

Middle School Grades (6-8) – Safe Environment Plan

Note: It is essential to read *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* by the Pontifical Council for the Family before presenting this material. The dignity of the human person, as laid out in the primary grades, is the foundation of the Safe Environment Program.

Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.

V. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray:

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant that in the same Spirit we may be truly wise, and ever rejoice in His consolation, through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Objectives

- Students will learn about and seek to further develop the virtue of prudence.
- Students will understand appropriate and inappropriate touch.
- Students will know how to incorporate the Buddy System into their everyday life.
- Students will learn practical tips for keeping themselves safe.
- Students will speak of defensive and assertive body language to protect themselves.
- Teaching Points

Lesson

Jesus is the Truth. We can know the truth about what is good and right through reason (our ability to think, understand, and judge).

God also gave us the virtue of prudence to protect us. Prudence is a good moral habit that helps us to know and choose what is good for us in every circumstance. It also helps us to foresee and avoid dangerous and harmful situations. It is important to develop and practice the virtue of prudence.

It is wise and prudent to formulate a plan to avoid dangerous situations. It is also prudent to rely on a network of people you trust to keep yourself safe. God gave us our parents, friends, and teachers to help us know when and how to avoid dangers, and to turn to them when we are in danger.

It is prudent to have a “Buddy System”. This means that you should never go anywhere alone. Always have a “buddy” with you. Now that you are older, parents are giving you more responsibilities and along with this, the virtue of prudence becomes more important.

The following are some safety tips that it would be prudent to follow:

- Always be with a group when outdoors. Be aware of your surroundings.
- Never hitchhike.
- Use well lit streets, walkways, and playgrounds. Do not use shortcuts.

- When you are home alone, be sure you have emergency numbers and a number of a neighbor or a near-by friend.
- Never answer the door unless you know the person.
- Always be alert and cautious of your surroundings.
- If an adult or another young person treats you without proper dignity or touches you inappropriately, in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable or scared, the rule is: “No! go, tell!” It is O.K. to say No, go away from this person and always tell someone, such as your parents, grandparents, teacher or someone you can trust. It is always important to tell someone you trust if you have been made to feel uncomfortable – no matter what has happened.
- Never go to a friend’s house or stay overnight if their parents are not home.
- If you are at a friend’s house, and a TV program, video or computer program makes you feel uncomfortable, or is inappropriate, suggest that you would like to watch something different or play a different game.

Activities

- You have read the “Safety Plan”. Sit in small groups and discuss what else you can include in “your safety plan”.
- Discuss with your parents your plan and ask for their guidance when you are on an outing.
- Practice saying “No” and acting in an assertive way by responding to these situations listed below:
 - You are walking home from school and a car with a young man pulls up and asks you for directions. How can you respond to this situation?
 - You are babysitting for your younger sister and brother and the doorbell rings. How would you respond to this?
 - You answer the telephone and you do not recognize the voice on the phone. The person says very unkind words to you. What will you do?
 - Your friend and you are shopping at the mall and a stranger is following you, asking you questions. How would you respond to this situation?
 - You are walking home with a friend. A young person that you do not know offers you a ride. How would you respond to this situation?

Conclusion

Jesus is the Truth and He wants us to know and follow Him. We can also know the truth about what is good and right through reason. Jesus wants us to have inner peace, joy and to be safe. He gave us the gifts and tools to make good choices and to have a plan in case we are in danger. The plan should include precautions such as always traveling with a buddy, avoiding strangers, dangerous situations or circumstances that could lead to sin. If anyone touches you in a way that is inappropriate, that makes you feel uncomfortable or scared, or if you have been violated in any way, immediately speak with parents, grandparents, teachers, or an adult that you trust.

Excerpts adapted from the Diocese of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania