

## Lesson 3 for Grades 9-12

## Partnering with Parents & Guardians for Safety: *Boundaries: You Have Rights!*

### PRINCIPLE

Youth must understand they have a right to be safe, and they are allowed to create boundaries to protect themselves in situations where they feel uncomfortable, or where they could be harmed.

### OBJECTIVES

Through this lesson, the adult lesson leader reinforces the parent's message about boundaries. After Lesson 3, children should be better able to:

- Identify and define various types of boundaries
- Ensure they can set their own boundaries and communicate them to others
- Honor appropriate boundaries in different types of relationships
- Understand boundaries can apply for Online activities

### CATECHISM / SCRIPTURE

*Freedom is exercised in relationships between human beings. Every human person, created in the image of God, has the natural right to be recognized as a free and responsible being. All owe to each other this duty of respect. The right to the exercise of freedom, especially in moral and religious matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person. This right must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and public order.*

—Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1738 (1997)

### Background for Parents and Guardians:

In preparation for teaching this lesson and to lead the activities, review the *Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide: Safe Environment Guide for Caring Adults, Parents and Guardians*.

Before sitting down with your child(ren) and beginning the activities, read through this entire lesson and view the video. Choose the activities that you are most comfortable with first and gradually moving to the others. You will find it is helpful to have the *Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide* handy to navigate the lesson material. These activities are intended to empower young people to think about safety issues with you as their partner.

### Considerations for the age groups—

**Grades 9-12** This is the age where all the experiences that began with puberty accelerate rapidly as the teenager matures into a young adult. 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. They may appear to reject authority to define their independence, in reality though, they rely on strength and support of 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. Fortifying online boundaries and guidance with online behavior is needed.

### Activity #1: Introductory Video

**Directions:** View and discuss the introductory video with your child. The introductory video for all grades is designed to open a simple discussion with children about personal boundaries and touching safety. The video is approximately six minutes long and is neither created nor intended as a substitute for the activities. It's merely an intro designed to “break the ice” and assist the transition into completing the interactive Lesson Activity options. It can be used in to introduce any of the following activities. Discussion and practice are the critical components needed to teach children how to protect themselves. They learn best by “doing”; not just listening or watching.

Grades 9-12 Video links:

English 9 – 12: [https://www.youtube.com/embed/eY\\_oua646oc](https://www.youtube.com/embed/eY_oua646oc)

Spanish 9 – 12: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/ScP07b62IR0>

**Activity #2: Review and Discuss Vocabulary words in an age-appropriate way with your child**

**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.

**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.

**Safe friends and safe adults**—safe people won’t hurt you without a good reason and won’t intentionally confuse or manipulate you. They listen to and consistently respect boundaries and follow the rules.

**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.

**Activity #3: Discussion—Discovering the boundaries in your life**

**Activity:** The purpose of this activity is to create scenarios for youth that will give them ideas about boundaries and limits, and how both are an important part of our daily lives. You’ll discuss how rules establish boundaries, how sometimes we people infringe on our boundaries, and how we can create them for ourselves.

**Discussion:** **Step 1:** Begin the conversation about boundaries by asking if they know what a “boundary” is, and have them explain it from their perspective.

**Step 2:** Then, begin to create scenarios by asking questions about some of the rules they have at home. For example:

- What are your family rules regarding when your homework must be completed?
- Are there other activities that aren’t allowed until your homework has been completed?
- For how long, and how late are you permitted to be on your phone?
- What are your family’s rules regarding the Internet? What are your family’s rules regarding gaming or video games?
- Does your family limit who can come into your room and when they are allowed to be in your room?
- Do you expect your best friend to sit next to you at lunch every day?
- Do you wish your parents would stop talking to you when you’re together at a party or at the mall?
- Do you wear any type of seatbelt when you’re in the car?
- Can you explain why you moved the chairs, sat closer to some people and away from others, left empty chairs between you and others, etc. when we started this class?

**Explain:** Each of these “rules” that we just talked about establishes a boundary. Everyone has them, including adults. Like the examples just discussed, some are rules that are given to us by others—like our parents, teachers or coaches.

**Step 3:** Explain that sometimes we get to choose our own boundaries. Ask your child if they can think of a time that they have created boundaries or rules for the people in their lives. Questions you can ask:

- Have you ever pretended to agree with something, or someone, when you really did not agree?
- Have you ever chosen not to tell on someone who broke the rules, because that person asked you not to tell?
- Have you ever gone along with an activity even though you didn't really want to go along with it?
- Have you ever declined to join in on an activity that you really wanted to do because someone else talked you out of it?
- Have you ever hidden how you really feel out of fear of how other people might react?
- Have you ever spent too much time doing things for other people and been frustrated that you don't spend enough time doing things you need to do for yourself?

**Step 4:** Ask your child why they do these things and how it makes them feel? During the discussion of their reasons, address the following points:

When you disregard your personal beliefs, values, wants and feelings, it sometimes causes you to feel diminished, disrespected, upset, annoyed, frustrated, angry, etc.

Boundaries are the invisible lines we draw around ourselves for self-protection and self-preservation.

When you don't speak up, you hide your true self and allow others to violate your boundaries. Sometimes we feel like we can't speak up.

Most people will respect our boundaries if we let them know what they are. However, with others, we must actively defend our boundaries.

Strong boundaries are essential components to safety. When we are clear about our boundaries, we know how to expect respect from others, and can more easily protect ourselves from people who are intent on violating our boundaries, or who don't care about our boundaries.

#### Activity #4: Technology— Netsmartz Online Safety: Your Photo Fate

**Background:** This short 3-minute video is shared with permission from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and can be played for children as part of an activity. It is designed to open a simple discussion with youth about safety. Youth learn to be safe online and offline, and that they have a right to be safe.

**Description:** Watch the video to determine how to strengthen your online boundaries. Once you send a photo online, there's no way to control it. It's out of your hands.

Click here for the link: <https://www.netsmartz.org/reallifestories/yourphotofate>