
Touching Safety[™] Program

High School Level, Grades 9 – 12

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 teens, parents, guardians, other caring adults to be our partners in creating safe environments.

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

- Teens 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 teens continue to build communication and partnership in the goal of keeping children safe.

Dealing with the teens —key concept is “searching”

This is the age where all the experiences that began with puberty—the physical changes the developing emotions. The self-consciousness deepens and matures. The world of “children” is now renounced. Teens believe in their immortality and may tend to be reckless in behavior. Although it would appear that they reject authority while defining their own independence, in reality they rely on the strength and support they find in parents and meaningful adults.

Vocabulary words:

- Partnership – Persons sharing with each other in some action or endeavor.
- Safe Code – A word or phrase young people and parents agree on that is a signal to children that a person who wants to take them somewhere was sent by parents.
- 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.

Healthy questioning at this age:

Teens 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 decisions making. Safe friends and safe adults are critical at this age since they have a strong need for 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.

Working together with the teens to create a partnership for safety empowers the teens and reassures parents.

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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: Partnering with Parents for Safety

Directions: **Recommendation:** If there are less than 10 students, set up the chairs in a circle and invite the students to take their seats. For more than 10 students, set the chairs up in an arc or semi-circle with you in the center.

Discussion: Today's discussion begins to introduce the students to the value of partnership and working together with parents as a team to accomplish some goals for 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 teens. They may be familiar with the word and they might THINK they know what it means, but defining it to be able to apply it in this situation may be unfamiliar. It is also likely that they see "partnership" in a particular situation or person but not as an idea that is more universally useful or as a concept they apply to their relationship with parents. For example, they may experience partnership as being assigned someone to work with on a class project or someone to team with when playing a sport. For them, in other words, partnership is likely to be situation specific.

Today we are going to talk about partnership and how working together we can create safe environments. Who can say 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

How is partnership part of your life?

When you work with partners on a project for example, do you choose your partner or is one assigned?

What's the difference in working with a partner you choose or one you are assigned?

How do partners divide the workload?

When you work with a partner or partners, how do you decide to do the job?

Most of the time partnership seems simple. You work together with someone in your science class for example to complete a project. Each of you has to do a certain amount of the work to get a good grade. But, what happens if one of the partners does not do his or her part? Do you pick up the slack? Do you just give up on the project? Do you talk it over and work it out? What happens?

NOTE: In this discussion, there is an opportunity for the students to begin to really consider what they think they know about partnership. It will be challenging for them to connect the lesson to safety from predators, but that is not your job this session. This lesson is about laying the ground work for working together in a partnership with parents. The work of creating that partnership will be done in the next lesson.

In order to give us some sense of what it takes to work together to accomplish a goal in partnership, we are going to do a fun activity together.

Directions: Ask the teens to stand in a very tight circle facing each other. (If you have more than 10 students in the class, divide into two groups for this exercise.)

Tell them to close their eyes and reach out with their right hand and grab the hand of another child.

Without moving or letting go, have the students open their eyes and use their left hands to connect with a different person. No one should be holding both hands of another, they must each be holding on to two other teens. Once they open their eyes they do not have to keep standing in the same spot.

When all the teens are connected by both hands they have formed a "human knot." Their task is to work together to untangle themselves without letting go of one another's hands. You should soon witness considerable communication and strategy formulation among the teens as they try to free themselves from the "knot." (If any hands come unclasped, freeze the action and reconnect the hands exactly as they were before proceeding.)

When the "knot" is completely untied, have the students take their seats and continue the discussion.

What was that like? How hard was it to work in partnership with one other person? What happened when there were more and more people added? What if someone did not do their part? What happened then?

This exercise begins to give you a sense of how partnership can help you accomplish goals together and how difficult it is to get the job done when one partner is not participating.

Activity #3: Review and discuss the touching safety rules:

Directions: In preparing for this activity, the instructor/catechist should review the *Teaching Touching Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Other Caring Adults*. Then, discuss the fact that a child has a right to say "No," and to expect the other person to listen and respect the "No" response to personal issues—even if the other person is an adult.

These exercises are intended to empower young people to begin to think about safety issues and to be their parents' partner in making sure that the child has the tools needed to resist the overtures of a potential child molester.

Talk with teens about risky situations they might encounter with adults and other young people and discuss appropriate ways to respond. Remember that teens are dealing with enormous peer pressure while trying to understand their independent role in the world apart from their families. It is not always "cool" to say that you must tell someone if you are touched or approached in an inappropriate or sexual way. So, do your best to stress the importance of good communication while speaking to the adolescent in a way that has him or her actually engage in hearing the message, rather than ignore you.

Discuss situations that could be a part of a grooming process. As you look at the situations, you will see that none of them is a clear cut example of grooming. Discussion allows the young people to work out the issues involved in determining whether the adult's actions are part of the grooming process. It is important that young people begin to recognize the elements of grooming and identify things that are "red flags." Some examples of grooming are:

- Adults or older teens who allow younger teens to watch R-rated or X-rated movies. (In the first situation, the mere fact that an adult allows an underage person to watch an R-Rated movie is not necessarily grooming. However, if the movie is one the underage person's parents have forbidden the teen to see, and if the adult tells the teen to keep it a secret, then the adult's action appears to be much more suspicious.)
- Adults or older teens who allow younger teens to play popular, but violent, video games even though the young person's parents have said "no" to this activity.
- Adults or other teens who tell dirty jokes or look at "adult" (naked or sexually explicit) pictures.
- An adult or older teen who does something unsafe and, when the young person says, "Stop," the adult or older teen agrees to back off but asks the younger teen not to tell anyone what happened.
- An adult or older teen who allows younger teens to break the rules.

Discuss difficult situations that encourage the young people to look carefully at challenges that might arise and think through the issues so they can come to a safe and healthy decision. This is an excellent opportunity for young people

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to begin to confront the challenge of doing the right thing in the face of peer pressure and the child's real need to "fit in" and be part of the group. Some examples of difficult situations are:

- A friend confides in you that someone has molested him or her or has done some things that make the friend uncomfortable with the other person.
- You are at a friend's house. The parents are gone and your friend wants the two of you to get into the liquor cabinet for some "refreshments."

Activity #4: Who and what do you trust?

Discussion: Who to trust and when to tell.

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 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 got to see that only by working together can we accomplish our goals with ease and effectiveness.

In some ways, this 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?

Important Points:

- Parents and teens 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 this, 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?
- Is it 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 #5: Expand on the touching safety rules

Directions: In preparing for this activity, review *Teaching Touching Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Other Caring Adults*. Discuss with teens the reasons that touching safety rules are important. Make sure you reinforce the following points.

- Knowing the rules helps teens deal with potentially threatening situations and, in the process, helps them maintain their own safety and the safety of their friends.
- Being aware of potentially risky situations, and discussing how to deal with them in advance, are vital to a teen's personal safety.

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. Discuss with teens the various types of rules that parents or families create to ensure the safety of all family members. State some specific rules regarding what a teen may or may not be allowed to do. This could include:

- Guidelines teens *know* are there because parents and guardians let them engage in certain activities while saying "no" to other activities.
- Behaviors that parents and guardians expect from their teens and young people, even though they (parents) may have never actually verbalized those expectations.

Remind teens that while most touches are good, some are bad and may pose serious risks to those involved. There are a variety of reasons for touching. Discuss some of the reasons for human touch, and note which touches are good and which are bad.

- Touch can be positive, negative, and sometimes confusing.
 - For example, touch can indicate:
 - An attempt to communicate.
 - Affection.
 - Loving and consensual sexual activity between spouses in the context of a Christian marriage.
 - Use of power and control.
 - A demonstration of anger and hostility.
 - A vehicle for victimization—sexually and physically.
- Discuss different examples of positive touches, negative touches, and confusing touches, as well as ways to deal with negative or confusing touches.
- Discuss ways to say "no" or to otherwise refuse unwanted advances or uncomfortable or unwanted touches.

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- Talk about whether there is ever a time when “no” doesn't mean “no.” And, if there is such a time, discuss some ways to help determine whether “no” really means “no.” **Hint:** If someone says “no” in the context of a human touch, you should always respect “no” as the final answer. Always!

Prayer to end the lesson:

(Have this prayer on a poster on the wall and as a handout for the students to pray along with you and take home with them. It 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.