

Combined Lessons One and Two for Grades 9 through 12

- Preparation:** Educators, catechists, youth ministers, and other caring adults (instructor/catechist) should prepare by reviewing the first two pages of the lesson plan and by reading *Teaching Touching Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Other Caring Adults*. Then, follow the instructions to complete as many of the activities as possible in your allotted amount of time.
- Activity #1:** Play the introductory video
- Activity #2:** Review and discuss the vocabulary words and definitions
- Activity #3:** Review and discuss the touching safety rules
- Activity #4:** Expand on the touching safety rules
- Activity #5:** Review concepts related to relationship boundaries
- Prayer:** Two suggested (optional) prayers are provided at the end of the lesson. If you wish, you may use either of these prayers to conclude this lesson with your students.
-

Preparation for completing this lesson:

- Principle:** Teens must guard against those who may harm them through touch—sexual or otherwise. Young people must respect their own health and safety and the health and safety of others. These themes provide the core message of this lesson plan.
- Catechism:** The following cites from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are provided to help instructors/catechists consider the power of the Church's teachings in helping us rid society of child sexual abuse.
- The human body shares in the dignity of "the image of God": it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit:*
- Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the Creator. For this reason man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honor since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day. — #364 ¹*
- 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 ²*
- Goal:** The goal of this lesson plan is to assist instructors/catechists in teaching young adults how to prevent or reduce the risk of sexual abuse and other forms of relationship abuse and violence.
- Objectives:** Through this lesson the instructor/catechist reinforces the parent's message about touching safety and protecting private body parts through respect of personal boundaries. Upon completion, teens should be better able to:
- Describe safe touches and clearly state the rules about inappropriate touching.
 - Name their safe friends and safe adults.
 - Identify the situations when keeping a confidence is appropriate and when secrets are a threat of harm.
 - Respond in an appropriate manner to unsafe situations.
 - Say "No!" when someone tries to touch them in a way that is inappropriate or potentially dangerous.

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

² Ibid.

Combined Lessons One and Two for Grades 9 through 12

Dealing with young adults, the key concept is “searching”

This is the age where all the experiences that began with puberty—the physical changes and the developing emotions—accelerate rapidly as the youngster matures into a young adult. 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 their 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 other influential adults.

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.

Activity #1: Play the introductory video:

The introductory video for grades 9 through 12 is designed to foster a discussion about personal boundaries in the context of a teen's desire to become independent in a world where peer pressures and other relationship issues place enormous individual and group pressure on teens to vacate their individual boundaries. The video is approximately seven (7) minutes long and is not intended as a substitute for the lesson plan. It is merely an introduction designed to “break the ice” among those in the group and to get everyone talking about the relevant issues.

Activity #2: Review and discuss the vocabulary words and definitions:

Boundaries—The invisible limits that separate one person from another and provide a sense of “self” as an individual that is different from others.

Peer Pressure—The influence, both positive and negative, exerted by one's peers in social, educational, and other situations.

Secrets—Something concealed or hidden from others.ⁱ A situation that is kept private or withheld from publication or public knowledge.

Respect—The state of being regarded with honor or esteem—being appreciative.ⁱⁱ An attitude of admiration, honor and friendship.ⁱⁱⁱ Respect for oneself and others means assuming that each person has value and dignity.

Safe adults or friends—People who won't hurt, confuse, or scare a young person intentionally or without a good or honorable reason. Safe friends and adults also respect young people's wishes and the rules of their parents and guardians.^{iv}

Unsafe adults or friends—People who intentionally hurt, scare, and confuse young people in order to satisfy their own personal needs, wants, and desires. Unsafe friends and adults disregard the wishes of the young person, the potential danger of various activities, and the also the family's rules about appropriate behavior. They may be safe at some times and unsafe at other times.^v

Special safe adult—People who may see or touch a child's private parts, but only for the purpose of keeping the child clean and healthy. For this age group, that will most certainly be limited to a physician or other healthcare professional, and that person needs to have another adult present during any examination.

Harassment—The act of tormenting through persistent, wrongful behavior that is annoying, offensive, troubling, or harmful.^{vi} This can be a very threatening experience.

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.

Using the word “No!”—Having the right to express an unequivocal refusal or denial.^{vii}

 Combined Lessons One and Two for Grades 9 through 12

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

Directions: In preparing for this activity, the instructor/catechist should review *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 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: 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.

Combined Lessons One and Two for Grades 9 through 12

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.
- 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!

Activity #5: 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?

Combined Lessons One and Two for Grades 9 through 12

- 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? (For teens, the issues surrounding secrecy are much different than with their peers who are only a few years younger. Teens may feel pressured to keep secrets for their friends about experimentation with alcohol, drugs, sex, and a wide array of other experiences.)

Suggested (optional) prayers to end the lesson:

Dear God,

Sometimes things happen to me that are confusing or frightening.

When I am confused or feel scared, help me remember what I have learned today.

Help me remember the touching rules so I can protect myself from anyone who might want to hurt me—even if it is someone I like.

Thank you for my parents or loved ones and my teachers who are teaching me how to keep myself safe and healthy.

Remind me that I am special and that you are always with me.

Amen

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

References:

Liberia Editrice Vaticana (1997). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd ed.). Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference.

United States Catholic Conference (1990) *Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning*. Washington, DC: Office for Publishing and Promotion Services.

http://www.virtus.org/virtus/pgc-Parent-Handbook_05-03.pdf retrieved March 5, 2004.

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

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ WordNet © 2.0, © Princeton University.

^{iv} *Teaching Touching Safety*, © 2004 National Catholic Services, LLC. Page 5.

^v Ibid. Pages 5-9.

^{vi} Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Law, © 1996 Merriam-Webster, Inc.

^{vii} The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, Copyright © 2000, Houghton Mifflin Company.