

Lesson 2 for Pre-Kindergarten

Safe Friends & Safe Adults

PRINCIPLE

Children must be equipped with basic safety rules in order to become empowered about how to protect themselves and others. They should understand the difference between safe friends and safe adults, and unsafe individuals. boundary violations.

OBJECTIVES

Through safety activities for Pre-Kindergarten, the adult lesson leader reinforces the parent's message about basic rules for personal safety, safe friends and safe adults. After completion of the Lesson for Pre-Kindergarten, children will be able to:

- Develop personal safety knowledge
- Understand the meaning of safe friends and safe adults
- Communicate when they feel unsafe
- Follow basic safety rules

CATECHISM / SCRIPTURE

Respect for the human person considers the other "another self." It presupposes respect for the fundamental rights that flow from the dignity intrinsic of the person. —Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1944 (1997)

Background for Lesson Leaders:*

While adults are the chief protectors of children, there are still ways we can teach children to better protect themselves when faced with tough situations. To empower children with safety skills, they must be equipped with some basic safety rules, and have an understanding of safe friends and safe adults. Personal boundaries are established during our early years, and adults must help children to create their own proper boundaries and respect the ones that are in place—understanding that children will model adult behavior.

During this lesson, it's extremely important that the Lesson Leader avoids saying that touches that *feel* good are "safe, loving or show someone loves you". Rather, a safe touch is a touch that isn't intended to confuse, scare or deliberately harm the child.

Whenever possible, Pre-Kindergarten safety lessons should be taught in connection with other learning happening in the classroom. This can be the time to expand the conversation and discuss safe friends, safe adults, and other behaviors, so children can practice safety when they are with anyone other than you.

Children who know they can ask their parents and safe adults questions are more likely to speak up if someone exhibits inappropriate behavior toward them, and are less vulnerable to potential predators.

Interacting with this age group: key concept is "movement"

Children this age need to be able to "move" around. Physical movement is essential for their development and allows them to connect concepts into action—and so, even the lessons should allow for movement. In their lives, the freedom of exploration and getting around could put them in danger. They are learning to make choices, and understand they need help when they have problems. They are capable of following a few simple rules. They seek approval of others and are overly curious about almost everything. They are capable of understanding the need for rules and following them, especially personal safety rules. People and the relationships they form are important to them. Teaching children of this age and developmental stage the skills for setting and maintaining appropriate boundaries is important. They should frequently practice control of their actions no matter what emotional state they may be experiencing. Repetition, reminders and active practice, involving movement, are keys to their success.

Prior to Teaching the Lessons—A Map for Lesson Leaders

1. **Complete the VIRTUS Children's Programs Lesson Leader Orientation and Certification Training.** This training module will provide the foundational knowledge necessary for any Lesson Leader to successfully lead a safe environment lesson. For access to this training, please communicate with your diocesan coordinator.
2. **Review the Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide: Safe Environment Guide for Caring Adults, Parents and Guardians.** This document (also available in module format) gives a wealth of information regarding boundaries. While adults are the main protectors of children, there are skills children can learn to better protect themselves and each other when faced with tough situations where caring adults aren't present. For access to this resource, please communicate with your diocesan coordinator.
3. **Review the Key Vocabulary Words for Lesson Leaders to Know** (below). These key words and concepts should be woven throughout the entire lesson. The lesson leader should read through and understand these terms and apply them to each activity.

Key Vocabulary Words for Lesson Leaders to Know

- **Private body parts**—those body parts covered by a bathing suit.
- **Rules**—a prescribed guide for conduct or action. We follow the rules to make sure we are safe—just like how we have a seatbelt rule to keep us safe in the car, or the safety rules before we cross the street. [For example, teach the child a simple rule for what to do if someone tries to touch him / her in an unsafe way, which is to say “No!”, try to get away, and tell an adult as soon as possible.]
- **Boundaries**—the limits that define one person as separate from another or from others. There are boundaries you can see (like a fence around a yard) and boundaries you can't see with your eyes (like the comfort zone around us that we call our “personal space”). Boundaries vary depending on the relationship with the other person. [For example, a boundary between a child and a grandparent is different than the boundary between a child and a teacher or coach.]
- **Saying “No”**—to say “no” means to refuse, deny, reject or express disapproval of. This word is used to express a boundary and communicate that you do not want something to happen or continue. [Let children know It's OK to say “No” to an adult if they make you feel scared or uncomfortable, or if they touch your private body parts.]
- **Respecting boundaries**—we should have respect for ourselves, and respect for others. Respect for ourselves means we understand our dignity and value as a person, and work to create or maintain boundaries to protect ourselves. We feel upset or uncomfortable when someone doesn't honor our own boundaries, and we communicate with the right person if we need help. Respecting another's boundaries means you care about them, and won't do anything that would bring them harm, and that you communicate with the right person to get them help if they are being harmed by someone else. [Give children examples of respecting others, i.e. not calling people mean names, not hitting others, following rules at school or at home, stopping an activity when someone asks, letting an adult know when someone is in pain or hurt, etc.]
- **Safe friends and safe adults**—safe people won't hurt you without a good reason and won't intentionally confuse you. They listen to and consistently respect boundaries, and follow the rules. [Explain that a child may have many safe friends and adults. Give children examples of adult behavior that could hurt them, but may be necessary for the child's safety, i.e. medical exams, vaccinations, throat swabs, removing splinters, stopping a child from running into the road, etc.]
- **Special safe adult**—*special* safe adults are those very few special adults who can see or touch a child's private body parts, but only for the purpose of keeping the child safe, clean and healthy. They have permission to help with bathing, restrooms, putting on clothes, and providing care when sick. Not every safe adult is a *special* safe adult, and sometimes *special* safe adults are only for specific occasions or reasons. [Give children examples of *special* safe adults who are always *special* safe adults, including a child's mother or father. Also, give an example of someone who is a *special* safe adult for specific reasons at a specific time, such as a doctor or nurse—but only for specific purposes and when a parent or caretaker is also present.]
- **Unsafe friends and unsafe adults**—unsafe friends and unsafe adults put a child at risk for emotional, spiritual and physical harm. These are people who place a child in danger for their own purposes without concern for the welfare of the child. They also do not consistently listen to the parents' wishes or the child's boundaries. [Tell children we can know when someone is unsafe if they do not follow the rules or listen to our boundaries.]

- **Safe touches**—touches that have a good purpose, aren't intended to hurt and should be familiar. They're safe and can also be meant to keep you healthy, even if the person isn't known well, as long as the touches are appropriate for the particular relationship, such as when mom kisses your forehead at night, when you high-five your teammate, etc. [Avoid saying safe touches that *feel good* are "safe, loving or show someone loves you" since sometimes touches are safe and necessary, but can also hurt—although they hurt for a good reason to keep children safe, such as stitches, a doctor shot or dental cleanings.]
- **Unsafe touches**—touches that are inappropriate, could be meant to hurt or scare, or are contrary to the touching rules. If unsure about a touch, ask a parent. [Provide examples of unsafe touches, such as hitting, punching, tripping, kicking, spitting, touching private parts, etc.]
- **Secret**—something kept hidden, never told or unexplained. Secrets exclude others and have potential to harm, sometimes causing the person involved to feel frightened or uncomfortable. [For example, let children know that there are no secrets when it comes to personal and physical safety. Tell children it's wrong for an adult or another child to ask to keep a secret about safety—especially unsafe touches—because that's a way for people to get hurt. If an individual tries to make a child keep a secret or makes him / her feel frightened, the child must know to communicate this information right away to a parent or caring adult—and be reassured that the child will be protected regardless of threats or seeming consequences of "telling".]
- **Surprise**—Surprises are typically happy. They cause feelings of happiness and joy. They are exciting, and temporary—meaning they will be revealed within a specific timeframe. As surprises are usually fun, they include activities like birthday surprises, gifts, trips and special treats. Surprises are inclusive and meant to be shared with others. Safe adults can talk about surprises with children, because they should only last for a short timeframe and surprises are meant to be revealed to others.

DURING THE LESSON

Each lesson should begin with the Introductory Video. Following the video, you are able to choose which activity options you would like to do with your students. There are multiple activities to choose from, and you may choose to do one, or all, of the activities. Each activity can also be tailored to the needs and grade level of your students.

STEP 1: Play Introductory Video

The introductory video for youth in this age range is designed to open a simple discussion about personal boundary safety. The brief video 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 critical components needed to teach youth how to protect themselves. They learn best by "doing;" not just listening. Please communicate with your coordinator to obtain video access.

ACTIVITY OPTION #1: The Boundary Safety Rules Song

Background: In this activity, you will be helping children to learn basic rules for personal boundary safety (see above definitions of boundaries) by making parallels between other types of safety rules.

Discussion: Begin by saying "Today we are going to discuss the importance of rules."

- Ask: "What types of rules about safety do you have at home?"
 - o (Examples: can't touch the stove; close doors for fire safety; window blinds and cords are not for playing; look both ways before crossing the street, etc.)
- Ask: "What types of rules about safety do we have at school?"
 - o (Examples: don't push anyone; always let the teacher know where you're going; use playground equipment correctly; no running in the halls; no running with scissors, etc.)
- Ask: "Why do we have rules about safety?"
 - o We have rules about safety to keep us and others healthy and safe, and to prevent anyone from getting unnecessarily hurt—usually rules involve keeping our bodies safe.)
- Ask: "Have you ever heard of a safe friend or a safe adult?"
 - o Safe Adults are people whose actions are safe, such as touching you only in ways that are safe, and include:
 - People who don't hurt you without a good reason (i.e., if a nurse gives a shot, it will hurt—but, the shot is for a good reason, to keep you healthy).
 - People who don't confuse or scare you on purpose without a good reason (i.e., if someone yells at you to get out of the street, they may have scared you, but it was for a good reason because it was to keep you safe).

SUPPLIES

Dry-erase board or large writing sheet
Writing Utensil
Musical instrument (drums), or, plastic cups and pencils instead

- People who respect your boundaries and your parents' rules (i.e., if you say "no, stop touching me!", they should stop immediately).
- Ask: "Who are some of your safe adults?" Possible responses:
 - Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other family members.
 - Family friends or neighbors.
 - Teachers, school counselors, principals, doctors and nurses.
- Ask: "Have you ever heard about the Personal Boundary Safety Rules?"
 - You can say "NO!"
 - Try to get away if you can.
 - Tell a safe adult.
- Ask: "Why do we have rules about safety?"
 - We have these rules to keep our bodies healthy and safe, to keep others safe, and to help us know what to do if something unsafe is happening to us.

Activity:

Say: Next, to help us learn about personal boundary safety rules, we're going to sing a song and learn a dance!"

1. Have the students stand up in a circle and distribute the instruments to them. Be creative with the instruments!
2. Teach children the song, using the beat/tempo from the first line of the nursery song, "*Mary had a little lamb.*" You can use either drums, or even plastic cups and pencils to keep the beat.

The song lyrics are (feel free to write them on a board or sheet for everyone to see, or to help with your own recall):

*You can say "NO!" anytime, anytime, anytime,
You can say "NO!" anytime, anytime, anytime!
Try to get away, if you can, if you can, if you can.
Try to get away, if you can, if you can, if you can.
Then go tell a safe adult, safe adult, safe adult,
Then go tell a safe adult, safe adult, safe adult!
Ending: Now I know the boundary safety plan!*

3. Have the students practice the song a few times.
4. Then, give them the dance moves:
 - When we sing, "You can say 'NO!' anytime, anytime, anytime,"—push your arms out in front of you, like you're a bulldozer pushing against a wall.
 - When we sing, "Try to get away if you can, if you can, if you can,"—stomp your feet or run in place (if you have plenty of space for movement, such as a playground, you can invite the children to run around for this part—cautioning them to be careful of running into one another; this demonstrates freedom with limits).
 - When we sing, "Then go tell a safe adult, safe adult, safe adult,"—cup both of your hands on the sides of your mouth like you're going to yell really loud.
 - When we sing, "Now I know the boundary safety plan,"—spin around once and jump up high in the air, adding a "fist bump" to the sky for extra fun.
5. Practice the song with the dance moves.
6. Next, ask the students a few questions, and have them respond with the song and dance you just learned.
 - If an adult tries to give you a hug, but you don't want them to, what can you do?
 - (Sing the song together, and dance the moves!)
 - What if someone tries to touch you in an unsafe way, or does something that makes you feel yucky inside—or does something that don't follow the boundary safety rules?
 - (Sing the song together, and dance the moves!)
 - What can you do if a friend does something to you that you don't like?
 - (Sing the song together, and dance the moves!)

Conclusion:

Remind students that most people and most touches are safe—and most importantly, that kids do have a right to be safe and protected! Share that they all have safe adults in their lives who want to keep them safe and do what is best for them. And, that anytime they feel uncomfortable or uncertain about a certain person, touch or behavior, they can always go to a safe adult for help. Tell them you're proud of them for learning a new song, and welcome them to go home and share it with their friends and family.

ACTIVITY OPTION #2: Stand up for Safety

Background: In this activity, you will be helping children to learn how to identify touches and actions that are safe or unsafe. You will also be helping them learn about safe adults.

Discussion: Discuss safe adults and special safe adults:

- Safe Adults are people who touch only in ways that are safe, and include:
 - People who don't hurt you without a good reason (i.e., if a nurse gives a shot, it will hurt—but, the shot is for a good reason, to keep you healthy).
 - People who don't confuse or scare you on purpose without a good reason (i.e., if someone yells at you to get out of the street, they may have scared you, but it was for a good reason because it was to keep you safe).
 - People who respect your boundaries and your parents' rules (i.e., if you say "no, stop touching me!", they should stop immediately).
- Children may have many safe adults, but there are only a few select people who have the right to touch one's private body parts. Special safe adults are the only people who may see or touch a child's private body parts, and only for the purpose of keeping the child clean and healthy.
 - Ask: "Who are the special safe adults in your lives?" (Examples: mom, dad, family doctor with mom or dad present, etc.).
 - Ask: "If another adult, or another child, tries to see or touch your private body parts, what can you do?"
 - Follow the Personal Boundary Safety Rules:
 - You can say "NO!"
 - Try to get away if you can.
 - Tell a safe adult.

Ask: "Why do we have rules about safety?"

- We have these rules to keep our bodies healthy and safe, to keep others safe, and to help us know what to do if something unsafe is happening to us.

Activity: Tell the students they are going to "Stand up for Safety!" This activity can either be done at their desks, or any area of the room or area (even outside). They can start the activity by sitting down.

1. Say "For this activity, if I say a safe action, stand up and show me a thumbs-up gesture, But if I say an unsafe action, sit down and show me a thumbs-down gesture." (You may need to demonstrate the thumbs up, thumbs down gestures.)
2. Give the following examples and allow the children to either stand up with a thumbs up, or sit down with a thumbs down.
 - Your mom gives you a hug after you clean your room. [stand up, thumbs up]
 - Your friend wants to help push on the swing. [stand up, thumbs up]
 - Your friend hits you on the playground. [sit down, thumbs down]
 - Your teacher helps you up after you fall down. [stand up, thumbs up]
 - An adult you don't know asks if you can help them find their lost puppy. [sit down, thumbs down]
 - Your neighbor tries to give you candy even though your parents said you couldn't have any. [sit down, thumbs down]
 - Someone says they want to show you their private parts, or look at yours. [sit down, thumbs down]
 - Your dog is wagging its tail and licking your face. [stand up, thumbs up]
 - A dog is growling at you and you don't know the dog very well. [sit down, thumbs down]

- When you are sad, your brother or sister puts their arm around you and it helps you feel better.
[stand up, thumbs up]

Conclusion: Remind students that most people and most touches are safe—and most importantly, that kids do have a right to be safe and protected! Share that they all have safe adults in their lives who want to keep them safe and do what is best for them. And, that anytime they feel uncomfortable or uncertain about a certain person, touch or behavior, they can always go to a safe adult for help.

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,
Each one of us is special and different.
We are made in your image.
Please help me respect myself, and others.
Please give me courage to speak up for myself, and my friends if we are being harmed
Amen*