

Lesson 2 for Grades 6, 7, and 8: Safe Friends, Safe Adults, and Safe Touches

Getting started with Lesson 2:

Principle: Young people must respect their own health and safety and the health and safety of others.

Catechism: *Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature. ... — #1930*¹

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:

- Name their safe friends and safe adults.
- Identify special safe adults.
- Respond in an appropriate manner to unsafe situations.

Healthy questioning at this age:

At this age, young people are experiencing many changes, both physically and emotionally. They may question traditional rules and struggle with making personal decisions. They have a heightened awareness of their bodies, which 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.

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

Lesson 2 for Grades 6, 7, and 8: Safe Friends, Safe Adults, and Safe Touches

Activity #1: Play the (optional) introductory video to begin the lesson:

Note to Teacher: The introductory video for grades 6 through 8 is designed to open a simple discussion with children about touching safety and personal boundaries. The video is approximately six (6) minutes long and is neither created nor intended as a substitute for the lesson itself. It is merely an introduction designed to “break the ice” among those in this age group and to get everyone talking about the relevant personal boundary and personal safety issues. Importantly, the video will get children focused on the topic matter, which will help the teacher to facilitate an easy transition into the interactive activities within the lesson. These interactive activities are the critical components where children have a real opportunity to learn how to protect themselves.

We recommend that you watch the video in advance at least a couple of times prior to showing it to your students, so you’ll be able to more easily anticipate when the video will end. The video really needs no introduction. Just put it into the machine, and hit “play.” If you’re using a DVD version of the video, you’ll select the English or Spanish version and the appropriate age group from a menu screen. If you’re using a VHS version of the video, you’ll need to “cue” the tape to the correct version prior to your class time.

Activity #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 from others. Boundaries promote and preserve personal integrity. 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.

Activity #3: Review concepts related to relationship boundaries

Directions: Hand out the word puzzle and explain the instructions to the children. Have adolescents 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 →

Lesson 2 for Grades 6, 7, and 8: Safe Friends, Safe Adults, and Safe Touches

Activity #4: Review the results of the Safe Touch news reporter project

Directions: During the first lesson, students were given the assignment to play the role of a news reporter interviewing "the person on the street" for his or her opinion about this question:

What is a safe friend or safe adult?

As a news reporter, each student needs a response to each of the five "w" questions, including: Who? What? When? Where? And Why? So, students were told to replace the underlined word What in the above question with each of the other "w" words, in order to ask each person they interviewed all five "w" questions.

Now that the assignment is complete, invite volunteers to share their tapes. Use the tapes and the project as an opportunity to discuss what the class has learned about safe touches and safe friends.

Emphasize the following points to students:

- Safe friends and safe adults are those who always respect your boundaries.
- Safe friends and safe adults honor your right to say "No!"
- Safe friends and safe adults are people who demonstrate safety in all of their activities (e.g., they don't drive recklessly or forget to wear safety goggles when using a power saw).

Directions: In preparing for this activity, 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."

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 children about risky situations they might face with adults and other young people and discuss appropriate ways to respond. 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 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 hear you, 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."

- 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 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 other children 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.

Discuss difficult situations 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. 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.

- 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.

Lesson 2 for Grades 6, 7, and 8: Safe Friends, Safe Adults, and Safe Touches

- 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."

Suggested prayer 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

Lesson 2 for Grades 6, 7, and 8: Safe Friends, Safe Adults, and Safe Touches 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