

**Primary Level, Grades K, 1, 2 (ages 5 to 8 years)**

**Lesson Plan: Touching Safety Rules/ Safe Friends, Safe Adults, Touching Safety**

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**Principle:** Children must guard against those who may harm them through touch (sexual or otherwise). They must respect their own health and safety and the safety of others.

**Scripture:** *If the whole body were just an eye, how would there be any hearing? If the whole body were hearing, how would there be any smelling? It is the parts of the body which we consider least dignified that we surround with the greatest dignity; and our less presentable parts are given greater preventability which our presentable parts do not need...*  
— 1 Cor. 12:17, 23, 24<sup>1</sup>

**Goal:** To assist educators, catechists, youth ministers, and other caring adults in teaching children how to prevent or reduce the risk of sexual abuse.

**Objectives:** Upon completion of this lesson, children should be better able to:

- Repeat and understand the touching rules.
- Say "No!" when someone tries to touch them in a way that is uncomfortable or otherwise inappropriate.
- Name their safe friends and safe adults.
- Identify special safe adults.
- Respond in an appropriate manner to unsafe situations.

**Parent Notice:** Send a notice to parents outlining the goals and objectives of the *Touching Safety* program and giving parents an opportunity to "opt out" of the program should they choose to do so. Every parent needs to return the form noting that their child has permission to attend the lesson or that they have chosen not to have their child attend the lesson. This form must be returned in either instance and retained at the parish/school office.

**Dealing with the primary age—Healthy questioning at this age:**

Parents and guardians are the primary educators of their own children. Teaching children the names of their private body parts is the responsibility of parents. Young children have lively and vivid imaginations, are growing less self-centered, and are becoming more conscious of others. Their attention span is short—approximately 20 minutes. They build on concrete experiences, love to learn, and are highly inquisitive. However, they rely almost entirely on others to define good and bad for them. Parents should make every effort to create an environment where children are free to ask questions about life and their own bodies. This early experience of honesty and trust will set the stage for each child's life-long relationships with significant adults.

Children at this age ask questions relating to the differences in body parts between boys and girls. They are beginning to differentiate positive and negative aspects of everyday life and are beginning to question when adults expect blind obedience. At the same time, they are learning how to respect and care for their own bodies in terms of hygiene, eating, and physical activities. Caregivers need to be open, honest, and available to answer questions correctly with language that children can understand. This is the time to discuss safe and unsafe touches so children can practice safety when they are away from home.

**Vocabulary words:**

- Private body parts
- Respect
- Safe touch
- Rules
- Touching
- Secrets
- Unsafe friend
- Special safe adult
- Safe adult
- Unsafe adult

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<sup>1</sup> *The New Jerusalem Bible*, Doubleday, 1999. (Imprimatur: June 18, 1989).

**Activity:**

Talk with children about the difference between these “regular “ body parts and private body parts:

We treat private body parts as “special” by keeping them covered. One reason is to help keep our private body parts clean and healthy.

As illustrated in the video, ask children what to do if someone wants to touch their private body parts or if an adult asks a child to touch the adult's private body parts.

- Say “No!”
- Run away.
- Tell a safe adult what happened

Give children examples of situations that might come up, and talk about what to do in each situation:

- What if a grownup asks you to keep a birthday present a secret?
- What if a grownup offers you a present or a treat to keep you from talking about a touch involving private body part or any other kind of touch that might upset your parents?
- What if the person who is trying to touch your private body parts is a bigger kid, and not an adult?
- What if a grownup tells you that no one will believe you if you tell?
- What if the grownup who makes you feel icky is someone you really like, someone your family knows and likes, or even someone in your family?

Ask the children to listen carefully and be ready to “hoot and holler.” If I name a safe touch, raise your thumb up in the air and yell yeah. On the other hand, if I name an unsafe touch, do a “thumbs down” and shout boo.

- Your mother gives you hug when you wake up.
- Your father gives you a kiss after tucking you into bed.
- Tommy gives you a “high five” when you win the game.
- Someone says they want to touch your private body parts—or, they try without even asking.
- Your cat purrs and rubs around your leg.
- Someone at school says they want to take you down a dark hallway to show you something.
- The stranger behind you in church tries to shake your hand during the peace greeting.
- Your friendly dog is wagging its tail and licking your face.
- The next-door neighbor child pushes you down on the sidewalk.
- Someone is running down a hallway at school and a teacher reaches out and puts a hand on the person's shoulder to stop them from running and possibly falling.

**Special Safe Adults**

Talk about “special safe adults” with children. A child's life may include a number of safe adults, but there are only a few select people who have the right to touch a child's private body parts. Special safe adults are the only people who may see or touch a child's private body parts, and only for the purpose of keeping the child clean and healthy.

Parents or guardians will tell you who, of the adults in your life, are special safe adults—and when these special safe adults have permission to touch your private body parts. No one has the right to touch your private body parts except these special people and they can touch your private body parts only under certain circumstances—to keep you clean and healthy, i.e., physicians

Special safe adults are those who have permission to help you take a bath, go to the bathroom with you if you need help, to help you put clothes on or change clothes, or to help you when you are sick.

**Suggested prayer 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