

Personal Safety Curriculum for Children and Youth

Grade Level 1

Remember that a notice must be sent home to the parents PRIOR to the lesson occurring. Please make sure to send any "opt out" forms to the Office of Catechesis and Formation. A letter also goes home to the parents AFTER the lesson is complete.

Student Objectives

The students will:

- a) Discuss that they have parts of their bodies considered private
- b) Learn to respect these parts of the body in themselves and in others
- c) Learn to respect all children as persons of worth and worthy of respect
- d) Understand the difference between comfortable/safe touch and uncomfortable/unsafe touch
- e) Become confident that if they experience discomfort or hurt from another they can bring that experience to a trusted adult
- f) Learn the concept of telling adults until they are heard
- g) Learn strategies for resisting hurt and protecting self (safety rules)

Lesson Overview

Students:

- Cut out a body silhouette to represent their self, draw a swimsuit on it, and learn that the parts covered by a swimsuit are private.
- Discuss comfortable/safe touches and contrast them with uncomfortable/unsafe touches.
- Learn basic safety rules.
- Saying "no" to uncomfortable/unsafe touches.
- Consider who is a trusted adult in their lives.
- Practice telling a trusted adult that they feel uncomfortable or unsafe because of an experience with another child or an adult.

Background Information

At this age, it is natural for children to be very inquisitive about their bodies and the bodies of others. It is important not to instill shame regarding the body as they ask questions. However, it is also important that they understand that the body is to be treated with respect and that there are parts of the body that are private.

Children will need a definition of respect for the body and of privacy and then some illustrations of how respect and privacy are acted out. There should be a discussion of what makes a touch or any other experience uncomfortable or unsafe, and what internal reactions make clear to the child that this doesn't feel good or right.

That being said, at this age, children have difficulty with approaches to personal safety that emphasize concepts or feelings as markers for what is safe. The most effective approaches seem to be those that emphasize safety rules and include rules about touching among other safety rules.

Finally, children need examples and practices as to how they can assertively resist uncomfortable or unsafe behavior and how their discomfort or sense of being unsafe can be shared with trusted adults. They should also understand what to expect from a trusted adult when they bring forth such concerns, alleviating fear that they will be punished or someone else will be harmed because they “told.”

Children are vulnerable to abuse by adults because they are naturally trusting and need affection and admiration. Abuse occurs most often by those the child knows and trusts, not strangers. This makes the ultimate effect of the abuse much more painful.

Child abuse cannot continue without the benefit of deceit, secrecy and intimidation. If children are approached before they have learned anything about social mores regarding sexual behavior (touches of private parts), they are easily drawn in.

Children who are abused often get direct instructions not to tell anyone and sometimes these instructions are accompanied by threats or predictions of dire consequences for the child, the family or even the abuser.

Although sexual abuse gets our attention, it is important to remember that abuse may take many forms – physical, emotional and, most commonly, neglect of basic needs.

Even when children do not talk about the abuse openly, there are usually signs or symptoms. Neglect may be evident in physical changes or talk about conditions in the home. Physical abuse may manifest in the form of bruises, marks or even broken bones.

A radical change in behavior signals some type of problem, whether abuse or something else. It deserves the attention of the adults around. Keep a chronological log when changes in behavior are noted and, if there is reasonable suspicion that the child may have been harmed, make the report.

One final note: remember that although this class is focused specifically on safety, children learn best when a lesson is presented many times and in many ways. Look for opportunities throughout the year to teach about safety in general, assertive maintenance of personal boundaries and seeking the assistance of trusted adults.

Vocabulary

- Safe/comfortable touch: touches that make you feel safe and loved. [They might be illustrated as hugging, playing, snuggling, helping, etc.]
- Unsafe/uncomfortable touch: touches that make you feel angry, sad or afraid. [They might be illustrated as kicking, grabbing, biting, pushing and touching the private parts of the body.]

- Private parts: those parts of the body covered by a swimsuit. Note that something private is something all our own and is not shared except for good reasons, like seeing a doctor or taking a bath at home.

Catechist's Role

Help children:

- Understand the meaning of privacy and respect of the body and of the person in general.
- Understand the difference between comfortable/safe and uncomfortable/unsafe experience and how they can tell the difference according to their reactions.
- Understand how to say “no” and how to tell a trusted adult when they are uncomfortable or feel unsafe.

Suggested Materials

- Outline of a body and bathing suit (Handout) for each child
- Crayons, scissors, construction paper, glue
- *Your Rights* (Handout)

Teaching/Learning Activities

Activity/experience:

1. Ask the children to cut out the outline of a body, then to draw or to paste on the outline of the kind of swimsuit they would wear.
2. Explain that the parts of the body that are covered by their swimsuit are private parts. These parts are worthy of special respect. Respect includes the rule that no one touches those parts except for good reasons. Review some of those reasons with examples like bath time with mommy or daddy and a visit to the doctor.
3. Make two columns on the board. Title one, “comfortable/safe” and the other “uncomfortable/unsafe.” Make sure the students know the meaning of the words.
4. Ask students to name the kinds of behaviors and experiences that would fit in each column.
5. Have students name trusted adults, persons to whom they can go to talk about uncomfortable or unsafe experiences.
6. Develop examples of behaviors that can be used to resist uncomfortable or unsafe behavior.
 - a. Stay an arm's reach away from someone you don't know.
 - b. Don't talk to strangers without mommy or daddy right there.
 - c. If someone wants to do something unsafe or uncomfortable or if someone is making you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, say “no,” go (get away) and tell a trusted adult.
7. Practice how the child might tell a trusted adult about an experience that was uncomfortable or unsafe. Practice what to do if the first person responds in a manner that is frightening, hurtful, or dismissive.

Processing the Experience

Content Questions:

1. Where are the private parts of the body?
2. What are the differences between uncomfortable/unsafe touches and comfortable/safe touches?
3. What do you do if someone wants you to do something uncomfortable or unsafe? (Say no, go, and tell a trusted adult.)
4. Why are children special? (Because God made them and loves them)
5. What are the safety rules? (No, go, tell)

Closure

1. Read the safety rules with the children.
2. When you feel uncomfortable or unsafe,
 - a. It's ok to say "no"
 - b. It's ok to go away
 - c. It's ok to tell a trusted adult
 - d. No, Go, Tell.

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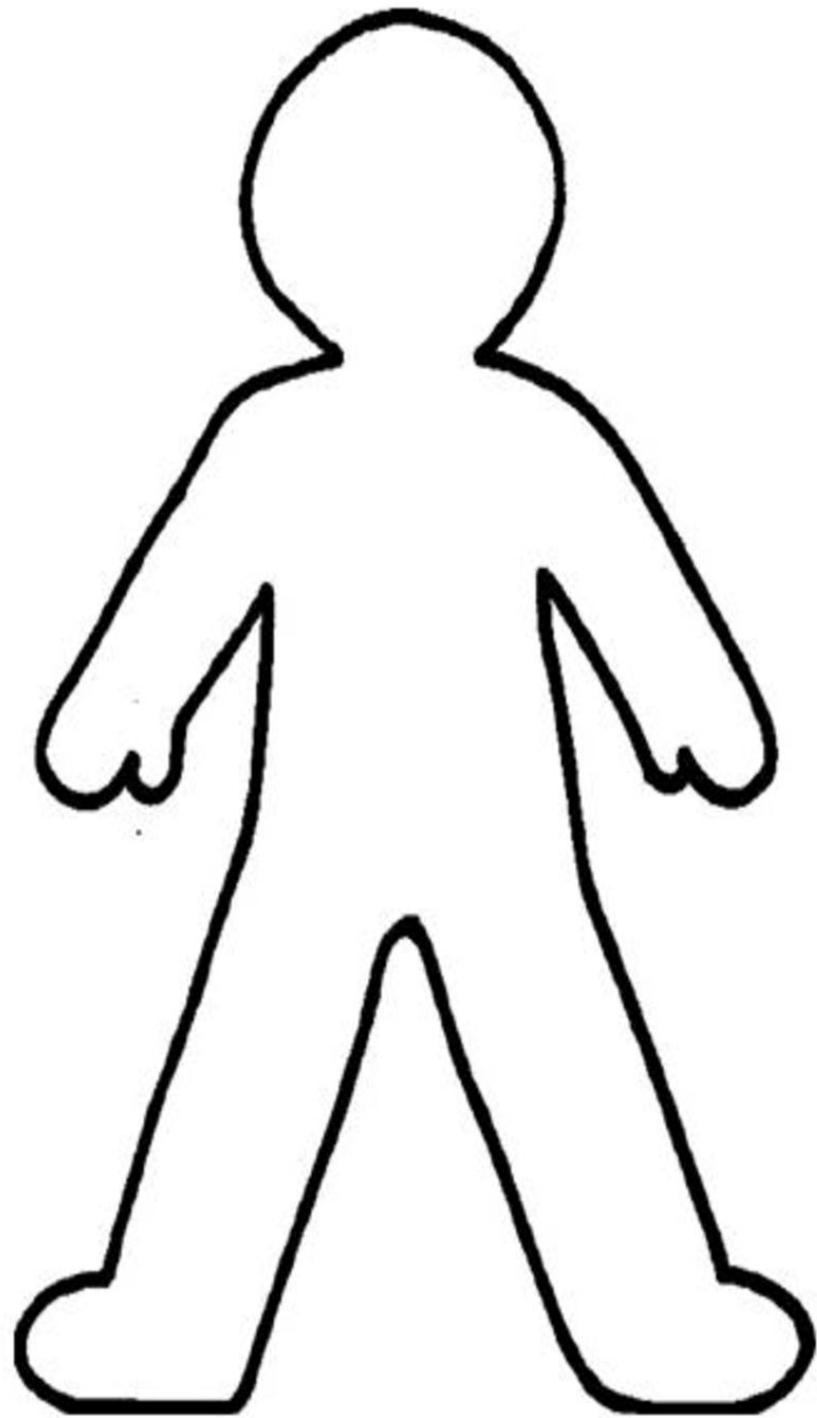
YOUR RIGHTS

You have the right to get help.

You have the right to tell if you or someone
you know is abused.

You have the right to protect yourself.

You have the right to say “No!” to anyone
who tries to hurt you.





Sources:

www.printablecolouringpages.co.uk

www.preschoolcoloringbook.com (bathing suits)

www.my-coloring-pages.com

