

Teaching Touching Safety

Junior High Level, Grades 6, 7, 8 (ages 11 to 14 years)

Lesson Plan: Speak up! Speak out! Be heard!

Getting started with Lesson:

- Principle:** Supporting children in learning to speak up, speak out, and make sure they are heard when they are confused or scared or when something happens that makes them uncomfortable or uneasy.
- 1) Choosing the right time and the right person to talk to about things.
 - 2) Knowing what to say and how to say it so that adults pay attention.
- Goal:** To assist children and young people in being able to speak up when they are confused or scared, to speak out when something happens that makes them feel uncomfortable and to make sure that they are heard when they talk to adults in their life about something that is important.
- Learning Goals:** To teach children and young people some guidelines about speaking up and speaking out when they experience situations that make them feel scared or confused or when they feel uncomfortable or uneasy with someone or something that is happening. Empowering children by providing communication skills that can be used in a variety of situations and focusing their application to circumstances that place them at risk related to their personal safety.
- Children and young people can learn age appropriate skills for that empower them to communicate powerfully.
 - Children and young people can start to learn to identify times, places, and people that provide the best chance for them to be heard when they have something important to communicate.

Dealing with the pre-adolescent age—key concept is “transition”

The junior high school young person is experiencing a period of rapid growth. The emergence of interest in the opposite sex is occurring. These young people are concerned about physical change, body size, skin, and hair length. Concepts depend a great deal on body image as young people complain of being either too physically mature or too physically immature. Peer groups play an important role in shaping attitudes and interest. Parents and caregivers need to regularly assure young people that changes are normal though the rate varies from person to person.

Parents, catechists, teachers, youth ministers, and other caring adults must also listen to young people and observe what's going on with them. Let young people be themselves. Let them explore their self-expression—and know who they are with, what they are doing and remind them of the importance of protecting themselves during this time in the young person's life. During this time, young people are completely self-absorbed and many are naturally less communicative.

Vocabulary words:

- Communication - The imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs.
- Trust — Reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc., of a person or thing; confidence
- Heard — To listen to; give or pay attention to what is said.

Supplemental material is available as an additional resource for this lesson plan starting on page 5. This is optional information as a refresher on grooming that may be useful when presenting this lesson.

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Junior High Level, Grades 6, 7, 8 (ages 12 to 14 years)

Lesson Plan: Speak Up! Speak Out! Be Heard!

- Activity #1:** Play the introductory DVD to begin the lesson.
- Activity #2:** Classroom Discussion — Speaking Up, Speaking Out, and Being Heard
- Activity #3:** Reporter Activity
- Activity #4:** Classroom Discussion – Learning when and who to tell

Supplies: Opening DVD
Prayer Handout/Poster
DVD Player and TV
CD player

- Activity #1:** Show DVD if appropriate.
- Activity #2:** Classroom Discussion — Speaking Up, Speaking Out, and Being Heard

The main purpose of this discussion is to emphasize the importance of talking to a trusted adult when something bad, scary, or confusing happens and these young people are facing a dilemma. With this age group, the challenge will be to get them to tell any adult. At this age, young people are usually completely wrapped up in their friends and their peer groups. Even if they have good relationship with parents, they are reluctant to talk to parents about these kinds of things. Having said that, whether they tell their best friend, their parent, a coach or teacher or another trusted adult, speaking up and speaking out in a way that clearly communicates is a key skill to develop. Using these lessons to help them develop those skills will be valuable for the rest of their lives. This lesson concentrates on “what” to say if something happens. We want young people to know how to communicate clearly so that what they need to say is actually heard.

- *When something important happens, who do you tell? This question can begin to get the young people present to how they communicate to others. They have the chance to begin to look closely at what information they share with the different people in their life, such as family, parents, trusted adults, friends, siblings, teachers, etc.*
- *What kinds of things do you tell them? Once the question begins to open up, use this and the following questions to expand on the discussion of this conversation to have kids start to see that there are different people in their lives with whom they share different things.*
- *Who do you tell first when something bad, scary, or confusing happens? Do you tell your friends different things than you tell your parents? What about teachers and other adults you trust? What do you tell them? How do you decide what to tell them? **Make sure you do not make judgments about what they tell others and who they tell. Also, remember the point of this discussion is not to talk them into doing something different. The point is to have them start to really consider what they tell to whom. The key in this part of the discussion is to raise their own awareness about how, when, and what they share about what's happening to them.***
- *Are there things you keep to yourself? Why? This is an opportunity for the students to start to see that already they are weighing things carefully to determine whether to share or not, and if “yes” what to share and with whom. Regardless of the age group engaged in this conversation, these questions will begin to uncover or reveal something about each person's willingness to share and to trust others with sensitive information.*
- *Does it sometimes seem like people just don't get what you are saying? Do they seem confused or ask you many questions after you tell them something? If kids say that it sometimes seems like the adults in their life don't understand them, ask them to look and see if they know why this happens. The point is to have them start to see that sometimes when they have something to tell, they just don't know what to say. Sometimes when things are upsetting, they are not sure why they are upset or what happened that left them upset.*
- *When we have something to tell that is scary, confusing, or hurtful, or something bad that happened, our ability to communicate clearly can make a big difference. Sometimes it is hard to figure out just what to say and how to say it.*
- *One way to make sure we communicate effectively is – if there is time - think about what to say and how to say it so that the person we talk to gets the message.*

Activity #3: Reporter Activity

Print out attached Reporter's Questions for each student. This is an activity to allow the young person to enhance the way they communicate effectively.

- An easy and effective way to accomplish our goal to effectively communicate is to think like a reporter. There is a process reporters go through to get the information they need to tell a story that can help us develop our ability to tell someone else what happened or is happening in a way that truly communicates what we want and need to say.
- When reporters begin to research a story they answer six questions before they report. These questions help them gather the facts about a situation or circumstance so they can tell the story, be understood, and get any help they need. Does anyone know what those questions are?
- Here are the questions? **Hand out the worksheet with these six questions (see attached).**
 - **Who** is it about?
 - **What** happened?
 - **Where** did it take place?
 - **When** did it take place?
 - **Why** did it happen?
 - **How** did it happen?
- What is different about these questions? **Steer the conversation towards an awareness where none of the questions can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.” Asking these questions of themselves or others will help them learn what’s important when there is something hard to talk to people about, or something scary or confusing to tell.**
- Why is it important to have the facts? **Listen as the young people start to get present to the importance of the facts in any situation – particularly a fact that can be upsetting for others or difficult to discuss.**
- Speaking up about something that makes us feel uncomfortable or scared begins with being able to tell someone as many facts as we can. We are going to practice telling a story using these six questions to figure out what to say. Everyone is going to write a story about this situation using these six questions to figure out what to say.
- Use the worksheet with the six questions we just gave you to identify the important facts in the story and then write out what you would say to tell your parents or another trusted adult what is happening in a way that lets them know this is a serious situation.
- **NOTE: Begin to tell them a story about a teacher and a student. Give them one section at a time and stop so they can write down the facts they heard in that part of the story. Give them about a minute to write and then add the second part of the story.**

Part 1: *There is a new science teacher this year named Ms. Wilson, and she seems great. She is very pretty and, although she dresses like a regular teacher, she drives a brand new sports car. Many students are talking about her. The guys comment on how great she looks and her “hot” car and the girls are impressed with how smart and good looking she is. Everyone says she has made science much more interesting and fun by creating some great experiments and activities. Casey never cared about science before Ms. Wilson came to the school. Now he seems to be interested in learning about it. Maybe Casey wants a good grade in science, but he loves cars and is always talking about the kind he plans to get when he is 16 – a convertible sports car. Yesterday, Ms. Wilson offered to give Casey a ride in her car someday after school.*

Take a minute to write down the facts you heard in what I just told you. [Pause to let the kids write down the facts they heard in this part of the story. Do not read any part again or answer any questions. The point is for them to listen and to start to realize what they hear and what facts they actually remember from hearing something one time.]

Part 2: *Tuesday, Casey’s mom and dad both had work emergencies and could not pick him up after practice. He needed a ride home and Ms. Wilson said she would give him a ride in her car, so he thought maybe this was his chance to take Ms. Wilson up on her offer. After school, Casey waited for Ms. Wilson in the parking lot and asked if her offer for a ride was still open. Ms. Wilson patted him on the shoulder and said, “Sure, get in and tell me where you live.”*

Take a minute to write down the facts you heard in what I just told you. [Pause to let the kids write down the facts they heard in this part of the story. Do not read any part again or answer any questions.]

Part 3: *Ms. Wilson got in the car, buckled the seatbelt and waited for Casey to do the same. She pulled out of the school parking lot and, as they were driving, she asked Casey if he wanted her to put the top down. He said “Yes!” enthusiastically, so she pulled into a parking lot and put the top down on the car. She then got back on the road and asked Casey if he had time for a little ride. He said “yes” and she asked if his parents would be worried if he did not come straight home. He said that if they were looking for him, they would text and he would let them know he was getting a ride home. She took off driving through the countryside outside of town.*

Take a minute to write down the facts you heard in what I just told you. [Pause to let the kids write down the facts they heard in this part of the story. Do not read any part again or answer any questions.]

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Part 4: As they rode around, Ms. Wilson asked Casey many questions about what he was interested in and what he did with his time. She seemed really interested in Casey and shared a lot with him about her life and what she cared about. Casey was amazed that a teacher would talk to him like she did and treat him like an adult. As she drove into Casey's neighborhood, she leaned over and put her hand on his leg. She told him that she thought he was very special and was glad they had this time together; however, she suggested to let him out of the car a block or so from his house. She said that if someone saw them, they might not understand their friendship. She suggested they could do it again but reminded him that it should be their little secret. She then told Casey she would see him at school and reminded him the ride home was his idea.

Take a minute to write down the facts you heard in what I just told you. [Pause to let the kids write down the facts they heard in this part of the story. Do not read any part again or answer any questions.]

- Now that you have heard what happened, write out the story in your own words as if you were going to tell it to someone you trust. Give the students about five minutes to write and ask anyone is willing to read their version out loud. If they do, point out that while the stories are the same they are also very different. This point is to help students start to understand how important it is to speak up when something happens that is confusing or scary and the value of being able to say **WHAT HAPPENED!** They will probably begin to confront their confusion about what there is to tell. They may be wondering whether anything bad really happened or whether there is really anything to tell. This is part of the struggle of sharing something confusing or uncertain with someone you trust.
- How many of you had trouble with this exercise? What were the challenges you noticed as you listened to the story?
- How many of you really wondered whether anything bad was happening at all?
- How many of you thought Casey was partly at fault?
- How many are still confused about what really happened and would have trouble telling someone else what bothers you about what happened? Use this conversation as an opportunity to point out the challenge of how to deal with confusing situations that are not clearly right or wrong. Emphasize that "better safe than sorry" is the best way to approach the situation.
- In our next lesson we will talk about what to do next. Once you are clear about the facts and why they are upsetting or unsettling, who do you tell and what do you say?
- Between now and the next lesson, notice how many times you think about telling your parents or another trusted adult about something but then you don't say anything at all.
- As we complete our lesson today, let's remind ourselves of the importance of speaking up and speaking out when something bad or uncomfortable happens.

Activity #4: Classroom Discussion – Learning when and who to tell

Directions: Remind your students that these lessons are designed to give them the tools to protect themselves when difficult or even dangerous situations arise. Tell them that in today's lesson we will be talking about *when* to disclose a dangerous event or situation and *who* to tell when something bad, uncomfortable, scary, or confusing happens to you. Remind them that knowing what to do when someone intrudes upon their boundaries or violates the touching rules can mean the difference between staying safe and getting hurt.

One of the essential elements your students must learn is the touching rule that states: you must tell a trusted adult if someone violates the touching safety rules.

Sometimes reporting this type of inappropriate behavior is the hardest part. Ask your students why disclosing this sort of behavior is so difficult. Listen for the following reasons:

- I don't want to get anyone in trouble.
- I think I can deal with it myself.
- I don't want to upset my parents and teachers.
- I'm not sure *exactly* what happened.
- The person asked me not to tell, and I don't want to be the one who told.

After students have given a number of reasons, continue the discussion by making the following points:

- Telling a safe adult about someone's inappropriate behavior does not get the person into trouble. The person's own inappropriate behavior is what gets them into trouble.

Instructions for Catechists, Educators, Youth Ministers, and Other Caring Adults

- Even if you can deal with the way the situation affected you, telling a safe adult means that the violator has to deal with his or her own inappropriate behavior. And, perhaps, by revealing an incident, you'll be helping to protect someone else from harm.
- The people who love you will always be upset when bad things happen. It is not your job to protect the adults in your life from being upset. They're not upset at you. They're upset because they love you and someone did something to you.
- Even if you don't know for sure what happened, it is important to tell an adult you trust.

Prayer to end the lesson:

(Have this prayer on a poster on the wall and as a handout for the students to pray along with you and take home with them. This variation of an Old Catholic Traveler's Prayer reminds us of the journey we are on as young people.

My holy Angel Guardian,
Ask the Lord to bless the journey that I undertake,
That it may benefit the health of my soul and body;
That I may reach its end,
And that, returning safe and sound,
I may find my family in good health.
Guard, guide and preserve us throughout the day and night.
Amen.

Supplemental Resource Material for Teachers

The complete grooming process employed by a child molester is usually three-pronged and involves physical as well as psychological behaviors. In person, the process may take months, even years to accomplish with regular face to face contact but through the Internet, predators can break down the young person's defenses in a very short amount of time, particularly if the young person is vulnerable or uninformed about the risks of the Internet.

The three aspects of the typical grooming process are *physical grooming, psychological grooming, and community grooming*. All three are going on at the same time.

In the case of Internet seduction, the *physical grooming* becomes part of the process much later in the game. In fact, by the time the molester has an opportunity to touch the young person it may be too late to protect the young person from harm. There is no "build up" in the levels of intimacy of touch when the Internet is the contact point. Young people solicited through the Internet are often abducted by the molester when a face to face meeting is arranged or there is any kind of physical contact. **On the Internet, the physical grooming and community grooming are left out of the initial process and the psychological grooming has some new twists.**

The most important aspect of grooming through Internet contact is the *psychological grooming*. The molester establishes a relationship online by pretending to be someone in the young person's age group. Through conversations about things the young person is interested in, the molester will lure the young person into chat rooms and, eventually, is often able to convince the young person to defy parents, grandparents, and guardians and meet the molester outside the home. The young person is convinced that the molester is trustworthy and believes this person is a friend, someone that really likes and understands the young person. The young person may be convinced the online friend is the same age and has the same issues. Molesters know it is important to talk to children and young people on their level. They communicate in a way that children and young people understand and convince the young people that they are someone who can be trusted —someone just like them. On the Internet, this psychological grooming is particularly effective because none of the natural barriers of distrust or apprehension that might arise for a child are present. The physical appearance and real age of the molester are hidden from the child's view. The Internet provides a wall for the molester to hide behind and the child can't see the molester or the wall. Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to this approach because of their natural tendency to trust others.

Threats about not telling or threats about harming someone or something the young person loves are not needed in this situation. The young person's resistance is broken down through the communication process. Remember, the young person often thinks that he or she is talking with another young person. There is really nothing to tell mom and dad. After all, they are older. They would not really

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understand. Sometimes the young person is conflicted; however, most of the time, unfortunately, what really happens is that the young person bonds more to the molester.

On the Internet, there is no grooming of the community. In fact, the intention of the molester is to bypass the community altogether. In online seduction, the molester wants to remain hidden from view. He or she will create a relationship with the young person that goes around the parents, grandparents, or guardians and encourages the young person to keep the conversations secret. This works because the young person believes the person on the other end of the communication is telling the truth.

The behavioral warning signs of a potential predator are evident in online communications, but they are much more difficult for adults to identify. There is a wall between the parents/adults and the predator that distorts everything about the relationship. This is why it is so important for parents/adults to be aware of the communications their children and young people are engaged in on the Internet and look for the signs that something is off.

Among the ways the behavioral warning signs show up in new and different ways on the Internet are:

1. *Always wants to be alone with children.* On the Internet, the predator has one on one access to children and young people through email and chat rooms. Email communications though are more risky. Parents can read email on the computer. Chat rooms are places for private, real time, conversations that are more difficult and sometimes impossible to recover and read. Predators will invite children and young people to join them in chat rooms for "private" conversations.
2. *Give gifts to children, often without permission.* In person or on the Internet, predators find ways to give gifts to children and young people and tell them to keep it secret. The gifts may be as simple as candy or soda that parents won't allow. However, gifts are often more than that, particularly when they come from someone who made contact with the child over the Internet. In that case, the gift is likely to be entirely inappropriate. Gifts such as perfume, flowers, lingerie or expensive items that parents cannot afford or a bouquet of roses or a box of lingerie for a girl.
3. *Allows a child to engage in activities that parents would not allow.* When meeting with children and young people online, predators lure them into online chat rooms and encourage secrecy. This activity is extremely effective at driving a wedge between the child and their parent(s). Child molesters look for children that are alone after school. They prefer to contact the young people between the time school is out and the time parents come home from work. This is another factor that convinces children and young people that the person "talking" to them is someone their own age. Why else would he or she be home and able to chat or email after school?
4. *Uses sexually explicit language and tells dirty jokes.* If parents/adults are monitoring children and young people's communications online, they can often see that this is happening and intervene. If, as is often the case, children and young people are allowed on the Internet unsupervised, it is possible for knowledgeable parents to recover this information; however, it may not be discovered early enough to protect a child or young person from harm.

Knowing the warning signs means little where the Internet is concerned if parents are not monitoring their children's Internet activities. Find out where they are going on the Internet. Read email messages. Check out their social networking site(s). Put limits and filters on any computer children and young people can use and check regularly to make sure that filters are in place and working.

Generally, the grooming process is complex. On the Internet it is much more difficult to identify and interrupt. This lesson is designed to focus on two things those children and young people can do to protect themselves from predators on the Internet. Two simple rules that can be the difference between safety and danger for children are: 1) keeping personal information private and 2) young people need to follow their parent's rules in order to stay safe. Concentrating on these two warning signs will reinforce the message from parents and other caring adults about Internet dangers while keeping the opportunity of the Internet available for everyone to enjoy.

REPORTER'S QUESTIONS

GATHERING THE FACTS

Who is it about? _____

What happened? _____

Where did it take place? _____

When did it take place? _____

Why did it happen? _____

How did it happen? _____
