: Using the formula below, have each child create a five-line poem. After all of the children create their poems, ask each child to share his or her poem with the group. If individuals in the group are uncomfortable sharing with the whole room, ask for volunteers. Another possible way to create the poems is to form the class into groups of 3 to work on their poems together.

- On line 1 – write the words “safe touch.”
- On line 2 – write two words that describe “safe touch.”
- On line 3 – write three action words for “safe touch.”
- On line 4 – write a short sentence about “safe touch.”
- On line 5 – write one word that means the same thing as “safe touch.”

Repeat the process. This time basing the poem on the words “unsafe touch.”

- On line 1 – write the words “unsafe touch.”
- On line 2 – write two words that describe “unsafe touch.”
- On line 3 – write three action words for “unsafe touch.”
- On line 4 – write a short sentence about “unsafe touch.”
- On line 5 – write one word that means the same thing as “unsafe touch.”

For example: Sample poems might look like the following:

Safe touch,	Unsafe touch,
Harmless, secure,	Dangerous, secret,
Laughing, tagging, running,	Angry, nervous, uncomfortable,
Shaking hands with a safe adult,	Touching private body parts,
Innocent.	Scary.

Ask children to share their poems and, as a group, discuss safe and unsafe touches

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Suggested (optional) prayers to end the lesson:

Dear God,

Sometimes things happen to me that are confusing or frightening.

When I am confused or feel scared, help me remember what I have learned today.

Help me remember the touching rules so I can protect myself from anyone who might want to hurt me—even if it is someone I like.

Thank you for my parents or loved ones and my teachers who are teaching me how to keep myself safe and healthy.

Remind me that I am special and that you are always with me.

Amen

Dear God,

Even though we are each unique, there are ways that we are alike because you made each of us in your image.

Help me to remember to respect myself just as I want others to respect me.

Help me to live as you have commanded me to live, and guide me in times of confusion and uncertainty.

And, help me to remember, God, that in your loving presence I will always be safe and protected.

Amen

References:

Liberia Editrice Vaticana (1997). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd ed.). Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference.

United States Catholic Conference (1990) *Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning*. Washington, DC: Office for Publishing and Promotion Services.

<http://www.virtus.org/virtus/pgc-Parent-Handbook 05-03.pdf> retrieved March 5, 2004.

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

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} WordNet © 2.0, © Princeton University.

^v *Teaching Touching Safety*, © 2004 National Catholic Services, LLC. Page 5.

^{vi} Ibid. Pages 5-9.

^{vii} The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, Copyright © 2000, Houghton Mifflin Company.