

Keeping Children Safe – Grade 6 – Week One

Begin by saying This week we will begin talking about our own personal safety. You may wonder why we talk about this in Religious Education Classes. It is important for you to understand that because you are created by God with great love, God is very much concerned with your well being and safety. Sometimes when children do not feel safe, they do not know that anyone cares whether they are safe or not. We want you to know that God cares a great deal and wants adults in your life to help you to stay safe as you grow up.

OPENING PRAYER We will begin our lesson today with a reading from the First Letter of John, which may help us to better understand God’s love and care for us. So, let us begin
*In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.*

1 John 4: 10, 13, 16, 19
*Love, then, consists in this:
Not that we have loved God but that God has loved us, and has sent God’s Son as an offering for our sins.
The way we know we remain in God and God in us is that God has given us the Holy Spirit.
We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us.
God is love, and the person who abides in love abides in God, and God in that person.
We, for our part, love because God first loved us.*
The Word of the Lord.

ALL Respond Thanks be to God. Amen

PART ONE ON MY OWN

SAY Many of you are not only spending time apart from adult supervision, but you are spending time with friends your own age. Even though you know what is safe for you, your friends might have a different idea. Today we are going to spend time talking about how to stick to your own safety rules when you are with friends who don’t acknowledge the same rules.

Display Poster The poster lists 4 rules:

- Keep your friends
- Have fun
- Stay out of trouble
- Stay in control

SAY Imagine that you are going to the mall with a group of friends. What are two or three things that you will do to stay safe?

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Write their responses on the board. Refer to the poster with the 4 statements.

SAY

Raise your hand if you think these four things are important to you. Today we will learn skills for staying safe while keeping these four things.

No matter where you are with your friends or other people, there are times when they might want to do something that you do not want to do or something that is illegal or wrong.

Who can think of some examples of these types of situations?

Gather a list from the students. Write the list on the chalk board or newsprint. Be sure to include these examples:

- Go to a movie you don't want to see.
- Do an activity you don't want to do.
- Do something your parents/family wouldn't allow you to do.
- Use tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.
- Hang out with people you don't want to be with.
- Tell someone a lie.
- Hurt someone else physically or emotionally.
- Do something that could be dangerous to you or someone else.

SAY

If you have ever been in one of these situations and needed to get out of it, nod your head.

These situations are difficult to manage. These situations get even tougher to manage when we are with a group of friends and want to maintain the friendships. What might happen if we go along with our friend or group of friends?

[We might do things we don't want to do. We might do something illegal or something that is against our personal and family values. We could get into trouble. Refer to the Four statements on the poster].

It sounds like we would lose out on

having fun,

staying out of trouble, and

staying in control.

Activity 1

Passive, Aggressive and Assertive Communication

SAY

Let's talk about how to manage situations in which you feel pressure from a friend or another person to do something that is unsafe or harmful to you.

What have you learned about ways a person might respond when they are feeling pressure to do something that might be unsafe or harmful?

(NOTE: Children have likely had lessons on refusal skills in the school setting.)

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SAY

There are three different ways that we might respond to a pressure situation.

- Be “passive” or non-assertive. A person who is passive might avoid confrontation, ignore a situation, or give in to another person.
- Be “aggressive.” This might involve attacking the other person, even verbally, over-reacting or being generally obnoxious.
- **THE BEST WAY:** Be “assertive.” This means that you stand up for your own rights, and express yourself honestly, openly and responsibly.

Go back to the list of difficult situations that you developed at the beginning of the lesson. Explain what might be a passive, aggressive, and assertive way to respond in each situation.

Discuss reasons for not being assertive.

SAY

Why do people sometimes not stand up for themselves or express their feelings?

Develop a list of reasons with the class. Your list might include:

- Not wanting to create a scene
- Being afraid to look foolish.
- Not wanting to offend the other person.
- Not wanting to start an argument
- Rationalizing and saying it’s not that important.

Then discuss the benefits of being assertive.

SAY

What do you think can be gained from being assertive?

Make a list on the board or newsprint.

Your list should include:

- Personal satisfaction
- Increased likelihood of getting what you want
- Better feelings about yourself
- Increased sense of control over your life
- Decreased anxiety from interpersonal conflict
- Increase ability to exercise your won rights and not be taken advantage of
- Respect from others

SAY

When we are faced with a difficult situation in which we need to respond to a request or a demand to do something that we do not want to do, it is important to be able to say “no” in an assertive manner. Let’s look at some

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specific skills for saying “no.”

Who has an idea for how to say “no” in a way that shows respect for the other person and states your position clearly?

Gather some ideas from the students. Summarize their ideas into this list:

- Say a direct “no.”
- Suggest another activity.
- Be a broken record.
- Say why not by stating a fact or your feelings and opinion.
- Walk away.

Apply these ideas using the following example:

SAY

If you were with a group of friends at the mall and someone wanted you to watch for security guards while he/she stole a CD, how could you be assertive and refuse?

Gather ideas from the students. Be sure to provide examples of the five different ways. Use the examples provided below along with the students’ ideas.

- Say a direct no.
No, I don’t want to.
No, I won’t do that.
- Suggest another activity.
No I don’t want to. Let’s go over to the arcade.
- Be a broken record.
Repeat “*No, I don’t want to*” or “*No, I won’t do that*” over and over no matter what the friend says.
- Say why not
No I don’t want to. It’s illegal.
No, it’s wrong. I wouldn’t feel good about helping you steal something.
- Walk away.
You always have the option of walking away, leaving the door open to keeping the friendships while standing up for what is right.

SAY

Remember, you never need to give a reason. However, if you choose to, you will want to begin with the word “I” so that the person will not feel like you are accusing them or lecturing them. See if you hear the difference in these two statements:

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* *No, I don't want to. It's illegal.*

* *Don't you know it's illegal?*

If you can avoid using the word “you” as you state your reason, you are more likely to be successful at standing up to pressure.

You will also want to avoid putting the other person down if you give a reason. See how you think the friend in this situation might respond to this statement:

* *No. Are you crazy? You are really dumb to take that kind of risk.*

Probably an argument would start, or the friend would be so angry he/she might leave.

Display the poster FIVE WAYS TO REFUSE. And distribute the Student Worksheet, “Practicing Standing Up To Pressure,” to each student.

SAY

Now we will have a chance to practice these refusal skills.

Read each situation on your worksheet (*If you are concerned about the reading ability of some of your students, you could read the situations aloud to everyone*), and use the skills we learned in our last lesson to develop a plan for how the individual in the situation might stand up to the pressure he or she is facing. You will have 5 minutes.

After 5 minutes, divide your class into 4 groups. Assign each group one of the situations.

SAY

Choose one person in your small group who will record your ideas and report to the class. In your small group, share your ideas with one another and write your group's recommendation on the back of a worksheet for the situation to which you were assigned. You will have 5 minutes.

At the end of 5 minutes, have one person from each group share their group's recommendation for their situation. Let the rest of the class decide if they agree with that group's recommendation. Clarify any incorrect recommendations or misinformation.

SAY

You have made strong recommendations on how to handle the pressure situations you have been discussing using the “Five Ways To Refuse.” You have tools now to help you do what you need to do to be safe. But sometimes, even when you know what you should do, doing the right thing is difficult.

When you are in a complicated situation and you feel like you need to take some action that will be difficult and even a little scary, remember that you

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are not alone. God is always with us and we can say a prayer and invite God in to help us.

Sometimes people think that God should just make all bad things go away, but that is not God's job—that is not how God works. God works through us. We are God's arms and legs. So, when we are faced with a difficult situation, we can invite God to help us. But remember, most of the time, the help we will get is the courage and strength and wisdom to do a difficult task.

Next week we will see a video about another area where we need to be safe.

We will watch a video about Internet Safety.

For today, we will close with a special prayer—Psalm 91.

Closing Prayer In your resource packet, you should have enough copies of this prayer to give each child a copy. Choose one or more students to read the verses. Instruct everyone to respond to each verse with “Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.”