

KEEPING GOD'S CHILDREN SAFE LESSON
LEVEL 5

For the Catechist:

Background Information about the Lesson

Scripture

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price, therefore, glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

St. Paul teaches that the human body is holy by referring to “temple”. For the Jews of Paul’s time, the temple at Jerusalem was the holiest place on earth. Paul’s use of the temple of the Holy Spirit gives a concrete image of human dignity and respect for the body to the newly baptized Christians.

Catechism

Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 2258)

Guidelines

God created all human life as sacred and desires each person to be in special relationship with Him. This relationship is the basis for human dignity which influences respect of self and others. Through the reception of the sacraments of the Church, the baptized encounter the Risen Christ and become temples of the Holy Spirit. The grace of the sacraments equips them to live a life in Christ.

Age Group

Children of this age are very aware of their peers and are beginning to recognize a social structure in their lives. Loyalty to friends is very important. They are beginning to form cliques of friends for security and acceptance. Trust is very important. They consider the breaking of a trust or confidence as betrayal, even if this confidence may compromise theirs or another’s well-being. Catechists and parents/guardians should provide instruction and guidance in this area, especially in establishing guidelines in discerning safe and unsafe secrets. When presenting this lesson it is important to avoid the term “adult” when talking about people who can do hurtful and inappropriate things to children. Children are abused by adults, older children and their peers. If children are only warned about adults, then they might not report abuse if it is committed by a child. The best terms to use throughout this lesson are “anyone” and “someone”. These terms help to widen the issue for the child and reflect the reality of the situation.

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Lesson Plan

Objectives

- Gain a better understanding of touching safety and protecting private body parts.
- Identify trusted adults and safe friends.
- Discuss how trusted adults protect them and keep them safe.
- Learn the rules for safe touch.
- Gain a better understanding of safe and unsafe secrets.
- Learn appropriate responses to unsafe situations.
- Understand the importance of trusting their feelings.

Vocabulary

Trusted adult, unsafe adult, safe friend, unsafe friend, safe/appropriate touch, unsafe/inappropriate touch, private parts, safe secrets, unsafe secrets, respect

Materials

Vocabulary words on chalk or poster board (page 2)
T-Chart on chalk or poster board (page 3)
Copies of Ending Prayer (page 6)

LESSON

Opening Prayer

We praise you, God,
For you have made us wonderfully good and in your image and likeness.
Help us always to honor you and respect ourselves and others. Amen.

Instruction

Having taught the Sacrament of Confirmation, the catechist might recall the following concepts with the students:

- full outpouring of the Holy Spirit
- reception of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit
- temple of the Holy Spirit
- respect owed to God, self and others

The review of these faith facts can provide a natural transition to the Keeping God's Children Safe Lesson within the Religious Education setting.

Show the children the T-Chart.

Ask the students to:

- explain how they know when to trust another person
- name the characteristics of a trustworthy person
- write their answers in the appropriate column on the T-Chart
- give descriptions of someone who is not to be trusted
- write their answers in the appropriate column on the T-Chart.

A TRUSTED PERSON IS...	A PERSON WHO IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED IS...

Explain to the students that

- a trusted person is also a safe person
- a person who is not to be trusted is an unsafe person.

Ask why unsafe adults/friends can confuse or fool them about their motive(s).

Ask how a trusted adult/friend could help them if they become confused about a situation?

Explain to the children that they are at an age when friends begin to share secrets with each other.

Ask the students:

- How they define a secret?
- Why do people share secrets?
- How do you decide when to share a secret with someone?
- How do you feel when someone asks you to keep a secret?
- How do you feel when someone tells your secret to another?
- What do you think a safe secret is? Can you give an example? (Examples could include: a surprise party, someone coming for a surprise visit)
- What do you think an unsafe secret is? Can you give an example? (Example could be: A friend tells you that they are being beaten at home.)

Explain to the students that they will listen to two stories and decide if the secret is safe or unsafe.

Story I

A neighbor asked John's parents if he could hire John to cut his grass. They agree. One day, when John was done his work, his neighbor asked if he would help him bring up trash from his basement to the curb. The neighbor told John that his parents had given their permission for John to help him. In the basement, the neighbor showed John a pile of trash and asked him to put it in cardboard boxes. As John picked up the trash, his neighbor began to stroke his back. John told the neighbor to stop touching him. The neighbor said he was rubbing a spider web off his back and continued. John yelled, "Stop now!" The neighbor told John that he got the spider web off his back and stopped. Then he asked John not to tell anyone else about the incident. It would be their secret.

Ask the children:

- Is this a safe secret or unsafe secret?
- What would you tell John to do?
- If John told you this secret, would you tell someone else?

Emphasize to the students that although they may want to respect another person's or friend's privacy, there may be times when a confidence must be broken. If the secret is harmful or dangerous to them or others, they must tell a trusted adult or safe friend.

Story II

Ann went to a carnival with her sister and a friend. Ann began to not feel well and told her sister that she wanted to go home. Her sister promised that they would leave after she went on one more ride. As she waited alone at the exit, an older boy suddenly approached Ann. He introduced himself as a friend of her sister. He offered to wait with her and suggested that they sit on a bench behind the amusement. Ann politely refused his offer as she wanted to wait at the exit. Suddenly he pulled her towards him and gave her a strong hug. At first, Ann was afraid and she froze. Then she summoned her courage and began to yell, "Let me go!" She was able to pull away and the boy ran away. She saw that there were people in line at the ride's entrance so she waited there. When her sister exited the ride she went back to the exit to meet her. Should Ann tell her sister (or a trusted adult) about this incident or should she keep it a secret?

Ask the students:

- Is this a safe or unsafe secret?
- Is the man's hug a safe (comfortable) or unsafe (uncomfortable) touch?
- How do you know when a touch is out of bounds and inappropriate?

Ask the children if someone touched you in an inappropriate manner, or asked you to touch them in an inappropriate way, what should they do?

What rules can they follow?

Recall with the students the safety rules from Levels 1-4.

If someone tries to touch your private body parts,

- **NO**--Say, "No!" to that person. Other ways to say "no" are: "Stop that!", "Leave me alone!" or "Don't do that!"
- **GO**--you go away if someone makes you feel uncomfortable or tries to touch your private body parts. Move or run away from him/her and try to go to another place.
- **TELL**--a trusted adult if someone tried to touch your private body parts or in an inappropriate way.

Emphasize to the children that no one has the right to touch them without their permission.

No one has the right to touch the areas of their body that are considered private. (The students learned in prior years' lessons that private parts are those which are covered by bathing suits.)

Instruct the students that it is very important that they trust their feelings about situations. If someone is doing something that makes them feel uncomfortable or asking them to do something that makes them feel uncomfortable, it is important that they tell a trusted adult.

Conclusion

Ask the students to recite the rules of safety together.

No
Go
Tell

Ending Prayer

Leader: Jesus, when you walked this earth you showed that you loved little children.

Children: Jesus, we know that you love each one of us.

Leader: Jesus, it is hard for us to hear that some people hurt children by their words and actions and do not treat children with love the way you did.

Children: Jesus, we know that you love each one of us.

Leader: Jesus, please help those who hurt others.

Children: Jesus, we know that you love each one of us.

Leader: Jesus, bless our parents, teachers and all those who work to keep us safe.

All: Amen.

Leader: Jesus, when you walked this earth you showed that you loved little children.

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