

Lesson 5 for Grades 3-5

Partnering with Parents & Guardians for Safety:
Being a Safe Friend

PRINCIPLE

Children must know that being a friend means that we “do the right thing” when it comes to healthy friendships with their peers: meaning we recognize unsafe situations, intervene (when possible) and get the information to a safe adult.

OBJECTIVES

After lesson 5, children should be able to:

- Participate in healthy friendships
- Recognize that they can do something to help themselves and their friends when confronted with unsafe situations
- Respond appropriately to unsafe situations involving themselves or their friends:
 - Say “No!” if involved in an unsafe situation
 - Try to leave the situation if they feel uncomfortable
 - Tell a safe adult as soon as possible (even if it happened to a friend)

CATECHISM / SCRIPTURE

“Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter; whoever finds one finds a treasure. Faithful friends are beyond price, no amount can balance their worth.” —Sirach 6:14-1

“Do not be a foe instead of a friend.” —Sirach 6:1

Background for Parents and Guardians:

In preparation for teaching this lesson and to lead the activities, review the *Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide: Safe Environment Guide for Caring Adults, Parents and Guardians*.

Before sitting down with your child(ren) and beginning the activities, read through this entire lesson and view the video. Choose the activities that you are most comfortable with first and gradually moving to the others. You will find it is helpful to have the *Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide* handy to navigate the lesson material. These activities are intended to empower young people to think about safety issues with you as their partner.

Considerations for the age group—

Grades 3-5 This age group is learning how to function independently of their parents. They know how to read, and their comprehension levels are giving them a better sense of abstract ideas. Their writing skills are getting better as they become more refined with communicating their ideas. Children this age are away from home more often and are recognizing that safety issues can arise when they are off with friends. They like to be in constant motion and are always on the go. Groups are important. Capable of intense loyalty to others, they usually have a best friend in which to confide. They have a strong sense of right / wrong, fair / unfair and are more able to discern the difference between safe / unsafe. They are able to use logic, can argue and hold strong debates. Parents and guardians can include them in discussions establishing rules or guidelines.

Activity #1: Introductory Video

Directions: View and discuss the introductory video with your child. The introductory video for all grades is designed to open a simple discussion with children about personal boundaries and touching safety. The video is approximately six minutes long and is neither created nor intended as a substitute for the activities. It's merely an intro designed to “break the ice” and assist the transition into completing the interactive Lesson Activity options. It can be used in to introduce any of the following activities. Discussion and practice are the critical components needed to teach children how to protect themselves. They learn best by “doing”; not just listening or watching.

Grades K-2 Video links:

English K – 5: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/As5weSq9Jw>

Spanish K – 5: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/-ELCTmNKsw4>

Activity #2: Review and Discuss Vocabulary words in an age-appropriate way with your child

Private body parts—those body parts covered by a bathing suit.

Saying “No”—to say “no” means to refuse, deny, reject or express disapproval of. This word is used to express a boundary and communicate that you do not want something to happen or continue. [Let children know it’s OK to say “No” to an adult if they make you feel scared or uncomfortable, or if they touch your private body parts.]

Rules—a prescribed guide for conduct or action. We follow the rules to make sure we are safe—just like how we have a seatbelt rule to keep us safe in the car, or the safety rules before we cross the street. [For example, teach the child a simple rule for what to do if someone tries to touch him / her in an unsafe way, which is to say “No!”, try to get away, and tell an adult as soon as possible.]

Uncomfortable—experiencing discomfort that leaves one feeling uneasy, sometimes causing anxiety or feelings of nausea. [It might be a feeling in the “pit of your stomach” or it could be the hairs standing up on the back of your neck. You may freeze, want to fight or feel like running away from the situation.]

Confusing—is something that is hard to figure out because it doesn’t make sense, it is unclear or puzzling. To cause confusion is to cause an inability to think clearly or to be misleading. [An example is a big, messy knot—it can be confusing because it’s hard to figure out where each part goes how to straighten it all out.]

Respecting boundaries—we should have respect for ourselves, and respect for others. Respect for ourselves means we understand our dignity and value as a person, and work to create or maintain boundaries to protect ourselves. We feel upset or uncomfortable when someone doesn’t honor our own boundaries, and we communicate with the right person if we need help. Respecting another’s boundaries means you care about them, and won’t do anything that would bring them harm, and that you communicate with the right person to get them help if they are being harmed by someone else. [Give children examples of respecting others, i.e. not calling people mean names, not hitting others, following rules at school or at home, stopping an activity when someone asks, letting an adult know when someone is in pain or hurt, etc.]

Safe friends and safe adults—safe people won’t hurt you without a good reason and won’t intentionally confuse you. They listen to and consistently respect boundaries, and follow the rules. [Explain that a child may have many safe friends and adults. Give children examples of adult behavior that could hurt them, but may be necessary for the child’s safety, i.e. medical exams, vaccinations, throat swabs, removing splinters, stopping a child from running into the road, etc.]

Unsafe friends and unsafe adults—unsafe friends and unsafe adults put a child at risk for emotional, spiritual and physical harm. These are people who place a child in danger for their own purposes without concern for the welfare of the child. They also do not consistently listen to the parents’ wishes or the child’s boundaries. [Tell children we can know when someone is unsafe if they do not follow the rules or listen to our boundaries.]

Safe touches—touches that have a good purpose, aren’t intended to hurt and should be familiar. They’re safe and can also be meant to keep you healthy, even if the person isn’t known well, as long as the touches are appropriate for the particular relationship, such as when mom kisses your forehead at night, when you high-five your teammate, etc. [Avoid saying safe touches that feel good are “safe, loving or show someone loves you” since sometimes touches are safe and necessary, but can also hurt— although they hurt for a good reason to keep children safe, such as stiches, a doctor shot or dental cleanings.]

Unsafe touches—touches that are inappropriate, could be meant to hurt or scare, or are contrary to the touching rules. If unsure about a touch, ask a parent. [Unsafe touches include hitting, punching, tripping, kicking, spitting, touching private parts, etc.]

Secret—something kept hidden, never told or unexplained. Secrets exclude others and have potential to harm, sometimes causing the person involved to feel frightened or uncomfortable. [For example, let children know that there are no secrets when it comes to personal and physical safety. Tell children it’s wrong for an adult or another child to ask to keep a secret about safety—especially unsafe touches—because that’s a way for people to get hurt. If an individual tries to make a child keep a secret or makes him / her feel frightened, the child must know to communicate this information right away to a parent or caring adult—and be reassured that the child will be protected regardless of threats or seeming consequences of “telling”.]

Rude—describes behavior where someone inadvertently or accidentally does or says something hurtful. Rudeness is usually unplanned and not intended to hurt. [Examples include social awkwardness, such as burping into someone’s face, cutting someone off, behaving narcissistically, having poor manners, bragging about an accomplishment, etc.]

Mean—describes behavior where someone says or does something hurtful on purpose, once (maybe twice). The aim is to intentionally hurt and is often motivated by anger. [Examples include putting someone down so the mean person looks/sounds better, making fun of

how the person dresses or looks, insulting person's skills or intelligence or saying / behaving in an unkind way after a disagreement, saying things like: "why would you wear that, it looks terrible on you" or "you're so dumb, you should quit."]

Bullying—is different from being rude or mean. It is cruel; the intentional, repeated exposure of negative and aggressive behaviors to a targeted person over time. The bully will say or do something intentionally hurtful, and keep doing it, without a sense of remorse. A key aspect is the ongoing pattern, involving an imbalance of power where the bully has more control or influence. [Examples include physical, verbal and emotional aggression, in-person and online; social exclusion, hazing others, spreading rumors or inappropriate content, cyberbullying, etc.]

Activity #3: Thumbs Up for Safety

- Activity:** In this activity your child will have an opportunity to hear different scenarios involving safety and provide their initial reactions with a "thumbs up" or a "thumbs down." Then, you will have a discussion emphasizing any areas that needed special attention.
- Preparation:** In preparing for this activity, review all of the questions and answers ahead of time, and *Activity #2: Review and discuss key vocabulary words.*
- Directions:** You will ask your child a few questions about safety. Ask your child to hold up a thumb for an answer of (Yes) to the question and point their thumb down for an answer of (No). If they are unsure, they should place their hand palm down on the top of their head. Observe responses and make notes of any responses that will need future attention.
- Discussion:** For the first part of this activity, you'll simply be asking prior knowledge questions, making a mental note when there seems to be confusion regarding the answers. Simple answers are provided below.

Question 1: Is it our parents' responsibility to keep us safe and healthy?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** YES / THUMBS UP, parents and caring adults are responsible for the welfare and safety of children. Children can help protect others, too, because it's the right thing to do, but it isn't the child's job to keep anyone else safe—that's the job of the adult.

Question 2: Do kids need to know about bicycle safety, like wearing a helmet?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** YES / THUMBS UP, while it's the adult's job to primarily protect children, youth can also be aware of how to be safe, too.

Question 3: Is it OK for a kid to say "no" to an adult or friend if they don't feel safe or comfortable?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** YES / THUMBS UP, boundaries are important! And, it's OK to say "no," when you don't feel comfortable.

Question 4: Is it OK if someone calls you "stupid" or other names, and doesn't make you feel good about yourself?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** NO / THUMBS DOWN, it's not OK for anyone to make you feel bad about yourself or call you names. This is an unhealthy relationship, and it's not OK to be in an unhealthy relationship. You deserve to be in a safe and happy friendship and relationship with others—especially with your friends and family members.

Question 5: Does anyone have the right to harm your body by causing bruises, burns, bleeding, broken bones, or bites?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** NO / THUMBS DOWN, no one has a right to cause you harm or put you in an unsafe situation—not even an adult; in fact, you have a right to be safe.

Question 6: Are strangers the only people who hurt children?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** NO / THUMBS DOWN, no; strangers can

hurt youth, and people we know, trust and love can hurt youth, too. Sometimes people hurt us, but they also tell us they love us, which can feel very confusing. Someone who is safe will never hurt you (or allow you to be hurt without a good reason, like removing a splinter to prevent an infection) or cause you to feel confused about a safe touch or action.

Question 7: Do you have the *right* to tell an adult to stop if he or she is touching you in a way you don't think is okay?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** YES / THUMBS UP, boundaries are important! And, it's OK to say "no," when you don't feel comfortable. It's also important to try and leave the situation if you feel uncomfortable (or scared, or confused, or puzzled, or unsure, or if someone tries to touch your private parts), and then tell a safe adult as soon as possible (even if it happened to a friend).

Question 8: Should you *tell* someone if physical abuse happened to you, like hitting you, pushing, or punching?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** YES / THUMBS UP, sometimes we have to be a safe friend to ourselves, too! That means, standing up for ourselves when we are hurt, or being abused, or even just feel uncomfortable, and getting the information to a safe adult.

Question 9: Should you tell someone if the physical abuse happened to your friend, and they made you promise not to tell?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** YES / THUMBS UP; When we know (or feel like) there's an unsafe situation where a friend is hurting, we should always take that information to a safe adult, even if you promise your friend. It's safer to ask an adult for help when this happens. Tell a safe adult; ask for their help.

Question 10: Should you tell someone if someone only threatened to hurt you—verbally or online)?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** YES / THUMBS UP, even just the "threat" of abuse can be just as bad as actual abuse. Sometimes we have to be a safe friend to ourselves, too! That means, standing up for ourselves when we know that someone is a problem, or when we are hurt, or being abused, or even just feel uncomfortable, and getting the information to a safe adult.

Question 11: If a youth is hurt by someone, or abused, is it ever their fault?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** NO / THUMBS DOWN, no, it's never a youth's fault (nor will it ever be their fault) if they or someone they know has been abused, or is hurting. [It's also not a youth's fault if an adult isn't taking care of them the way that they're supposed to, like giving them the food they need, or a blanket for sleeping when it's cold, etc.]

Question 12: Is it OK to keep quiet about being abused if you also did something wrong, and are worried you might get into trouble?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** NO / THUMBS DOWN, no, it's not OK to keep quiet about being abused, even if you're afraid you're going to get into trouble—even if you are afraid that you also did something wrong. It is never your fault, regardless of the circumstances, if you've been abused.

Note: This answer to whether or not children will have the courage to stand up for themselves or for a friend will be subjective, and dependent on the individual youth. The hope is that each child will say "YES" with THUMBS UP, because they will recognize that standing up for themselves when they are unsafe or when they *feel* unsafe, or even just uncomfortable, is the right thing to do, and the best way to "be a safe friend."

An important point for parents to recognize is that children may be aware that something unsafe or unhealthy is going on their own lives or in the lives of their friends, and they need to deliver that message to a safe adult. Emphasize that we bring these types of unsafe situations that are hidden or secretive, "out into the open."

Question 13: Do you have the courage to stand up for yourself or for a friend, and tell an adult when you're hurt, uncomfortable or being abused?

If your child answered correctly ask why they answered that way. If they answered incorrectly help them with understanding the reasoning behind the correct answer. **Answer:** RESPONSE WILL BE SUBJECTIVE.

Explanation to give to the youth: Sometimes we have to be a safe friend to ourselves, too! That means, standing up for ourselves when we feel uncomfortable, or getting the information to a safe adult. The fact that you feel upset and uncomfortable is a good sign that you have to do something about it! When someone is hurting you or making you feel uncomfortable, regardless of whether it's from a friend, and regardless of what they've said to you to try and get you not to tell, you have to tell a safe adult about it as soon as you can. Even if the situation happened in the past, it's never too late to tell a safe adult!

"Discuss the truth" discussion component. After all of the questions have been asked, you will begin a discussion that goes through the following points:

- There are also people in our lives who are our safe adults. Safe adults are there to protect us, to listen to us, and get us help when we need it. It's a very important responsibility they have to protect us! Some of us know a safe person for sure, our school guidance counselor! Can you think of other examples of safe adults? (perhaps our parents, grandparents, other family, teachers, church employees, doctors when mom/dad are there, fire fighters, etc.)
- Kids can also be a "safe person" for others. This is called being a "safe friend." **As a kid, it's not your JOB (as kids) to protect others. It is not your responsibility, because you are kids.** But, when we do know that someone is hurt or hurting, then we **should try to help** by getting that information to a safe adult. Let's recap these really important points:
 - Whose responsibility is it to keep kids safe? (ADULTS; It's the adult's job to protect kids)
 - Can we, as kids, also help when we know there's a problem? (Yes, usually kids can help, too)
 - How can we, as kids, help the most? (Take the information to a safe adult; a trustworthy person)
- Sometimes there are people in our lives who are not safe.
 - These are called unsafe adults. Unsafe adults don't follow our safety rules, and being around them can feel confusing. Sometimes they might hurt us. Sometimes we might just feel uncomfortable with what they are saying or doing, and it's important to pay attention to those feelings.
 - We can tell when someone is unsafe when they don't listen to our boundary rules, especially when it comes to "unsafe" and "safe" touches.
 - Friends can be unsafe, too.
- Sometimes adults don't listen to kids—even ones who we thought were safe.
 - Have you ever had a situation where an adult doesn't listen to you? (You have a right to be safe. Your friends have a right to be safe. If you know that there's important information about safety, adults should listen to you. If a safe adult isn't listening to you, take the information to another safe adult. Keep taking the information to a trustworthy person, and may a different trustworthy person, until you feel that you've been heard.)
- In our communities, homes, schools, and friendships, sometimes we know that someone is really sad or that someone is hurt, or that they are unsafe. When our family or friends are hurt, there are different ways we can help them, depending on the situation.
 - For example, what is the first number to call if you are home alone with an adult and they fall and get really hurt? (You can always call 911 to get help from safe people)
 - Or, maybe your good friend told you that someone at home hit them, or hurt them. In these cases, you can still call 911, or you can also tell your safe adult to get help. It's the adult's job to keep kids safe.
- Sometimes we are around people who make us feel sad, nervous, or confused. They might try to touch us in our private parts, and may not listen to us when we say "no." This is not a safe person.
 - If this happens to you, whom should you talk to? Talk to a safe adult, as soon as you can.