

Intermediate Level, Grades 3, 4, 5 (ages 8 to 11 years)

Lesson Plan: Touching Safety Rules/ Safe Friends, Safe Adults, and Safe Touches

- Principle:** Children must guard against those who may harm them through touch (sexual or otherwise). Children must respect their own health and safety and the health and safety of others.
- Scripture:** *“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*
- Goal:** To assist educators, catechists, youth ministers, and other caring adults in teaching children how to prevent or reduce the risk of sexual abuse.
- Objectives:** Through this lesson the catechist, teacher, or youth minister 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
- Parent Notice:** Send a notice to parents outlining the goals and objectives of the *Touching Safety* program and giving parents an opportunity to “opt out” of the program should they choose to do so. Every parent needs to return the form noting that their child has permission to attend the lesson or that they have chosen not to have their child attend the lesson. This form must be returned in either instance and retained at the parish/school office.

Dealing with the intermediate age—Healthy questioning

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. 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.

Vocabulary words:

- Private body parts
- Touching safety
- No! or other words and phrases that mean “no”
- Secret
- Safe Friend
- Unsafe Friend
- Safe touch
- Unsafe touch
- Safe adult
- Unsafe adult
- Special safe adult
- Respect

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

Activity:

In preparation for this activity, the teacher should review for his/herself the *Teaching Touching Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Other Caring Adults*. Help children to see that they have a say in what happens to their bodies. Have children write the Touching Rules on a blackboard or poster board. Language for the rules should vary somewhat from the language used for younger children, but not dramatically.

For example, the 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.

Note: *Teachers should 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 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.

Practice ways of saying "No!"

- 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!"
- Say, "No!" and run away.

Suggested prayer 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