

## Lesson 1 for Grades 9—12

## Physical Boundaries: Safe and Unsafe Touching Rules

### PRINCIPLE

Young people must learn tools to protect themselves from people who may harm them through physical touch (sexual or otherwise) to prevent / reduce the risk of sexual abuse and boundary violations.

### CATECHISM / SCRIPTURE

*Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the Creator. For this reason man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honor since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day.*  
—Catechism of the Catholic Church, #364 (1997)

### OBJECTIVES

Through this lesson the lesson leader reinforces the parent's message about touching safety and protecting private body parts. After lesson 1, young people should be better able to:

- Understand the rules about safe and appropriate touches and other boundary issues, recognizing it's OK to say "no" to an adult or other youth:
  - Everyone has a right to say "No!" when feeling unsafe or uncomfortable
  - Try to get away from the situation
  - Tell an adult as soon as possible
- Keep themselves safe and out of danger, and protect themselves from people who have bad intentions or violate their boundaries
- Technology Component: Similar boundary rules apply for Online activities, too
  - Say "No!" if someone shares unsafe or inappropriate material / images
  - Leave the situation
  - Tell an adult as soon as possible
- Understand that if anybody does give them an unsafe touch or shows them inappropriate material, it isn't the youth's fault

### Background for Lesson Leaders:

Many of the boundary and safety rules for younger children also apply to older youth, though it may be communicated differently. Caring adults will still provide teenagers and "tweens" with expectations and boundaries. Remind them they can always say "no" and are allowed to remove themselves from any situation if they're uncomfortable. If abuse or boundary violations occur, they need to know that you'll help to protect them regardless of the circumstances—and that abuse isn't their fault. The older children become, the more you can outline other types of boundaries.

### This age group: Dealing with teenagers—key concept is "searching"

This is the age where all the experiences that began with puberty—the physical changes and the developing emotions—accelerate rapidly as the teenager matures into a young adult. The self-consciousness deepens and matures. The world of "children" is now renounced. Teens believe in their immortality and may tend to be reckless in their behavior—in person and online. Although it would appear that they reject authority while defining their own independence, in reality they rely on the strength and support they find in parents and other influential adults. Feeling supported and understood is important for this age group, as is upholding boundaries while the reasoning portions of their brains continue to develop. Teens have a great deal of personal freedom. This freedom also puts them at risk in various ways. Parents and guardians expect teens to take care of themselves and to ask for the help that they need. Caring adults must know that children's online behavior and boundaries may need to be fortified.

**ACTIVITY OPTION #1: Play the (optional) introductory video as an icebreaker**

The introductory video for children and youth in this age range is designed to open a simple discussion about personal boundary safety. The video is brief and is not intended to be a substitute for the lesson itself. It's merely an introduction designed to "break the ice" and assist the transition of completing the interactive Lesson Activity options. If the video is shown as an optional activity, please use in conjunction with one of the additional activity options, because discussion and practice are the critical components needed to teach children and youth how to protect themselves. They learn best by "doing"; not just listening.

**ACTIVITY OPTION #2: Review and discuss the vocabulary words**

The following words should be placed on a white board, black board or poster (may also include definitions) prior to the discussion. Children of this age can also be asked to take notes.

- **Boundaries**—the physical and emotional limits that define one person as separate from another or from others. Boundaries promote and preserve physical or emotional personal space in our relationships. Boundaries give each person a clear sense of “self” and a framework for how to function in relation to others. Boundaries bring order to our lives and empower each of us to determine how others will interact with us.
- **Unsafe touch**—harmful touches committed by an individual or group that physically, sexually, or psychologically harms a child or young person. This touch is often from people who either cannot or choose not to see the harm in their actions.
- **Peer Pressure**—the strong influence of a group—especially of young people—on members of that group to behave as everyone else does.

**Note:** It is important to invite questions and comments from students at this point. Clarifications of some of the language, such as “harmful touches” might be necessary. Lesson Leaders should be ready to answer clearly and honestly.

**ACTIVITY OPTION #3: Review and expand the boundary touching rules**

**Preparation:** In preparing for this activity, review the *Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide: Safe Environment Guide for Caring Adults, Parents and Guardians*.

**Directions:** Discuss with the youth the reasons highlighting why touching safety rules are important. Make sure you reinforce the following points, and write them out (onto a blackboard or dry erase board) after identifying them:

- Knowing the rules helps teens deal with potentially threatening situations and, in the process, helps them maintain their own safety and the safety of their friends.
- Being aware of potentially risky situations, and discussing how to deal with them in advance, are vital to a teen's personal safety. (Ask the youth to give examples of risky situations).

Discuss with the youth the various types of rules that parents or families create to ensure the safety of all family members. State some specific rules regarding what a teen may or may not be allowed to do. This could include:

- Guidelines teens *know* are there because parents and guardians let them engage in certain activities while saying “no” to other activities.
- Behaviors that parents and guardians expect from their teens and young people, even though they (parents) may have never actually verbalized those expectations.

Remind the youth that while most touches are safe, some are unsafe and may pose serious risks to those involved. There are a variety of reasons for physical touching. Discuss some of the reasons for human touch, and note which touches are safe and which are unsafe.

- Touch can be appropriate, inappropriate and sometimes confusing. It can be received positively or negatively, and it can be safe or unsafe.
  - For example, touch can indicate:
    - An attempt to communicate
    - Affection
    - Loving and consensual sexual activity between spouses in the context of a Christian marriage
    - Use of power and control
    - A demonstration of anger and hostility
    - A vehicle for victimization—sexual and physical

- Discuss different examples of safe / unsafe touches or behavior, and confusing behavior, as well as ways to deal with negatively perceived or confusing touches.
- Discuss ways to say “no” or to otherwise refuse unwanted advances or uncomfortable / unwanted touches.
- Talk about whether there is ever a time when “no” doesn't mean “no.” And, if there is such a time, discuss some ways to help determine whether “no” really means “no.” **Hint:** If someone says “no” in the context of a human touch, you should always respect “no” as the final answer. Always!

**ACTIVITY OPTION #4: “Saying ‘No!’ and Staying Safe” group collage**

**Preparation:** The youth will start this activity during this lesson and finish during Lesson 2.

They will create a group collage that represents the concept of saying “No” when possible, and staying safe. Make sure to collect the listed supplies, and then follow the process. Be sure to leave room for the addition of other pictures to complete the collage as a part of the next lesson.

**Directions:** Instruct the youth to cut out, print from the Internet or draw as many pictures as possible to demonstrate “Saying ‘No!’ and Staying Safe.” Spread the images out so that all are visible and then Vote with the youth on which image best exemplifies the theme. Place this image in center of the poster and make it a focal point in the collage. Then, arrange the other images around the central picture (images may overlap, but shouldn't completely cover the main image).

**Process:** Discuss the concept of “Saying ‘No!’ and Staying Safe,” while the group is creating the collage. Upon completion, display the poster in the classroom or common area of the building.

**SUPPLIES**

Old magazines for cutting pictures  
Scissors  
Paste / glue  
Poster board  
Felt-tipped markers

**Note:** Collages provide the opportunity for creative expression to demonstrate the comprehension of the discussions. This activity requires many old magazines, newspapers, ad clippings, etc. Families may not have many magazines in the home as individuals now use the Internet for most information. Even if the family has access to the Internet, they may not have printer access. Have additional pictures on hand for children who didn't or couldn't bring pictures.

**ACTIVITY OPTION #5: “Saying ‘No!’ and Staying Safe” song skits**

**Preparation:** The youth will start this activity during this lesson and finish during Lesson 2. Oversee the project in order to ensure the activity's goals are achieved and that the message is well represented in the finished product.

**Directions:** Instruct the youth to create a song skit that represents the concept of saying “No” when possible, and staying safe. The youth may choose a current popular song and reinvent the words to express and exemplify the theme of the activity. Or, they may create an original Rap song (or music of a different genre) that presents the same message. They may add dance steps or visual representations of the message with props to “act out” the words.

**Process:** Either divide the group into teams of three to five youth, or invite them to form their own groups before explaining the assignment. They will begin planning their song skits during this lesson, and will present them to the class during Lesson 2.

**SUPPLIES**

Presentation props (optional)

**Note:** The overall number of youth will greatly impact the amount of time to devote to this activity. Each song-skit is recommended to be no more than 3 minutes long.

**ACTIVITY OPTION #6: Create a ‘Praise and Worship’ service**

**Preparation:** The youth will start this activity during this lesson and finish during Lesson 2. Oversee the project in order to ensure the activity's goals are achieved and that the message is well represented in the finished product.

**Directions:** Instruct the youth to create a short praise and worship service to be implemented at the end of Lesson 2—a service that demonstrates the concepts covered in both Lessons 1 and 2. The service should include prayer, music and scripture. Consider incorporating the story

**SUPPLIES**

Candles / Votive holders  
Matches / Lighter  
Bibles  
Music / Instruments  
Song sheets

of St. Maria Goretti into the worship service. They may add dance steps or visual representations of the message when they complete this assignment during Lesson 2.

**Process:** Either divide the group into teams of three to five youth, or invite them to form their own groups before explaining the assignment. Oversee the project in order to assure that the goals of the activity are achieved and that the message is well represented in the finished product. The finished product of each group can then be presented to the whole group at the end of the next lesson.

**Note:** The overall number of youth will greatly impact the amount of time to devote to this activity. Each Praise and Worship service is recommended to be no more than 5 minutes long.

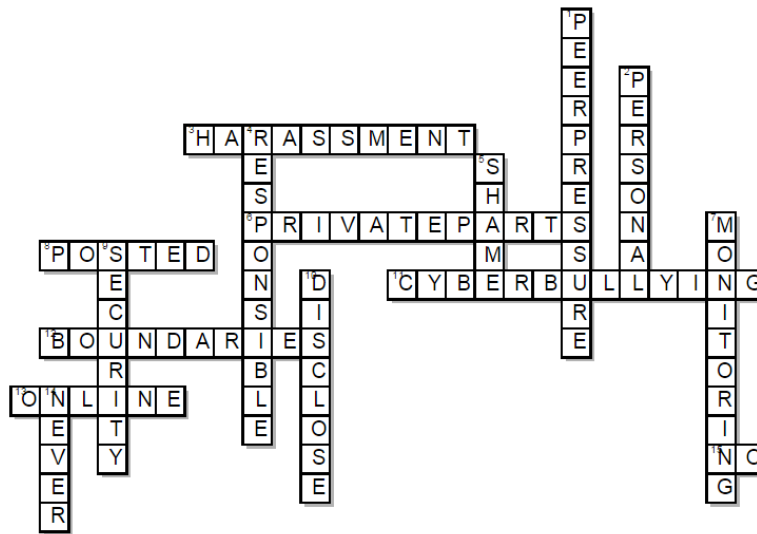
**ACTIVITY OPTION #7: Physical Boundaries Crossword puzzle**

**Directions:** Hand out the crossword puzzle and instruct the children to find the words on the list related to the topic of “Touching and Boundary Safety,” and to outline / highlight each of those words.

Consider having the activity be a race to see who can finish first with finding all of the words. Then, invite the youth to communicate about how they feel regarding the words within the puzzle. Ask them to define / explain each of the words as a review.

**Note:** The Crossword Puzzle template is included in the downloaded set of materials at the end of this packet. Print sufficient copies of that particular page for the entire class.

**Example:** Complete the following crossword puzzle by determining the answers to the clues. There are no spaces between letters or words in two-word phrases (i.e., “SAY NO” would appear as “SAYNO”). Some letters may be shared by two intersecting words.



**WORD BANK:** SHAME, SECURITY, RESPONSIBLE, PRIVATEPARTS, POSTED, PERSONAL, PEERPRESSURE, ONLINE, NO, NEVER, MONITORING, HARASSMENT, DISCLOSE, CYBERBULLYING, BOUNDARIES

**End the lesson with a prayer**

The Lesson Leader may invite the children to create their own prayer, he / she may lead a prayer, or may use the suggested prayer below.

*Dear God,  
Sometimes things happen to me that are confusing or frightening. When I feel stuck, alone or don't know where to turn, help me remember that I have many adults who care about me and want the best for me. Help me remember to uphold my boundaries so I can protect myself from anyone who might want to hurt me—even if it is someone I like, and help me to protect my friends as well by delivering safety information to people who can help. Thank you for my parents or loved ones who are protecting me. Remind me of your love for me and that you are always with me.*

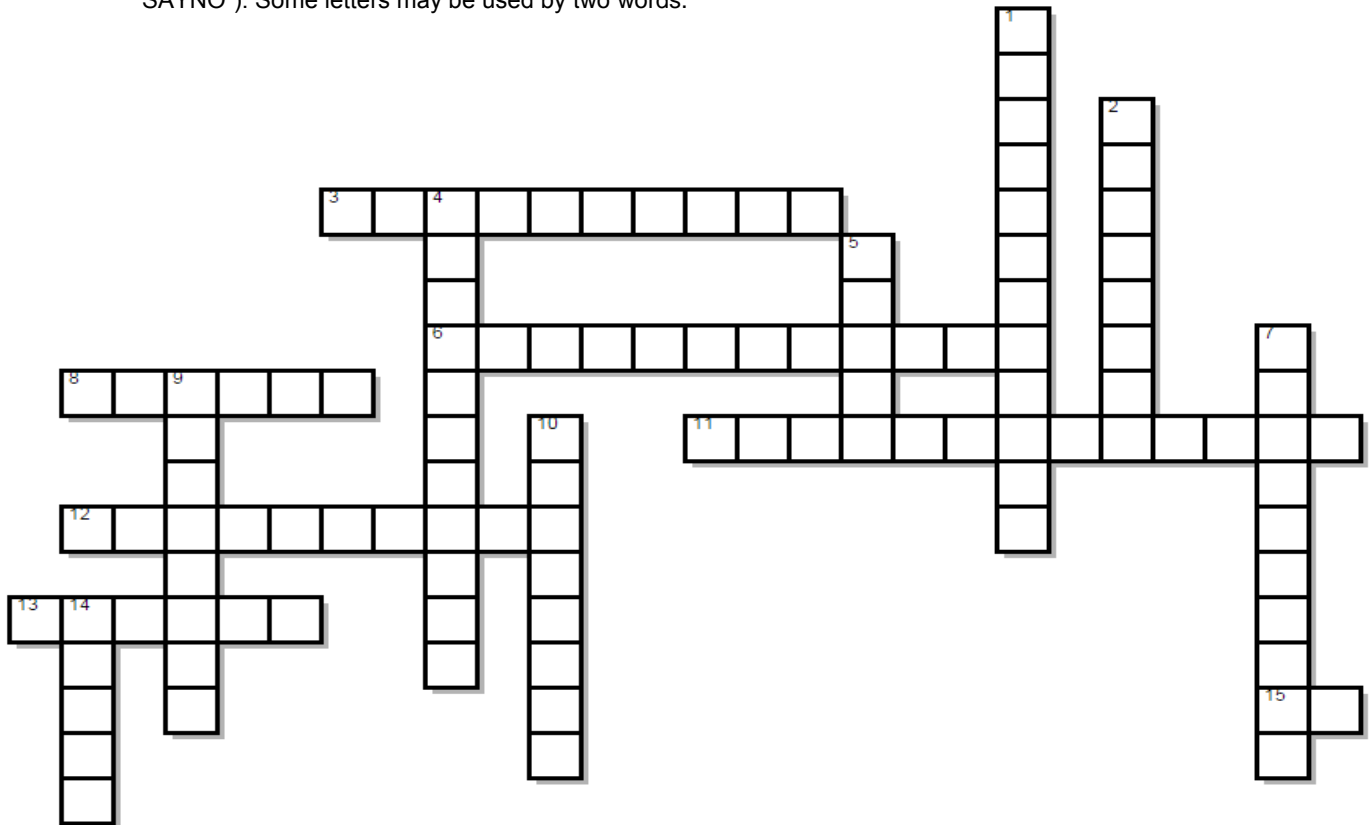
*Saint Maria Goretti, Pray for us!  
Amen*

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**ACTIVITY OPTION #7: Physical Boundaries Crossword puzzle**

**Instructions:** Complete the following crossword puzzle by determining the answers to the clues and inserting them in the boxes provided. There are no spaces between letters or words in two-word phrases (i.e., "SAY NO" would appear as "SAYNO"). Some letters may be used by two words.



**ACROSS**

- 3 Tormenting by continued and persistent attacks (noun)
- 6 Area of body covered by bathing suits (two words)
- 8 Once \_\_\_\_\_ on the Internet, the information exists forever
- 11 Virtual way of being cruel
- 12 Important personal parameters; sometimes people try to violate them
- 13 If you wouldn't say or do it in person, don't do it \_\_\_\_\_
- 15 It's OK for a youth to say this to an adult if the youth feels uncomfortable

**DOWN**

- 1 Strong influence on members of a group to behave like everyone else

(two words)

- 2 It is important to refrain from posting \_\_\_\_\_ and identifying information, such as school backgrounds, full names, school colors, etc.
- 4 Friends are \_\_\_\_\_ for communicating to caring adults regarding known abuse of their friends
- 5 Type of remorse caused by feeling responsible for an offense
- 7 Act of reviewing accounts to ensure safety
- 9 A responsible teen fortifies his/her social media account's \_\_\_\_\_ settings
- 10 To give evidence of, to "tell"
- 14 You can \_\_\_\_\_ know the exact identity of people with whom you meet on the Internet