

Safe Touch Program

Kindergarten through 2nd Grade

Information for Parents:

Program Goals:

1. To provide information at age-appropriate levels to make young 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 information, 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 K-2

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 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.

Sometimes, people break rules. That can make us feel uncomfortable, because we are afraid they might get in trouble.

Question: Have you ever felt a funny, uncomfortable feeling when someone breaks the rules and you know something bad is going to happen?

Question: When someone breaks a rule or asks you to break a rule, how do you feel?
(If necessary, give examples like sad, worried, etc.)

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

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

When we feel worried and nervous, and when our stomachs feel uncomfortable, 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!

Being safe, taking care of our bodies and being respectful of ourselves and others is important to God. As your parents, we brought you to church and presented you to God at Baptism, and Jesus lives within you. God loves you so much and does not want anyone to hurt you or for you to hurt anyone else.

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 or grandpa gives you a 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. I want you to think of wearing a swimsuit. The parts of your body covered by your swimsuit are the private areas of your body.

People, like a doctor or nurse, need permission to touch you in those places. If someone else touches the private areas of your body, or if they ask you to touch their private body areas, you might get that bad or uncomfortable feeling that tells you something is not right.

If you get that bad feeling, you have the right to say no and to get away, and you should tell us [parents] or an adult that you trust about what happened.

This is true whether this person is an adult, an older child, 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 asks you to touch the private areas of their body, or does anything else that gives you that bad or uncomfortable feeling:

1. First, say NO or STOP. Use a loud, big voice. (*Demonstrate what this looks and sounds like.*)
2. Second, get away from that person immediately.
3. Third, tell me [parent] or another safe adult about what happened. Tell me or another safe adult immediately; don't wait. A safe adult includes us [parents], teachers, and other close family members. A safe adult is someone you trust to care about you, 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 a 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 or another safe adult.

Question: We talked about three steps you should take if someone touches you on a private part of your body or asks you to touch their private body areas. What is the first thing we should do? (*Say no/stop.*) What is the second thing? (*Get away.*) What is the third thing we should do? (*Tell a safe adult.*) *Parent: Review the three steps until you feel your child understands them.*

Question: How does your body give you clues when someone isn't being safe? How do we feel when something just isn't right? *Parent: If your child needs to review, remind them how our bodies give us clues, through emotions and bodily sensations, when a situation doesn't feel safe.*

Question: What if your body gives you clues that something isn't right, but the other person tells you not to tell anyone about it? What should you do? (*Tell a parent or another safe adult anyway.*)

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

Part 4: Safety Rules

Note, these safety rules can be discussed on the same day as Parts 1-3, above, or on a different day. (*Parents please note: there is a written handout available for students your child's age that you may provide to your child.*)

Parent shares:

No-Go-Tell is a very important safety rule. Let's talk about a few other safety rules.

1. You should know your full name, address (city and state), and phone number with the area code.
2. Being safe when you're on the phone or computer is very important. You should only be on a cell phone or computer device when you have permission. You should only visit sites or play games that you have permission to use.
3. The internet is NOT a safe place to make new friends -you never know who you're really talking to. If you play online, you should never talk to people online that you do not know in real life.
4. No one on the computer should talk about their private body areas or ask you about your body. If this happens, tell us [parents] or another safe adult immediately.
5. No one should ever take pictures or videos of the private areas of your body or show you pictures of people that show their private body parts. If this happens, tell us [parents] or another safe adult immediately.
6. A stranger is anyone that we don't know. Do not tell strangers where you live, even if they ask.
7. Never get into a car or even close to a car of a person you do not know, even if they say they have permission to take you, unless we [parents] say that it's OK. Never go anywhere with a stranger, even if they seem nice.

8. Sometimes, strangers say certain things in order to get kids to come 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 and they want to give you the prize.

If an adult tells you something like this, immediately run away and tell us or another safe adult.

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

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 us [parents], doctors and nurses to see your private body areas, because it is our job to keep you healthy and safe.

Remember, if your body gives you clues that something just isn't right,
#1 Say NO, #2 Get away, and #3 Tell an adult you trust!

