

SAFE TOUCH PROGRAM

3rd through 5th grades

Information for Parents:

Program Goals:

1. To provide information at age-appropriate levels to make elementary school aged children aware of the concepts of safe touch vs. inappropriate touch
2. To provide information in regard to:
 - recognizing the uncomfortable feelings we get when someone treats or touches us inappropriately
 - how to say NO and get away from unsafe situations
 - how to report concerns to a parent or other safe adult
3. **To provide information that a parent can share with his or her own child in a brief format**
4. To focus on safety, rather than on sexuality

Tips for Presenting this Information to Your Child:

This program is designed to help children identify situations or events that do not feel safe. Many times children (and even adults) fail to recognize the danger of being in situations with someone who is not being appropriate, because they fail to listen to their own sense of what is wrong. This is why this program is strongly focused on helping children to recognize feelings that alert them to situations that may not be right and to take action.

Your child's school or PSR program has available additional materials, such as visuals and websites, etc., that you may wish to use with your child. Please ask the administrator of your child's school or program, or contact the Safe Environment Office of the Archdiocese of St. Louis at (314) 792-7271 to obtain those additional materials, if you wish to review them for use with your child.

Note that this program does not discuss specific body parts. As parent, you may wish to teach your children the appropriate names for their private body areas.

Please be aware that children have disclosed mistreatment because of this program; it is very important. Just as with any important, how it is presented to the child makes the difference. This information can be treated similarly to fire safety information, in that it is important, serious, and discussed regularly.

If, after presenting this information to your child, your child shares information that suggests he or she has experienced mistreatment know that support is available. You may contact the Safe Environment Office of the Archdiocese of St. Louis at (314) 792-7271 and speak to the director, Sandra Price. You may also speak to your child's school principal or school counselor, or reach Catholic Family Services at 1-800-652-8055. The Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline is 1-800-392-3738 and is answered 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

The material below is based on the program as it would be presented to a class of students your child's age. Please present this information to your child in the individualized, personal way that you know will be best for your child.

Safe Touch Program

Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan

Parents: Keep in mind that sexual abuse perpetrators use a grooming process that involves teaching children not to follow their safety instincts or typical personal boundaries. This program, therefore, teaches children to understand appropriate boundaries, listen to their instincts when a situation feels unsafe, and take action.

Part 1: Boundaries

Parent shares:

Today, we are going to talk about a very important issue, called safe touch. This is a topic that can seem embarrassing sometimes, to children your age. However, it's a very important safety issue.

There are rules everywhere, like speed limits, rules at our house, and rules in the classroom. They help us know what we can or can't do, what is safe or not safe, and when everyone knows them and follows them, then we are all safer.

Each of us has personal rules called personal boundaries. Our boundaries determine what we do or don't do, who we share personal information with, how we communicate online, and what kind of physical contact we have with others.

For example, you might have a personal boundary about whether or not you share clothes with your brother or sister. Or you might have a boundary that you'll hug your best friends but not all of your sports teammates.

When someone tries to cross one of your rules, your personal boundaries, it can feel emotionally and physically awkward or uneasy. Let's talk about how it feels when we know that a situation isn't right or safe.

Question: When someone breaks a rule or crosses your boundaries, how do you feel?
(If necessary, give examples like upset, worried, etc.)

Question: How does your stomach feel when you are uncomfortable or upset?

Question: Are there any feelings in the rest of your body when you are uncomfortable or upset?
(If necessary, give examples like heart racing, body feeling shaky, etc.)

When we feel worried and nervous, when our stomach feels uncomfortable, our chest feels tight, or we feel shaky, these are clues that our bodies are giving us. Our bodies give us clues when something just isn't right. And it's important that we listen to those clues!

Making safe decisions, taking care of our bodies and being respectful of ourselves and others is important to God. We brought you to church and presented you to God at Baptism, and Jesus dwells within you. You are loved and cherished and your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. God does not intend for any harm to come to you just as he does not intend for you to cause any other person harm. We are all made in God's likeness and as such we are made for Greatness! We must honor and respect the boundaries of others just as we expect our own boundaries to be honored and respected.

Part 2: Safe Touch

Parent shares:

One of the important times when we listen to our body's clues is if someone touches us in an unsafe way.

People touch other people all the time. Some touches make us feel really good, like when your friend gives you a high-five. Sometimes being touched makes us feel safe and happy, like when your grandma gives you a good-night hug.

Other times, though, touches might not feel good. When someone is hit or kicked, or has to get a shot at the doctor, that doesn't feel very good!

There is another type of touch that isn't safe. There are certain areas of our bodies that are private and we all have personal boundaries about those private areas of our bodies.

People (like a doctor or nurse) need permission to touch the private areas of your body. If someone else touches your private body parts, or if they ask you to touch their private body areas, you might get that uncomfortable feeling that tells you that the situation isn't safe.

If you get that uncomfortable feeling, and your body is giving you clues that the situation isn't safe, you have the right to say no and to get away, and you should tell us [parents] or another adult that you trust about what happened.

This is true whether this person is an adult, a teenager, or even someone your age. No one, no matter what their age, has the right to touch your private body parts without your permission and our [parent's] permission.

It is also true whether the person is a stranger or someone you know. No one at school, at church, or in our neighborhood has the right to touch the private areas of your body or to ask you to touch the private areas of their body.

Part 3: No, Go, Tell

Parent shares:

If someone touches you in a private area of your body, or does anything else that gives you that uncomfortable feeling that something isn't right or safe, there are three important steps to take.

- First, say NO or STOP or LEAVE ME ALONE. Use a strong voice that makes it clear that you are serious.
(Demonstrate how this sounds and looks.)
- Second, get away from that person immediately. If someone has tried to touch you inappropriately, you have the right to get away from them, even if they are an adult.
- Third, go to a safe adult and tell them you need help. A safe adult includes us [parents], teachers, or other close relatives. It is an adult who cares about you and will listen to you and help you.

If a person has touched the private areas of your body, or asked you to touch the private areas of their body, you must tell us [parents] or another safe adult, even if they told you not to tell anyone or they told you it was a secret. No adult should ever ask you to keep a secret from us, your parents.

A secret is different from a surprise. A surprise will be shared eventually, like at a party or holiday. A secret is something that you are never supposed to share. If an adult asks you to keep a secret, always tell us [parents] or another safe adult.

Question: We talked about three steps to take if you feel a situation isn't safe. \Vb.at are those three steps? *(Say no, Get away, and Tell a safe adult.)* Parents: Review the three steps until you feel your child understands them.

Question: \Vb.at should you do if someone tells you to keep the situation a secret or not to tell? *(Tell a safe adult anyway.)*

Question: \Vb.at should you do if a friend or classmate tries to touch a private area of your body? \Vb.at should you do? *(No, Go, Tell.)*

Part 4: Online safety

Note, these safety rules can be discussed on the same day as Parts 1-3, above, or on a different day.

Parent shares:

Just like there are rules and boundaries in the real world, there are also rules and boundaries when we are online. So we need to be very careful when we are on a cell phone, a tablet, a computer, and even when we are playing video games.

The most important thing to remember is to never talk to strangers. A stranger is someone that we don't know in real life. Online, almost everyone is a stranger. So it is important to never talk to anyone online that we do not know in the real world.

Question: Is it OK to play a video game online with a friend from school, if you have permission? *(generally yes)*

Question: Is it OK to play a video game online with someone that you met online, in the game? *(No) \Why not?*
(It's never safe to interact with strangers online.)

You always need a parent's permission before you:

- Get on a new website
- Sign up for a social media account
- Accept or request a friendship on social media
- Share a picture online
- Download an app or game

Question: Do you know why it's important to get permission before doing any of these things? *(Remind them that parents can help them make safe decisions online.)*

When you sign up for an online video game or create a user name for a social media profile, you will be asked to provide information about yourselves. It is very important that you don't share certain information. Always ask us [parents] before entering information such as your email or home address, your phone number or where you go to school.

We have to be very careful about sharing personal information online, because there are certain people online who are very dangerous. We call these people online predators. An online predator is someone who wants to meet or interact with children that they don't know. Sometimes, these are people who might hurt children or try to touch children inappropriately.

There are also some adults online who may even want to take children from their families, which is sometimes called child trafficking. Beware of anyone online who asks to meet you or offers to pay you cash, gifts, or game *credits* for you to provide *photos, videos*, or webcam access of yourself. This can be the start of child trafficking, which is very dangerous.

If someone that we don't know **in** real life tries to get to know you online, this should give you that uncomfortable feeling that something just isn't right. If someone online asks for pictures of you, sends you cash, gifts or game credits, asks for webcam access to you, or asks to meet you in real life, tell us [parents] or another safe adult right away.

Remember talking about trusting our body's clues when someone is making us feel uncomfortable? It is important to trust those clues when we are on line too. If you ever feel uncomfortable about how someone is talking to you online or when you are playing a video game, stop talking to them immediately and tell a safe adult.

Finally, we need to be very careful about the kinds of pictures we share online. It is important that you always get permission before you share a picture online. If anyone ever asks you to share a picture of you that shows the private parts of your body you say NO and tell us [parents] or a safe adult right away. If anyone ever tries to send you a picture that shows their private body parts, you need to set down the phone or computer you are using, walk away, and tell us or another safe adult about it. It is the same rule that we talked about before; SAY NO, GET AWAY, TELL A SAFE ADULT.

Part 5: Safety Rules

Note, these safety rules can be discussed on the same day as Parts 1-4, above, or on a different day.
(Parents: there is a written handout available for students that you may provide to your child.)

Parent shares:

Let's talk about a few other safety rules.

1. Always use the Buddy System and never go places alone. Unsafe adults and child traffickers usually focus on kids that are alone.
2. Always let someone know where you are going and who you're going to be with.
3. A stranger is someone that you and we [parents] don't know. Never get into a car or go with a stranger or any person who makes you feel uncomfortable. If someone you don't know calls you over toward their car, do not get close to their vehicle; get away from them and get help if needed.
4. Unsafe adults sometimes use tricks to lure kids into going with them. Never go with a stranger, even if they say something like:
 - The stranger has lost his pet and needs your help to find it,
 - The stranger is lost and needs directions,
 - Your mom or dad is hurt or sick and told the stranger to pick you up, or
 - You have won a contest or are invited to a "modeling tryout"

(Parents: these are common lures that are used by child abductors.)

It is important to know that safe adults do not ask children they don't know for help or directions.

5. It's all right to be suspicious of any adult who seem to be too friendly. Trust yourself when it doesn't feel right. An unsafe adult is someone who makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe; asks you to keep secrets or tries to get too close to you.

6. Being safe when you're online is very, very important. Never tell anyone your name, your address or phone number, or the school that you go to while you're online. Never share your passwords with anyone but us, your parents. If someone says something mean to you over the computer, or asks questions about your name, your school, or where you live over the computer, leave the computer right away and tell an adult you trust.
 7. When you're on social networking sites, never "friend" someone you don't personally know in real life. The internet is NOT a safe place to make new friends -you never know who you're really talking to. Some unsafe adults pretend to be kids online, in order to trick kids into giving out their personal information. Tell us or another adult you trust immediately if anyone online asks to meet you in real life or offers to pay you cash, gifts, or game credits for you to provide photos, videos, or webcam access of yourself.
 8. No one on the computer should talk about their private body areas, show pictures of their private body areas, or ask you about your body. Even if someone asks you to or dares you to, never take a picture of yourself or anyone else that shows the private areas of the body. If someone takes an inappropriate photo of you, immediately tell us [parents] or another safe adult.
 9. Just as we want to be treated with respect, we must treat others with respect. We always give others privacy in the bathroom or when they're changing. We don't ask to see or touch other people's private body areas, and we don't show others our private body areas. It is OK for your parents, doctors and nurses to see your private body areas, because it is our job to keep you healthy and safe.
- I 0. Trust your feelings in regard to your safety! If a situation doesn't feel right, leave and tell a safe adult.
- Remember the three steps if anyone tries to touch you inappropriately or get you to touch them: 1) Say NO
2) Get away 3) Tell a safe adult.