

VIRTUS Teaching Safety – Sixth Grade

Learning about Boundaries, Safe Adults, Safe Touches and Special Safe Adults

Catechists are to review the Teaching Safety guidelines from VIRTUS and the lesson plan guidelines before the class session. Parish catechetical leaders are to make sure that parents or guardians have been advised of their right to have their child opt out of this class session.

Recording Form Due Date:

March 31 of every calendar year

Length of class session: 45-60 minutes

This lesson plan may have more activities than can be included in your 40-60 minute session. Please feel free to choose which activities your session will connect with the best and drop any activities that you think your class would not connect with. Catechists should include opening and closing prayer. They should also include Scripture component and review Religious Education Standards for their correlation with the VIRTUS activities.

Educator Resources:

Archdiocesan Religious Education Tasks, Essential Concepts, and Standards: By the end of the session the child will be able to:

Task II: Liturgical Education

- *Celebration of the Sacraments*
 - Identify Old Testament stories that provide the foundations for the sacraments today.

Task III: Moral Formation

- *Made in the Image of God: Foundation of Human Dignity*
 - Associate [Bible] stories of humanity with the concept of human dignity.
 - Describe why being made in the image of God, means we have a sacred obligation to take care for our entire being: body, mind, and soul.
- *Human Freedom and Conscience Formation*
 - Practice and discuss making good moral choices through resolving moral dilemma activities or role-playing.
- *The Human Community*
 - *(Reinforce from Grade 4)* Recognize that God created humans to live in community and thus, we need to be aware of the needs of (ourselves) and others in our home, our Parish, our community.

Task IV: Learning to Pray

- Recite a spontaneous prayer using the "You, Who, Do, Through" format.

Task V: Education for Community Life

- *Models of the Catholic Church: Temples of the Holy Spirit*
 - Explain the importance of ... why we respect our body and the body of others, because we are Temples of the Holy Spirit.

Touching Safety Course Objectives: By the end of the session the child will be able to:

- Clearly state the rules about inappropriate touching.
- Describe safe touches.
- Say "No!" when someone tries to touch them in a way that is uncomfortable or otherwise inappropriate.
- Identify the situations when secrets are appropriate and when secrets are a threat of harm.

- Name their safe friends and safe adults.
- Identify special safe adults.
- Respond in an appropriate manner to unsafe situations.

Note to Catechist: The introductory video for grades 6 through 8 is designed to open a simple discussion with youth about touching safety and personal boundaries. The video is approximately six (8) minutes long and is neither created nor intended as a substitute for the lesson itself. It is merely an introduction designed to “break the ice” among those in this age group and to get everyone talking about the relevant personal boundary and personal safety issues. Importantly, the video will get children focused on the topic matter, which will help the catechist to facilitate an easy transition into the interactive activities within the lesson. These interactive activities are the critical components where children have a real opportunity to learn how to protect themselves.

We recommend that you watch the video in advance at least a couple of times prior to showing it to your students, so you'll be able to more easily anticipate when the video will end. The video really needs no introduction. Just put it into the machine, and hit “play.” If you’re using a DVD version of the video, you’ll select the English or Spanish version and the appropriate age group from a menu screen. If you’re using a link, you will need to select the appropriate link and click play.

In preparing for this activity, review *Teaching Boundaries and Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Other Caring Adults*. **Help children to see that they have a say in what happens to their bodies.**

English Link: <https://seattlearch.box.com/shared/static/q5odkngf74wbaestvebvysldqd2cp9fe.pdf>

Spanish Link: <https://seattlearch.box.com/shared/static/6j4th0n2h11sfo75o4kj0xe2l2ismv1n.pdf>

This age group: Dealing with pre-adolescents and adolescents—key concept is “transition”

The middle school child is experiencing a period of rapid growth. The emergence of interest in the opposite sex is occurring. He / she is often concerned about physical change, body size, skin quality and hair length. Body image is very important to this age as he / she complains of being either too physically mature or immature—and may also complain that they do not have enough privacy. The peer group plays an import role in shaping attitudes and interest. Caregivers need to regularly assure youngsters that changes are normal, though the rate of change varies from person to person.

Lesson leaders must carefully listen to children and observe what is happening in their lives. Let young people be themselves. Let them explore their self-expression; but, know who they are with and what they are doing, and remind them of the importance of protecting themselves during this dynamic time in their lives. During this time, children are completely self-absorbed, and many are naturally less communicative than at other periods during their development. This is the point that more trust will be given to the youth to evaluate safe and unsafe situations when they are not in the care of their parents or guardians.

Vocabulary words and definitions: (NOTE - This list is designed to help the catechist explain relevant terms. It includes more terms than the students are expected to know).

Boundaries—the limits that define one person as separate from another or from others.

Conscience – our inner voice from God telling us right from wrong (CCC #1777-1778)

Consequences – the results of our actions; what happens from the things we say and do

Evil – the opposite or absence of good (CCC #309-311, 385, 1707)

Free Will – the freedom and ability to choose (CCC #1730-1739)

Intellect – our mind, our ability to think

Holy – close to God; filled with God’s grace

Holy Spirit - the third Person of the Trinity; the Spirit of God. (CCC #685; 152; 243)

Human Dignity – The belief that all people are created in God's image and worthy of honor or respect

Moral life – choosing to act with goodness

“No!” or other words and phrases that mean, “No!”—a child needs to know that any time someone tries to touch his or her private body parts or tries to get the child to touch the private body parts of the other person, the child should say words that mean “No,” run away, and then should tell the child’s mother or father or another safe adult as soon as possible.

Peer Pressure—the strong influence of a group—especially of young people—on members of that group to behave as everyone else does.

Pornography – the printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity, intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings.

Private Body Parts – those body parts covered by a bathing suit

Right – what we are allowed to do

Respect – want only the best for other people and do good things for us

Rules – tell us what we can and cannot do

Sacred – holy and special to God

Safe (trusted) friend/ safe adult/ safe touch – people who respect our wishes and the rules of our parents or guardians or guardians; they won’t hurt or scare us without a good reason, such as a nurse who gives us a shot

Secret – something kept hidden or unexplained

Sin - choosing to disobey God. It is doing what you know is wrong. (CCC #1849; 1853)

Special safe adult – our parents or guardians, doctor or nurse – are those very special adults who can see or touch our private body parts, but only to keep us clean and healthy and only when we are sick or need help

Soul – where God lives within us

Spontaneous Prayer – writing or saying a prayer to God using the “You, Who, Do, Through” formula

Stewardship – taking care of God’s creation, such as our bodies that God has created

Temple of the Holy Spirit – At baptism, the Holy Spirit comes to live in our bodies and souls to nourish, heal, guide, and protect us (CCC 739, 809-810)

Ten Commandments – rules from God that help keep us safe and respect others

Touching Rules: “If someone tries to touch a child’s body parts or wants the child to touch their **private body parts**, the child should...”

- Say, “No!”
- Run away.
- Tell a parents or guardians or another safe adult what happened.

Touching safety – knowing how to protect our bodies from those who might want to hurt us

Unsafe friend/ unsafe adult/ unsafe touch – people who do not respect our wishes and the rules of our parents or guardians; they could hurt us

Virtuous – making a habit of choosing to do the good and right thing

Lesson Plan:

Resources:

Catholic Youth Bibles (Bible open to the passage of Jeremiah 29:11-13)

Touching Safety introduction DVD for Grades 6-8 or provided video links

English: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/P3RoYAYkDQ4>

Spanish: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/XBN8gsD8A7U>

- Welcome the students. Remind them that God calls our bodies “**Temples of the Holy Spirit**”. That means that God made us good and **holy**. Because we are good and holy and we are to **respect** and to take care of our bodies by following **safety rules** and knowing how to protect ourselves and thus, we have the **right** to say “No” to people who make us feel uncomfortable. It is important to learn about our personal boundaries and those of others.
- Opening prayer that includes scripture and begins and ends with the Sign of the Cross.
 - All: + **In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**
 - Catechist: A Reading from the Prophet Jeremiah... (*read verses 11-13*). Short pause. Explain to the students that God loves us and wants us to be free of all harm. In this reading, God tells us that he listens when we pray and he wants a future full of hope for each of us. Thus, each of us are special and holy (sacred). God wants us to take care of us and we do so by following those rules that keep us safe, healthy, and holy. God also wants to protect us and that means we need to know when to say “No!” to people who might want to hurt us.
 - Review **relevant** vocabulary words, including:
 - **Peer Pressure**—the strong influence of a group—especially of young people—on members of that group to behave as everyone else does.
 - **Private body parts**—those body parts covered by a bathing suit.
 - **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.
 - Catechist tells students, please bow your heads and make the Sign of the Cross, as we pray... *Dear God, you made each of us in your image, as good and wonderful. Because we are Temples of the Holy Spirit, you want us to always take care of ourselves and to be with others, who want to keep us safe and holy. Help us to learn the ways we can respect ourselves and each other. Thank you for the gifts of all those who help us to learn and follow your rules through Christ our Lord. Amen.*
 - All: + **In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Show the introductory video (7 1/2 minutes).

Activity #1: Review and Expand the Touching Safety Rules

Directions: In preparing for this activity, review *Teaching Boundaries and Safety: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Other Caring Adults*, linked above in the **Note to Catechist** section. 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."

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

Reviewing the touching rules and violations

- "If someone tries to touch a person's body parts or wants the child to touch their **private body parts**, the person should..."
 - Say, "No!"
 - Run away.
 - Tell a parents or guardian or another safe adult what happened.

Talk with students about risky situations they might face with adults and other young people and discuss appropriate ways to respond. Remember that children of this age 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 hear you, 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 are clear-cut examples 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."

- Adults or older children who allow young people to watch R-rated or X-rated movies. (In the first situation, the mere fact that an adult allows a child to watch an R-Rated movie is not necessarily grooming. However, if the movie is one the parents or guardians have forbidden the child to see and the adult tells the child to keep it a secret, the adult's action become more suspicious.)
- Adults or other children who tell dirty jokes or look at "adult" (naked or sexually explicit) pictures.
- An adult or older child who does something unsafe and, when the young person says, "Stop," the adult or older child agrees to back off but asks the child not to tell anyone what happened.
- 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 or guardians are gone and your friend wants the two of you to get into the liquor cabinet for some "refreshments."

Discuss difficult situations that encourage the young people to look carefully at challenges that might arise and think through the issues to 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.

Activity #2: Identifying Safe Touch through Bible Stories (Old Testament)

Directions:

Tell the students that the Old Testament has stories that reflect both safe and unsafe touch. We will be comparing two stories to talk about this topic – the story of Joseph being thrown in the well by his brothers and the priestly blessing of the Israelites.

Ask one or more students to read Genesis 37:17b-24. Next have the students in either small groups or as an entire group, answer the following questions:

1. What happened in this story?
2. Who was involved?
3. Why is this a story about safe or unsafe touch? Were the safety rules followed?

Remind students that although Joseph was not treated well by his brothers, God took care of Joseph and he eventually became the Governor of Egypt where he later forgave his brothers and reminded them that God is always present to take care of us (cf. Genesis 45:1-15).

Next have the students read the Numbers 6:22-27.

Discuss with the students how blessings continue to be an important part of our faith. Ask them if they can identify times people have touched them or others for a blessing (e.g. babies being touched with oil and having their parents or guardians make a sign of the cross on their forehead at Baptism, small children being blessed when brought by parents or guardians in the Communion line; the Sacrament of Anointing with oil; being touched by the Archbishop for Confirmation; being blessed by their parents or guardians, etc.)

Then ask the students if these types of blessings are forms of safe touch and if they follow the safety rules.

Emphasize the following points to students:

- Safe friends and safe adults are those who always respect your boundaries.
- Safe friends and safe adults honor your right to say "No!"
- Safe friends and safe adults are people who demonstrate safety in all of their activities (e.g., they don't drive recklessly or forget to wear safety goggles when using a power saw).
- We know that God has created us to be respected, just as he looked out for the people in our Bible stories.

Activity #3: True or False Internet Safety Worksheet

Directions:

Hand out the worksheet, found on the last page of the lesson plan, and instruct the children to read each statement and select whether the statement is "True" or "False." They can circle or highlight each answer. The answer key is located on the second to last page of this guide.

After completing the exercise, go through the examples one by one and ask the youth to articulate why they chose the specific answers. Help them to understand the correct answers by looking at the Internet Safety Answer Key below. Explanations are listed for "False" answers on the right of the page.

Closing Prayer Option 1:

Help the students develop a spontaneous prayer using the "Who, You, Do, Through" model, thanking God for the gifts of our bodies and helping us learn to respect others and ourselves.

Using the "You, Who, Do, Through" formula, explain to the children how they can write a spontaneous prayer to God on safe touch.

For example,

"You": Dear God, who made us in your image as Temples of the Holy Spirit,

"Who": You are always with us and want to protect us from all harm,

"Do": Please help us to remember and to follow the safety rules we learned today,

"Through": We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Write the prayer for all the students to see. Then lead the students to pray together:

- + In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
- Class recites the prayer they developed.
- + In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Prayer Option 2:

Lead students in the following prayer:

+ Dear God, we thank you for your presence in our lives and many ways you want to bless us. We thank you for the gifts of others, who want to keep us safe from harm and show us ways toward being healthy, happy, safe and holy. Please help us always remember the gift it is to be a Temple of the Holy Spirit and the importance of respecting our human dignity for ourselves and others. Amen.+

INTERNET SAFETY ANSWER KEY:

1	If aware that a friend is being cyberbullied or harassed, or has experienced abuse, is it OK to keep the matter private without telling an adult.	FALSE: Note: If something bad happens to a friend, it is important to communicate with a caring adult. It is NEVER OK to keep silent when another friend is in trouble.
2	You can always know the exact identity of the people you meet on the internet.	FALSE: Note: It is not possible to know the exact identity of the people that you meet on the internet.
3	It's OK for an adult or older child to make you promise to keep a secret.	FALSE: Note: It is not OK for an adult or older child to make you promise to keep a secret.
4	If you see inappropriate images on the internet, it is important to stop looking and tell a caring adult as soon as possible.	TRUE
5	Even if you have great security settings on your accounts, sometimes people can see the material you share because of a lack of security settings on a friend's account.	TRUE
6	The best policy is to refrain from posting personal/identifying information on the internet.	TRUE
7	Its OK to say something online, if you wouldn't say it in person.	FALSE: Note: If you wouldn't say or do the action in person, don't say it online.
8	Once material is shared on the Internet, the information can be easily deleted and removed.	FALSE: Note: Even if you can no longer see the information that was posted on the internet, it doesn't mean that it's been completely removed. Once information is shared, it will always be available or someone to find of the Internet.
9	If unsure of whether an action is inappropriate, I should just keep quiet and not tell until I know for sure.	FALSE: Note: If an action makes you feel uncomfortable, do not keep silent@ Speaking out protects you and others, Even when unsure, communicate your concerns to a caring adult who will protect you.

Internet Safety Worksheet – Is it True or False?

Instructions: Read each question and circle / highlight the correct response. You'll be evaluating whether each statement is True or False, and discussing the answers at the end with your whole group.

1	If aware that a friend is being cyberbullied or harassed, or has experienced abuse, is it OK to keep the matter private without telling an adult.	TRUE	FALSE
2	You can always know the exact identity of the people you meet on the internet.	TRUE	FALSE
3	It's OK for an adult or older child to make you promise to keep a secret.	TRUE	FALSE
4	If you see inappropriate images on the internet, it is important to stop looking and tell a caring adult as soon as possible.	TRUE	FALSE
5	Even if you have great security settings on your accounts, sometimes people can see the material you share because of a lack of security settings on a friend's account.	TRUE	FALSE
6	The best policy is to refrain from posting personal/identifying information on the internet.	TRUE	FALSE
7	Its OK to say something online, if you wouldn't say it in person.	TRUE	FALSE
8	Once material is shared on the Internet, the information can be easily deleted and removed.	TRUE	FALSE
9	If unsure of whether an action is inappropriate, I should just keep quiet and not tell until I know for sure.	TRUE	FALSE