

Lesson 2 for Grades 9 through 12: Safe Friends, Safe Adults, and Safe Touches

Getting started with Lesson 2:

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

Catechism: *Anyone who uses the power at his disposal in such a way that it leads others to do wrong becomes guilty of scandal and responsible for the evil that he has directly or indirectly encouraged. "Temptations to sin are sure to come; but woe to him by whom they come!" — #2287*¹

Goal: To assist educators, catechists, youth ministers, and other caring adults in teaching teenagers 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, teenagers 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:

Young people of this age primarily identify with their interpersonal relationships. They are beginning to have a stronger concern for others and have many questions about social relationships and decision making. Safe friends and safe adults are critical at this age because young people have a strong need for role models and mentors in whom they can confide. It is also crucial that they can identify unsafe adults and have the skill to deal with them.

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

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

Note to Teacher: The introductory video for grades 9 through 12 is designed to open a simple discussion with children about touching safety and personal boundaries. The video is approximately seven (7) 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:

- **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.
- **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: Review concepts related to relationship boundaries

Directions: In preparing for this activity, review *Teaching Touching Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Other Caring Adults*. Use this activity to discuss situations that might arise placing young people at risk. Discuss the touching rules, a teenager's right to say “No” and have his or her boundaries respected, and the importance of not keeping secrets about sexual or other inappropriate touching.

Set up the exercise by asking the teens to pretend that they are journalists on a weekly newspaper, which features a column for teenagers—an opportunity for teens to seek advice on their personal problems. For the purpose of the exercise the editor has just put them in charge of answering letters from various teenagers. Students need to work together to come up with an appropriate response to each of the following letters.

- My coach seems to be always tapping, rubbing, or slapping me. She does this to everyone. Yet, I feel uncomfortable when she does it to me. It is just me? How should I handle it?
- The halls at school are crowded between classes. One student seems to have lots of “accidents” that cause him to rub up against me every day—even when I try to get out of his way. What can I do?
- When my father comes home drunk late at night he comes into my room and touches my private body parts. How should I handle it?
- One day after practice, a group of us went over to our coach's house to shoot pool. Lying there on a table in the den were books and magazines full of pictures of naked women. I was uncomfortable, but everyone else was laughing and joking and looking at the pictures. If I tell my parents, everyone will think I'm a dork. What should I do?
- My boyfriend wants to come over to my house when my parents are gone, but he's been pushing me to have sex with him, and I'm afraid that I won't be able to say “no” if he and I are alone in the house. What should I do?
- My stepfather keeps coming in my room uninvited—just when I am getting dressed. How can I stop him without making a big scene?
- When is it okay to keep a secret?

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Activity #4: Collage of Safety Rules, Safe Touches, and Safe Friends

Directions: During lesson 1, your group of teenagers began creating a collage poster depicting safe friends and safe touches. Have them finish the collage that they started during the first lesson, or create a second poster depicting safe friends and safe touches.

Supplies: Old magazines from which to cut pictures
Scissors
Paste or glue
Poster board
Felt tipped markers

Process: Instruct the teens to cut out as many pictures as possible to demonstrate "Saying "No!" and Staying Safe." Spread pictures out so that the group may view them all individually. Decide which picture best exemplifies the theme. Place this picture in center of the poster as a focal point in the collage. Then, arrange the other pictures around the central picture (pictures may overlap slightly, but none should cover any substantial part of the primary picture).

Discuss the concept of "Saying "No!" and Staying Safe," while the group is creating the collage. Upon completion, display the poster in the classroom and perhaps in the parish church.

Editor's Note: If you are concerned that Activity #4 will not keep the interest of your students, please consider one of the alternate activities listed below:

Alternate Activity: Create song-skits with the theme: "Saying 'NO!' and Staying Safe"

Directions: During Lesson 1, each small group of students started creating a song-skit that demonstrates the concepts surrounding touching safety. Students should finish preparing their song-skits during this time and be prepared to present their creation to the rest of the class.

Supplies: Unless students need props for the presentation, no supplies are needed other than the boundless creativity of teens.

Process: Give the previously created groups time to complete their song-skits using the concepts and ideas presented during this lesson—Lesson 2. If necessary, help the groups complete the activity. Have each group present their creation to the rest of the class.

Note: Your overall number of students will greatly impact the amount of time you can devote to this activity. We recommend that each song-skit be no more than three minutes long.

Alternate Activity: Create a praise and worship service

Directions: During Lesson 1, each small group of students started creating a praise and worship service to demonstrate and emphasize the concepts covered in the *Touching Safety* program. For Lesson 2, students will finish planning their praise and worship services and each group will present its service at the end of the lesson.

Supplies: Supplies needed might include musical instruments or a CD player, candles, and bibles. Other necessary supplies will be determined by the students as they develop their services.

Process: Students should review the plans they created during Lesson 1, and make sure their planned services represent the concepts covered in the *Touching Safety* program. Then, to conclude the assignment, each group will conduct its service while all the other groups participate in the service. If necessary, help the teens complete the activity and present their services to the class

Note: Your overall number of students will greatly impact the amount of time you can devote to this activity. We recommend that each praise and worship service be no more than five minutes long.

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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