

Year-1 Lesson for Grades 6, 7 and 8

- 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:** Review concepts related to touching safety by completing the touching safety rules word puzzle
- Activity #5:** Review concepts related to relationship boundaries by completing the relationship boundaries word puzzle
- 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:** Adolescents 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.
- Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God. — #2319*¹
- Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature. ... — #1930*²
- Goal:** The goal of this lesson plan is to assist instructors/catechists in teaching adolescents 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, adolescents should be better able to:
- Clearly state the rules about inappropriate touching.
 - Describe safe touches.
 - Name their safe friends and safe adults.
 - Identify "special" safe adults.
 - Identify the situations when keeping a confidence is appropriate and when secrets are a threat of harm.
 - Respond in an appropriate manner to unsafe situations.
 - Say "No!" when someone tries to touch them in a way that is inappropriate or potentially dangerous.

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

The middle school child is experiencing a period of rapid growth. The emergence of interest in the opposite sex is occurring. He or she is concerned about physical change, body size, skin quality, hair style, and fashion. Body image is very important to this child as he or she complains of being either too physically mature or too physically immature. The peer group plays an important role in shaping attitudes and interest. Caregivers need to regularly assure youngsters that changes are normal, though the rate of change varies from person to person.

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

² Ibid.

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At this age, young people may question traditional rules and struggle with making personal decisions. The heightened awareness of their bodies may cause them to feel awkward, confused, and uneasy about themselves. They lack the experience to anticipate the consequences of their decisions. Caregivers can assist adolescents in forming healthy views about appropriate boundaries in relationships.

Parents, catechists, teachers, youth ministers, and other caring adults must carefully listen to adolescents and observe *what is happening in their lives*. Let young people be themselves. Let them explore their self-expression; but, know *who* they are with and *what* they are doing. Remind them of the importance of protecting themselves during this dynamic time in their lives. Caregivers need to remember that, during this time adolescents are often completely self-absorbed and are naturally less communicative than at other periods during their development.

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Activity #1: Play the introductory video:

The introductory video for grades 6 through 8 is designed to foster a discussion about personal boundaries in the context of an adolescent's desire to begin to flex his or her independence in a world where peer pressures and other relationship issues place enormous individual and group pressure on youngsters to vacate their individual 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.

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.

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.ⁱ 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.ⁱⁱ An attitude of admiration, honor and friendship.ⁱⁱⁱ 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.^{iv}

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.^v

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.

Harassment—The act of tormenting through persistent, wrongful behavior that is annoying, offensive, troubling, or harmful.^{vi} This can be a very threatening experience.

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, the instructor/catechist should review *Teaching Touching Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Other Caring Adults*. Then, discuss the fact that a child has a right to say “No,” and to expect the other person to listen and respect the “No” response to personal issues—even if the other person is an adult.

These exercises are intended to empower young people to begin to think about safety issues and to be their parents' partner in making sure that the child has the tools needed to resist the overtures of a potential child molester.

Talk with adolescents about risky situations they might encounter with adults and other young people and discuss appropriate ways to respond. Remember that adolescents are dealing with enormous peer pressure while trying to understand their independent role in the world apart from their families. It is not always “cool” to say that you must tell someone if you are touched or approached in an inappropriate or sexual way. So, do your best to stress the importance of good communication while speaking to the adolescent in a way that has him or her actually engage in hearing the message, rather than ignore you.

Discuss situations that could be a part of a grooming process. As you look at the situations, you will see that none of them are clear-cut examples of grooming. Discussion allows the young people to work out the issues involved in determining whether the adult's actions are part of the grooming process. It is important that young people begin to recognize the elements of grooming and identify things that are “red flags.” Some examples of grooming are:

- Adults or older adolescents who allow young people to watch R-rated or X-rated movies. (In the first situation, the mere fact that an adult allows a child to watch an R-Rated movie is not necessarily grooming. However, if the movie is one the parents have forbidden the child to see and the adult tells the child to keep it a secret, the adult's action become more suspicious.)
- Adults or older adolescents who allow young people to play popular, but violent, video games even though the young person's parents have said “no” to this activity.
- Adults or other adolescents who tell dirty jokes or look at “adult” (naked or sexually explicit) pictures.
- An adult or older child who does something unsafe and, when the young person says, “Stop,” the adult or older child agrees to back off but asks the child not to tell anyone what happened.
- An adult or older child who allows young people to break the rules.

Discuss difficult situations that encourage the young people to look carefully at challenges that might arise and think through the issues so they can come to a safe and healthy decision. This is an excellent opportunity for young people to begin to confront the challenge of doing the right thing in the face of peer pressure and the child's real need to “fit in” and be part of the group. Some examples of difficult situations are:

- A friend confides in you that someone has molested him or her or has done some things that make the friend uncomfortable with the other person.
- You are at a friend's house. The parents are gone and your friend wants the two of you to get into the liquor cabinet for some “refreshments.”

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Activity #4: Review concepts related to touching safety by completing the touching safety rules word puzzle.

Directions: Hand out the word puzzle and explain the instructions to the students. Students are instructed to find the words on the list that are related to the topic of “Touching Safety,” and to circle each of those words. Each word will be in a straight line, but it may be written vertically (up and down), horizontally (left and right), diagonally (at an angle), and either forward, backward, or upside down (see the example, below).

Example: Find the following words in the puzzle below and draw a circle around the word or color it with a highlighter. The words are spelled out correctly in a straight line. There are no spaces between letters or between words in two-word phrases (For example, “SAY NO” will appear as “SAYNO”). However, words may be upside down, backwards or at an angle. Some letters may be used by multiple words.

- SAFE TOUCH
- PRIVATE PARTS
- PEER PRESSURE
- SECRETS
- GROOMING
- BLAME
- RESPECT
- SAY NO
- LEAVE
- TOUCHING
- UNSAFE

P	A	L	Z	X	I	R	M	R	K	S	T
E	B	F	T	E	B	L	A	E	J	P	S
E	C	S	E	C	R	E	T	S	H	L	T
R	V	O	A	T	F	B	R	P	D	E	R
P	K	S	E	F	J	H	U	E	Y	B	A
R	W	A	E	T	E	M	N	C	G	U	P
E	A	C	V	M	R	T	K	T	N	O	E
S	U	Y	A	O	I	Y	O	V	I	N	T
S	B	L	E	W	A	N	C	U	H	E	A
U	B	O	L	P	G	V	O	J	C	P	V
R	C	W	E	A	J	K	S	Y	U	H	I
E	F	A	S	N	U	E	A	I	O	D	R
N	E	S	N	T	E	R	Y	N	T	U	P
K	G	R	O	O	M	I	N	G	U	Y	E
A	S	D	F	G	E	R	O	P	O	I	M

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Activity #5: Review concepts related to relationship boundaries by completing the relationship boundaries word puzzle:

Directions: Hand out the word puzzle and explain the instructions to the students. Have students complete this jumble puzzle as a review of boundary terminology. Find the correct “S” as the starting point, and then draw a line that follows a pinwheel pattern to uncover the following statement:

Safe friends and adults respect my physical safety and keep me safe.

E	H	Y	S	I	C	A
F	P	N	D	A	D	L
A	Y	A	F	E	U	S
S	M	S	A	F	L	A
E	T	D	S	R	T	F
M	C	N	E	I	S	E
P	E	P	S	E	R	T
E	E	K	D	N	A	Y

Start Here

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Suggested (optional) prayers to end the lesson:

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

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

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 WordNet © 2.0, © Princeton University.

^{iv} *Teaching Touching Safety*, © 2004 National Catholic Services, LLC. Page 5.

^v Ibid. Pages 5-9.

^{vi} Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Law, © 1996 Merriam-Webster, Inc.

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

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Activity #4: Touching safety rules word puzzle

Instructions: Find the following words in the puzzle below and draw a circle around the word or color it with a highlighter. The words are spelled out correctly in a straight line. There are no spaces between letters or between words in two-word phrases (For example, "SAY NO" will appear as "SAYNO"). However, words may be upside down, backwards or at an angle. Some letters may be used by multiple words.

- SAFE TOUCH
- PRIVATE PARTS
- PEER PRESSURE
- SECRETS
- GROOMING
- BLAME
- RESPECT
- SAY NO
- LEAVE
- TOUCHING
- UNSAFE

P	A	L	Z	X	I	R	M	R	K	S	T
E	B	F	T	E	B	L	A	E	J	P	S
E	C	S	E	C	R	E	T	S	H	L	T
R	V	O	A	T	F	B	R	P	D	E	R
P	K	S	E	F	J	H	U	E	Y	B	A
R	W	A	E	T	E	M	N	C	G	U	P
E	A	C	V	M	R	T	K	T	N	O	E
S	U	Y	A	O	I	Y	O	V	I	N	T
S	B	L	E	W	A	N	C	U	H	E	A
U	B	O	L	P	G	V	O	J	C	P	V
R	C	W	E	A	J	K	S	Y	U	H	I
E	F	A	S	N	U	E	A	I	O	D	R
N	E	S	N	T	E	R	Y	N	T	U	P
K	G	R	O	O	M	I	N	G	U	Y	E
A	S	D	F	G	E	R	O	P	O	I	M

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Activity #5: Relationship boundaries word puzzle

Instructions: Complete this jumble puzzle as a review of boundary terminology. Find the correct "S" as the starting point, and then draw a line that follows a pinwheel pattern to uncover the following statement:

"Safe friends and adults respect my physical safety and keep me safe."

E	H	Y	S	I	C	A
F	P	N	D	A	D	L
A	Y	A	F	E	U	S
S	M	S	A	F	L	A
E	T	D	S	R	T	F
M	C	N	E	I	S	E
P	E	P	S	E	R	T
E	E	K	D	N	A	Y