
Touching Safety™ Program

Intermediate Level, Grades 3 – 5

Lesson Plan 11 and 12: Partnering with Parents for Safety!

Getting started with Lesson:

Principle: Working together with the adults in our lives can help keep everyone safe.

Catechism: 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. **#1738**

Parents must regard their children as Children of God and respect them as human person. Showing themselves obedient to the will of the Father in heaven, they educate their children to fulfill God's law. **#2222**

Goal: To teach children, parents, guardians, other caring adults to be our partners in creating safe environments.

Learning Goals: To strengthen the communication and partnership between parents and children with the common goal of keeping children safe.

- Children and parents create a special safe word that will be the signal to children that any person claiming to be sent to get the child by the parents must know before the child goes with him or her.
- Children will learn behaviors that are inappropriate from a stranger as well as someone well known to them, such as family, friends, neighbors, coaches, teacher or catechist, etc.
- That parents and children continue to build communication and partnership in the goal of keeping children safe.

Dealing with the intermediate age—key concept is “energy”¹

The key word is “energy.” 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 friend of the same sex and the time in which team sports flourish. Capable of intense loyalty to others, they usually have a best friend to confide in. 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 being late, not 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 some question for themselves and they are capable of developing plans and setting goals.

Although truthful about big things, they 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 think through and reason out solutions.

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

Protecting God's Children® Touching Safety for Children

Vocabulary words:

- Safe code – A word or phrase that children and parents agree is a code to let children know the people wanting to take them somewhere were sent by parents.
- Safety – An environment that protects children and adults from harm
- Partnership – Persons sharing with each other in some action or endeavor.
- Safe Touch – A touch that has a good purpose, is not intended to hurt, and is familiar and safe.
- Unsafe Touch – Any touch that can hurt or scare someone. Or, any touch that, although it starts out safe, becomes uncomfortable, confusing, or scary.

Supplemental Resource Material for Teachers

One of the most valuable tools for parents and children to use as partners in creating safe environments is the use of a unique word or short phrase that has special meaning or is chosen only for this purpose. Parents and children can come up with the word or phrase and an agreement that the children won't tell anybody and the parents will only give that word to someone who has their permission to pick the child up.

Working together with the children to create a partnership for safety empowers the children and reassures parents. The word can be anything that is easy for the child to remember and unique enough that is not used in everyday conversation. Something that is special to the child or represents a special shared memory can work really well. For e.g.: 'Rainbows', 'Clowns', 'Circus', 'Dinosaurs', or the name of grandparents, dog or cat would fit the bill. These are words a child can easily remember. However a predator couldn't easily guess which one of these words was the safe word.

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Lesson Plan 11 and 12: Partnering with Parents for Safety!

Supplies: TV and DVD Player
Power to Protect DVD

Activity #1: Play the Power to Protect Introductory Video

Activity #2: Creating and Practicing Partnership

Directions: Large empty can or unbreakable container and a small unbreakable object that fits inside such as a small rubber ball, (You need something that would fall out easily if the can is tipped or turned over and would not break or do damage to anyone or anything when it landed. An example would be a large disposable plastic container with a rubber ball inside.), and two or three cloth strips that can be used for blindfolds.

Discussion: Today's discussion begins to introduce the children to the value of partnership and working together with parents as a team to accomplish some goals such as personal safety. The lesson involves a discussion to create partnership as a concept and a fun activity to create the experience of partnership and what it can provide and what happens when it is missing or when a partner does not participate.

Begin by asking questions to find out what "partnership" means to the children. They may be familiar with the word, but defining it or applying it in any situation will be a new idea. It is also likely that they see "partnership" in a particular situation or person but not as an idea that is more universally useful.

Today we are going to talk about partnership and how working together can create safe environments. Who can tell me what "partnership" is?

Points to emphasize or make:

- Partnership is working together
- Everyone has an important responsibility
- Each person must do her or his part
- Partnership eases the load on one person and spreads it around
- In some situations, partnership is necessary to complete a task or fulfill a commitment
- Responsibilities are not necessarily equally shared between the partners

Activity #3: Partnering with Parents for Safety

Directions: **Recommendation:** If there are 10 students or less, invite them to sit in a circle with you. For more than 10 students create rows of chairs in an arc with you seated in front of the room.

Remind the students that these lessons are designed to give them the tools to protect themselves when difficult or even when dangerous situations arise. Tell them that in today's lesson we will be continuing to talk about partnering with parents and other caregivers to promote a safe environment and stop potential predators.

In our last lesson we looked at partnership. How it works, how it impacts what we are out to accomplish and what happens when partners do not work well together or when one partner does not fully participate. In the activity we did, we were able to see that only by working together can we accomplish our goals with ease and effectiveness.

In some ways, that was easy to see when we are working with each other in class. However, the "partners" we really need to create and promote a safe environment is our parents – or the other adults we live with. This might not be quite so easy to accomplish.

What are some of the differences between working with your friends or peers and working with your parents or adult caregivers that might get in the way of creating useful, workable partnerships?

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Important Points:

- Parents and children don't always seem to want the same things.
- Parents think they get to have all the say.
- They just want to tell us what to do, not work with us to find a way to accomplish a goal.
- It is hard for us to listen to parents sometimes.
- They don't understand what it is like to be my age.

Given these challenges, it might seem impossible to create a partnership with parents to help with this issue but it is not. However, creating a partnership with parents might be a bit different.

Creating and maintaining a safe environment is very important to you and your parents. Sometimes adults think we know how to do that and we try to tell you what to do. There are times when this is true and it works. There are other times when we can find ways to partner with parents that they might not have thought of yet.

Let's see if we can think of some ways we could suggest to parents that we can work together to make sure each of us knows the situation is safe.

For example, what if you created a "safe code" with your parents? Perhaps you and your parents could agree on a code word or phrase that would be a signal to each of you that the situation is safe. You could agree that without the safe code you will never go off with someone who simply says he or she was sent by parents to pick you up. Parents would agree that they will always give the safe code to someone who really has permission to take you with them.

The code can be a word or phrase that is easy to remember but hard to guess like a phrase or word that you and your family use with each other. What are some words and phrases that might be unique to your family or at least have special meaning to you and your parents?

The safe code does not have to make sense to someone else. It is a code word or phrase intended to communicate to you that this person has permission to take you with them.

What are some other ideas we can create for partnership with parents to promote personal and family safety?

NOTE: Make a list of the things that the students start to create. Evaluate the ideas using the following criteria:

- How does it help keep you safe?
- How is partnership required?
- It is something that another person could guess?

At the end of the lesson, create a list of the suggestions from the students and have it for them at their next class.

It is important to work together with parents to keep everyone safe from others who want to do us harm. We have talked over the years about safe friends and learning who to trust and setting boundaries. All those actions are part of keeping us safe. Today's lesson adds one more tool to our safety box. When we work together and use the tools we have, our chances of living a great life, having fun, and being safe are greatly increased.

Next week you will get a copy of all the things we created today as part of developing a strong partnership with our parents to meet the goal of keeping us all safe. Talk with your parents about how you can use these ideas to work together to keep everyone safe from harm.

Activity #4: Learning to say "no" or "stop" in a an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation

Directions: Discuss the types of touching that make you feel uncomfortable. For example, when someone kicks, scratches, or pinches you. Start by making a list. Someone could write the list on a chalk board as children brainstorm.

- Someone taunts you by saying mean things about you
- A person you do not feel comfortable with wants a hug from you
- A coach pats you on the buttocks after a good game

Directions: This is a role-playing exercise. Take turns sharing when you have said "no." If you can't think of any, look at the list below of incomplete sentences to help you get started.

- I yelled stop when _____
- I hated it the day that _____
- My friend said "stop" when _____

- One day in school I said “no” because _____
- My father said “stop” when _____
- I ran away when _____
- I couldn't stop crying when _____

Prayer to end the lesson:

(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.