

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

Lesson Plan 6: Grooming—Recognizing risky adult behavior—Teacher Planning and Preparation

Getting started with Lesson 6:

Principle: Identifying grooming behaviors of potential abusers. Specifically:

- 1) Adults that give gifts without permission and tell the child not to tell anyone about the gift or where they got it, and
- 2) Knowing when to refuse to go where an adult is trying to take you or to refuse to do what an adult asks you to do.

Catechism: Man is obliged to follow the moral law, which urges him “to do what is good and avoid what is evil” (cf. GS 16). This law makes itself heard in his conscience. **#1713**

“To love is to will the good of another.” (cf. MK 7:21) All other affections have their source in this first movement of the human heart toward the good. Only the good can be loved. Passions “are evil if love is evil and good if it is good.” **#1766**

Goal: To assist children in recognizing the risky, frightening or confusing behaviors that adults can exhibit and to teach children how to trust their own instincts and resist the overtures of a potential molester.

Objectives: To give children the ability to begin to identify and define adult behaviors that indicate that the person wants more than friendship in the relationship and to trust their own instincts about what is “okay” and what is “not okay.” The goal for this age group is not to teach them all of the warning signs but to concentrate on two specific areas: 1) an adult who gives gifts without permission and instructs the child not to tell and 2) respecting their own instincts when adults’ requests make them feel uncomfortable or are confusing. The specific learning goals are that:

- Children can distinguish between a gift given from love and generosity and one that is given as an attempt to trap them in a cycle of secrecy.
- They can say “no” when they feel uncomfortable or confused by how an older person is acting—even if the older person is someone they love and trust.
- They should not go with or meet alone with an adult in an isolated or out-of-the-way area where no one else is around.
- They can speak up and tell a trusted adult when someone’s behavior makes them feel uncomfortable or uneasy.

Dealing with the intermediate age: “Energy” is the key concept¹

These children are away from home more often and need to start recognizing that safety issues can arise when they are off with friends or at other events and places.

They like to be in constant motion and are always on the go. Groups are important. This is the “gang” age with friends of the same sex and the time in which team sports flourish. Capable of intense loyalty to others, they usually have a best friend in whom to confide. They can talk through problems and can think through their past actions to find a justification for their behavior. For example, they will have explanations and justifications for

¹ DeBord, K. (1996). “*Childhood Years: Ages six through twelve.*” Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service.

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being late, note completing homework, still being on the phone after lights out, etc. They will also take time to search for the information they need to resolve questions for themselves, and they are capable of developing plans and setting goals.

Although truthful about big things, young people in this age group are less so about the smaller things, often making up alibis or shifting the blame to others. They have a strong sense of right and wrong or fair or unfair. They can argue and hold strong debates. Caregivers can be more effective when dealing with this age by including them in the discussion while establishing rules or guidelines.

The best approach to this age group is through non-competitive games in which the children can establish individual goals. At this age, more explanation is necessary when rules are given. Children need to begin to learn to trust their own ability to make decisions. Therefore, criticism should be designed to teach. For example, when something goes wrong or does not turn out the way that the child wanted, rather than tell the child what went wrong or how to do it differently, ask, "how could you do that differently next time?" Let the child begin to evaluate and develop reasoning skills.

Vocabulary words:

- Secrets — Something that is hidden from others or that is known only to one or to a few.²
- Surprise— Something that leaves a person feeling wonder, astonishment, or amazement, as at something unanticipated.³
- Tattle— To gossip about another by revealing their plans or activities in a sensational way or spreading rumors about another person.⁴
- Uncomfortable — Experiencing physical discomfort that leaves one ill at ease or uneasy, sometimes causing anxiety.
- Confusing — To cause to be unable to think clearly, to make unclear or incomprehensible.⁵
- Secluded — Kept apart from social contact with other people, hidden from view.⁶

Supplies and Preparation:

Educators, catechists, youth ministers, and other caring adults should prepare by reviewing the entire lesson plan and by reading *Teaching Touching Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and other Caring Adults*. Then review and do the teacher preparation exercise in lesson five. During the class, follow the instructions to complete as many of the activities as possible in your allotted amount of time.

Activity 1: Play the introductory video to begin the lesson if necessary. *If the two lessons are consecutive, it may not be necessary to use class time to show the video introduction again. However, if the two classes are spread out during the year, the video will help set the stage for the discussion.*

Activity 2: Review the material from lesson five. (5 minutes)

Activity 3: Review the rules for going with adults and/or doing what adults say to do and what to tell your parents about it. (5 minutes)

² The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

³ Id.

⁴ Id.

⁵ WordNet ® 2.0, © 2003 Princeton University

⁶ Id.

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Activity 4: If you wish, use a picture as the creative inspiration, form the students into groups of at least three and ask them to write and put on a play that demonstrates what they have learned about how to deal with adults who put kids in challenging, confusing, or compromising situations. (30-32 minutes)

Prayer: A suggested prayer is provided at the end of the lesson. If you wish, you may use this prayer to conclude this lesson with your students. (2-3 minutes)

Supplies: Opening Video
Photographs for the Teacher/Student exercise.
TV and VCR
Boom box or CD Player
Music CD (Suggestions Provided)
Notebooks and pens

Activity 1: **NOTE TO TEACHER:** If you have a typical prayer service that you use to start class, use it for this session also. If not, please consider the suggestions provided and create an appropriate prayer opening for the class.

Suggested prayer formats:

- Place a small table at the front of the room next to the teacher. Cover it with a beautiful scarf. Place an open Bible on the table along with a candle and, if available, a flower or a symbol that represents all children or the children in the class. Use the same prayer for opening and closing the lesson. Light the candle and have someone lead the other young people in reciting the prayer on the poster.
- Form a circle of silence around a lighted candle and listen to (or sing along with) an appropriate Christian song in the background such as: "You are Mine" by David Haas, "Here I Am, Lord" by Dan Schutte, "You Are Near" by Dan Schutte or another that you find appropriate. Invite the children to join in saying the prayer together.
- Have music playing in the background as the children come in to class. Ask everyone to be seated and get quiet. Listen to the music and offer this prayer and intentions:
 - Loving God, we come before you today to ask your guidance and wisdom so that we may know and do your will and walk with you each day. We offer these intentions as we begin our prayer together today.
 - For all children who suffer abuse that they may feel God's loving arms enfold them and take away their pain.
 - For all those who harm children that they may seek forgiveness and turn away from harming others.
 - For all parents and others who care about children that they learn how to be protectors of children and make sure that all children are safe from intentional harm.
 - [Ask for other intentions that the children wish to bring.]
 - For these intentions and all those that we hold in our hearts, we ask this in the name of Jesus your son. Amen.

Show video if appropriate.

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Discussion: Ask the young people to share what they learned the week before about gifts and the way that someone might use gifts to create a potentially harmful relationship with the young person.

Points to make:

- Young people need to know the difference between a gift given from love and generosity and one that is given as an attempt to trap them in a cycle of secrecy.
- That giving gifts without permission and instructing the young person not to tell anyone is one indication that the person wants more than friendship in the relationship.
- Young people should trust their own instincts about what is “okay” and what is “not okay” and always tell their parents about any situation that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- One of the characteristics of a “safe” adult is that the person respects the wishes of the child and follows the rules established by the parents.

Activity 3: Class Discussion

NOTE TO TEACHER: The point of this discussion is to build on the discussion from the previous lesson to empower young people to trust their own instincts and to avoid going anywhere—particularly to an isolated area—alone with another adult. Also, remind students that they have the right to say “no” and to tell another person when someone approaches them to go somewhere they know that they are not allowed to go or to go to an isolated area.

Ask the students about invitations from adults and others that make them feel uneasy or uncomfortable. Give some examples of how this might happen and invite the students to discuss how they might deal with these situations.

- A teacher invites you into the teacher’s lounge when others are not around.
- An adult who volunteers with the youth group asks you to come *alone* with him or her to a remote part of the building to help load or unload something.
- A bus driver offers to take you to a drive-in restaurant after school for that smoothie you’ve been wanting as soon as he or she drops off the other riders.
- A coach asks you to stay late after everyone else is gone home for some individual instruction.
- A religious education teacher offers to give you a ride home every week after class.
- A friend of your parents always seems to want to touch you. This person pats you on the back, pulls you into hugs, and touches your arms, your hands and your head every time you are within reach.

Points to make:

- Students can say “no” when they feel uncomfortable or confused by how an older person is acting—even if the older person is someone they love and trust.

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- Students should not go with or meet alone with an adult in an isolated or out-of-the-way area where no one else is around.
- Students need to speak up and tell a trusted adult when someone's behavior makes them feel uncomfortable or uneasy.
- It is sometimes hard to identify the problem. Is a person safe or is a person just a little too touchy-feely? The point is that the student's comfort is the determining factor, not the intentions of the other person. If one doesn't feel comfortable, speak up. If they don't listen or respect the student's wishes, they should tell the first trusted adult they see and get as far away as possible.
- Trust your instincts. When something does not feel right, take action to protect yourself from harm.

Activity 4: Dramatization

Form the students into groups of at least three and ask them to write and put on a play that demonstrates what they have learned about how to deal with adults who put kids in challenging, confusing, or compromising situations. If you wish, use pictures as the creative inspiration. Choose one picture for each group of young people to guide the process.

Their Assignment:

Using their imaginations and thinking about the material we have been discussing for the two sessions of Teaching Touching Safety, create a short play about what's happening to the young people and adults in the picture. **STUDENTS HAVE A MAXIMUM OF 15 MINUTES TO CREATE THE PLAY.**

Use the remainder of the time to have the groups perform their plays and talk with the other students about the lesson the play intends to convey.

Activity 5: Prayer to end the lesson:

(Since this prayer was handed out in the last session and the students took it home, have those who don't have their copy read it off the poster this week as you pray together.)

(Remember that this is a variation of an Old Catholic Traveler's Prayer to be said before beginning the journey. Remind the students that as they grow up, they are on a kind of journey through life. Each time they leave their own home or their own room to go out on their own, they are traveling. Prayer can help prepare them for the journey and guide them along the way.)

My holy Angel Guardian,
Ask the Lord to bless the journey that I undertake,
That it may benefit the health of my soul and body;
That I may reach its end,
And that, returning safe and sound,
I may find my family in good health.
Guard, guide, and preserve us throughout the day and night.

Amen.

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