

**Lesson 1 for Grades 6, 7 & 8**

**Physical Boundaries: Safe and Unsafe Touching Rules**

**PRINCIPLE**

Children / youth 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**

*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.—Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2319 (1997)*

**OBJECTIVES**

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

- Clearly state the boundary touching rules, recognizing it's OK to say "no" to an adult or other youth:
  - Say "No!" when someone tries to touch them in an unsafe or uncomfortable way
  - Try to get away from the situation
  - Tell an adult as soon as possible
- Describe safe / unsafe touches and begin to practice keeping themselves safe and out of danger
- 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 child's fault

**Background for Lesson Leaders:**

Remember that children of this age 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 person, or online) in an inappropriate or sexual way. Situations of this nature may involve immense shame, guilt, threats, etc., for the youth. So, do your best to stress the importance of good communication while speaking to the adolescent in a way that has him / her actually hear you, rather than ignore you. It will be important for the adult to stress "healthy" behavior and boundaries, and the "right thing to do" when discussing boundaries to this age group.

These exercises are intended to empower young people to begin to think about safety issues and to be their parents' partners in making sure the child has the tools needed to resist the overtures of a potential child molester or an adult with poor intentions.

**This age group: Dealing with pre-adolescents and adolescents—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 / she is often concerned about physical change, body size, skin quality and hair length. Body image is very important to this age as he / she complains of being either too physically mature or immature—and may also complain that they do not have enough privacy. 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.

Lesson leaders must carefully listen to children 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, and remind them of the importance of protecting themselves during this dynamic time in their lives. During this time, children are completely self-absorbed, and many are naturally less communicative than at other periods during their development. This is the point that more trust will be given to the youth to evaluate safe and unsafe situations when they are not in the care of their parents.

**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**

- **Peer Pressure:** The strong influence of a group—especially of young people—on members of that group to behave as everyone else does.
- **Private body parts:** Those body parts covered by a bathing suit.
- **Boundaries:** The limits that define one person as separate from another or others. To break someone's boundaries means to come into their personal space, get too close to them, touch body parts that are private, etc. Sometimes it is just someone leaning on you that makes you to feel crowded or uncomfortable. Good friends sometimes appear to be breaking boundaries by hanging on to one another but when you are uncomfortable you should tell them "No". Never allow someone to cross your boundaries. Boundaries are different in various cultures but we always know when our boundaries have been broken by our feelings of discomfort.

**Note:** It is possible to demonstrate personal boundaries by having children stand close to one another.

When children live in metropolitan cities, talk about personal space boundaries on public transportation.

**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:** Talk with children about risky situations they might face with adults and other young people, and discuss appropriate ways to respond. For example:

- Adults or older children 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 problematic. However, if the movie or the rating 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 concerning.)
- Adults or other youth who tell dirty jokes or look at "adult" (naked or sexually explicit) pictures.
- An adult or older youth 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.

**Note:** 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." As you look at the situations, you will see that none of them are clear-cut examples of grooming. 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.

Then, discuss the fact that a child has a right to say "No," and to expect the other person to listen and respect the boundary. Discuss difficult situations that could be a part of a grooming process or that encourage the young people to look carefully at challenges that might arise and think through the issues to come to a safe and healthy decision.

- A friend confides in you that someone has molested him / 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."

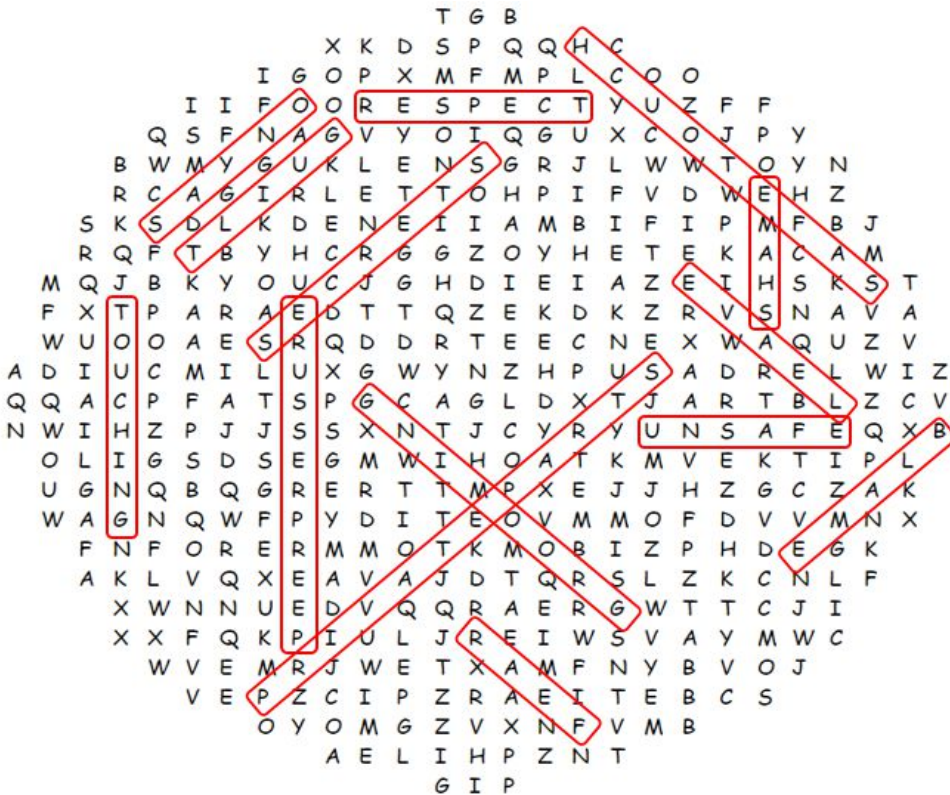
Stress the importance of the following to the youth: tell an adult you trust to behave safety when something is wrong or when you feel your boundaries have been crossed. If you aren't taken seriously, tell another caring adult, and keep telling until someone pays attention to you.

**ACTIVITY OPTION #4: Personal Space Bubble / Safety Rules Word Puzzle**

**Directions:** Hand out the word 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 children to communicate about how they feel regarding the words within the puzzle. Ask them to define / explain each of the words as a review.

**Example:** The words are spelled out in a straight line. There are no spaces between letters or words in two-word phrases (i.e., “SAY NO” will appear as “SAYNO”). Words may be upside down, backwards or at an angle. Some letters may be used by multiple words.



**Note:** The Word 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.

**Note:** It is important the youth recognize that shame and guilt might be natural reactions to boundary violations. Sometimes a person with bad intentions might tell the youth they did something wrong. It is extremely important for them to know that what occurred was not their fault.

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

**ACTIVITY OPTION #5: “Safe Touch” Assignment—related to Lesson 2**

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

**Directions:** Tell the youth you are news reporters who will be interviewing “the person on the street” for his / her opinion about this question:

“What is a safe friend or safe adult?”

As a news reporter you will need to obtain a response to each of the five “w” questions, including: “Who?”, “What?”, “When?”, “Where?” and “Why?” So, replace the underlined word “What” in the above question with each of the other “w” words, and ask each person you interview all five “w” questions.

**Process:**

Instruct the youth to do the following:

- Conduct interviews with your friends, family members and classmates using a recording device or notepad. Address each of the five “w” questions with each person you interview.
- After completing the interviews, play it back or read your notes to review.
- Each youth should ask him / herself: Was anything left out of the interview? If so, what?
- Compile a closing paragraph to “wrap it up” like legitimate reporters in the field generally do.
- Record (or write) your closing remarks.

**Finally:**

Return to class prepared to share what you have learned after writing a quick summary. Share your tape recording or the interview process with your parents or other important caregivers. Then, discuss your findings and reflect on what your response would be if someone asked you to answer all five “w” questions regarding unsafe adults.

**SUPPLIES**

Electronic recording device (such as a phone, Ipad, etc.), or,  
 Note pad / paper  
 Writing utensil  
 Volunteers / People the youth knows

**Note:** Some individuals may not have an electronic recording device. If this is the case, then simply instruct them to use the notepad and writing utensils to record the interview.

If sharing the results of this experiment with the whole group, and there is the capability to electronically record, be prepared to have equipment or speakers that can magnify the sound. In this activity, if there are youth who do not have electronic recording devices, simply have them verbally recap some of the points from the interview. Make sure that if a child does not have an electronic recording device, he / she does not feel embarrassed to use the paper / pen option.

**ACTIVITY OPTION #6: Internet Safety Worksheet—Is it true or false?**

**Directions:**

Hand out the worksheet and instruct the children to read each statement and select whether the statement is “True” or “False.” They can circle or highlight each answer.

After completing the exercise, go through the examples one by one and ask the youth to articulate why they chose the specific answers. Help them to understand the correct answers by looking at the Internet Safety Answer Key below. Explanations are listed for “False” answers on the right of the page.

**Note:** The Internet Safety T/F 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.

**INTERNET SAFETY ANSWER KEY:**

1. If aware that a friend is being cyberbullied or harassed, or has experienced abuse, it is OK to keep the matter private without telling an adult.

**False**

Note: If something bad happens to a friend, it is important to communicate that person to a caring adult. It is NEVER ok to keep silent when another friend is in trouble.

2. You can always know the exact identity of people with whom you meet on the Internet.

**False**

Note: It is not possible to know the exact identify of people whom you meet on the Internet.

## INTERNET SAFETY ANSWER KEY (cont.):

3. It's OK for an adult or older child to make you promise to keep a secret.

False

Note: It is not OK for an adult or older child to make you promise to keep a secret.

4. If you see inappropriate images on the Internet, it is important to stop looking and tell a caring adult as soon as possible.

True

5. Even if you have great security settings on your accounts, sometimes people can see the material you share because of a lack of security settings on a friend's account.

True

6. The best policy is to refrain from posting personal/identifying information on the Internet.

True

7. It's OK to say something online, if you wouldn't say it in person.

False

Note: If you wouldn't say or do the action in person, don't say it online.

8. Once material is shared on the Internet, the information can be easily deleted and removed.

False

Note: Even if you can no longer see the information that was posted on the Internet, it doesn't mean it's been completely removed. Once information is shared, it will always be available for someone to find on the Internet.

9. If unsure of whether an action is inappropriate, I should just keep quiet and not tell until I know for sure.

False

Note: If an action makes you feel uncomfortable, do not keep silent! Speaking out protects you and others. Even when unsure, communicate your concerns to a caring adult who will protect you.

## 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 don't know where to turn, help me remember what I have learned today. 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 and my teachers who are protecting me. Remind me of your love for me and that you are always with me. Amen*

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#### ACTIVITY OPTION #4: Personal Space Bubble / Safety Rules Word Puzzle

**Instructions:** Find the following words in the puzzle and outline / highlight each word. The words are spelled out in a straight line. There are no spaces between letters or words in two-word phrases (i.e., "SAY NO" will appear as "SAYNO"). Words may be upside down, backwards or at an angle. Some letters may be used by multiple words.

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                T G B
            X K D S P Q Q H C
        I G O P X M F M P L C O O
    I I F O O R E S P E C T Y U Z F F
        Q S F N A G V Y O I Q G U X C O J P Y
            B W M Y G U K L E N S G R J L W W T O Y N
                R C A G I R L E T T O H P I F V D W E H Z
                    S K S D L K D E N E I I A M B I F I P M F B J
                        R Q F T B Y H C R G G Z O Y H E T E K A C A M
                            M Q J B K Y O U C J G H D I E I A Z E I H S K S T
                                F X T P A R A E D T T Q Z E K D K Z R V S N A V A
                                    W U O O A E S R Q D D R T E E C N E X W A Q U Z V
                                        A D I U C M I L U X G W Y N Z H P U S A D R E L W I Z
                                            Q Q A C P F A T S P G C A G L D X T J A R T B L Z C V
                                                N W I H Z P J J S S X N T J C Y R Y U N S A F E Q X B
                                                    O L I G S D S E G M W I H O A T K M V E K T I P L
                                                        U G N Q B Q G R E R T T M P X E J J H Z G C Z A K
                                                            W A G N Q W F P Y D I T E O V M M O F D V V M N X
                                                                F N F O R E R M M O T K M O B I Z P H D E G K
                                                                    A K L V Q X E A V A J D T Q R S L Z K C N L F
                                                                        X W N N U E D V Q Q R A E R G W T T C J I
                                                                            X X F Q K P I U L J R E I W S V A Y M W C
                                                                                W V E M R J W E T X A M F N Y B V O J
                                                                                    V E P Z C I P Z R A E I T E B C S
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                                                                                            A E L I H P Z N T
                                                                                                G I P
    
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|---------------|----------|----------|-------|
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**ACTIVITY OPTION #6: Internet Safety Worksheet—Is it true or false?**

**Instructions:** Read each question and circle / highlight the correct response. You'll be evaluating whether each statement is True or False, and discussing the answers at the end with your whole group.

1. If aware that a friend is being cyberbullied or harassed, or has experienced abuse, it is OK to keep the matter private without telling an adult.
2. You can always know the exact identity of people with whom you meet on the Internet.
3. It's OK for an adult or older child to make you promise to keep a secret.
4. If you see inappropriate images on the Internet, it is important to stop looking and tell a caring adult as soon as possible.
5. Even if you have great security settings on your accounts, sometimes people can see the material you share because of a lack of security settings on a friend's account.
6. The best policy is to refrain from posting personal/identifying information on the Internet.
7. It's OK to say something online, if you wouldn't say it in person.
8. Once material is shared on the Internet, the information can be easily deleted and removed.
9. If unsure of whether an action is inappropriate, I should just keep quiet and not tell until I know for sure.

**True False**

**True False**

**True False**

**True False**

**True False**

**True False**

**True False**

**True False**

**True False**