
Touching Safety™ Program

Intermediate Level, Grades 3 – 5

Lesson Plan 11: Partnering with Parents for Safety

Getting started with Lesson 11:

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.

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Vocabulary words:

- Safe Word – A word that parents and children agree is a signal that the person wanting to take the child is a safe adult.
- 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 of one these words was the safe word.

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Lesson Plan 11: Partnering with Parents for Safety

Supplies: TV and DVD Player
Power to Protect DVD
Large empty can or unbreakable container
Small rubber ball
Strips for blindfolds

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 #2 (or Alternative Activity)

Prepare the can with the object inside it. Ask the children to stand in a circle. Go around the circle and assign a limitation to each player. For example, blindfold one or more participants, tell others to use only their feet or only one hand. Tell the students they cannot talk to each other.

Show the children the can. Make up a story about how ancient, powerful or valuable it is and that it must not be dropped on the ground. Challenge the group to pass the can around to each member without dropping it or spilling its contents.

If the can--or the object in the can--drops to the ground, the group must start over. After explaining the task to the group, set a time limit for completing the activity (15-25 minutes depending on class time remaining.)

At the end of the time, ask the students to share about working together, what it took and how they felt about both the limitations they had and how working together made a difference or not. Ask the students to compare these thoughts and feelings about partnering with their parents to create safe environments and overcome the obstacles they sometimes face in life.

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Assignment (for both activities) : Tell the students to think of ideas that would promote partnership between students and parents in making sure that children are safe from those adults who want to harm them.

Activity #3: Learning to say “no” or “stop” in a an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation

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:

(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.