

Dear Parent(s) of Kindergarteners through Fourth Graders,

Our parish is participating in a personal safety and abuse prevention education program for Kindergarten through Grade Four sponsored by the Archdiocesan Offices of Child Advocacy, Implementation and Oversight, Religious Education and Catholic Schools. In full appreciation of parents as the primary educators of their children, our goal is to partner with parents in providing our children with the best information and skills for personal safety.

Soon our classes in Grades K-4 will begin using the “Stay Safe” Personal Safety Skills Program – a program designed to address safety issues related to the needs of children in these age categories. The context for all our messages is: God made us and God loves us, so God wants us to be safe and happy. God gave us rules for being good (the Ten Commandments). We also have rules to keep us safe.

This program is based on the following elements:

1. Nurturing children’s self-esteem
2. Building children’s confidence
3. Enabling children to be assertive
4. Helping children to identify and express their feelings
5. Helping children to distinguish between safe and unsafe situations and telling a parent or Trusted adult about unsafe situations

This program will be presented in two parts. The scripts and props for both classes are available on our web site, www.stirene.com for anyone who would like to review the material ahead of time.

WEEK ONE

The first part, items 1-4 above, will be presented in the children’s regularly scheduled class by their catechists on November 6, 2011. Parents are welcome to attend. This will include:

- Learn to identify feelings (happy, sad, surprised, upset, confused, and angry) and constructive ways To express feelings.
- Explore times when they feel safe and when they don’t feel safe (“Yes” Feelings and “No” Feelings)
- Rules about what to do if:
 - o They are Lost
 - o The phone rings when no adult is around
 - o The doorbell rings when no adult is around
- Touches they like (hugs and handshakes) and touches they don’t like (tickling, cheek-pinching)
- Unsafe touches (hitting, kicking, pinching)
- Saying “NO!” effectively to touches they don’t like – even to an adult

Role of the Parent

A major component of the Stay Safe Program is parent involvement. At the end of the lesson, the children will bring home worksheets to complete at home with you. Children learn more about safety and are more likely to follow safety guidelines when they have multiple opportunities to practice and talk about safety with their parents and family. Your child learns more from you than anyone else!

The worksheets will also reinforce the concepts and help you begin a dialogue with your child at home. You are also asked to continue the role-playing with your child, practicing the rules (below) concerning what to do when lost, answering the phone, answering the door and responding to unsafe or unwanted touches.

Rules About Being Home Alone

1. Don't open the door for anyone.
2. Don't tell the person outside that you are home alone.

If the Phone Rings

1. Say "Hello", but don't tell the person calling that you are home alone.
2. Don't give your name.
3. Tell the person that your mom/dad can't come to the phone and that you will take a message.
4. Take the message and hang up.

Rules About Getting Lost

1. Do not wander from the place where you became separated.
2. If you are in a store, DON'T LEAVE THE STORE!
3. Get help from the police or other "official" adult in the area.
4. Tell the person your name, who you were with, and that you are lost.

Rules for Unwanted or Unsafe Touches

1. Say "NO!".
2. Get away.
3. Tell someone you trust.

WEEK TWO

The Second Part will take place in the parish Hall on Sunday, November 13, 2011 during class times for students in grades K-4. Parents are ***strongly encouraged*** to be present for this second, large-group session.

We will cover the following:

- Review the safety rules for touches they don't like or unsafe touches (hitting, kicking, pinching).
- Identify for the children another kind of touch, inappropriate touching (touching those parts Covered by a bathing suit).
- Remind them that the same rules apply
 - Say "NO!"
 - Get Away
 - Tell someone you trust
- Secrets: Good secrets (i.e. Birthday Gift) – don't tell good secrets
Bad secrets (when someone is hurting you) – always tell someone you trust
- Strangers

Rules for Unwanted or Unsafe Touches

1. Say "NO!".
2. Get away.
3. Tell someone you trust.

Rules About Secrets

1. Don't tell good secrets.
2. Always tell a person you trust if someone

Rules About Strangers

1. Never go anywhere with a stranger.
2. Never take anything from a stranger.

We will help children to identify "Inappropriate Touches", to never keep secrets about touching and who is a stranger. As always, you have the option to keep your child out of these sessions if you wish. The staff feels confident that the Stay Safe Program is appropriate for this age group and acknowledges the important role of the parent or guardian in this learning process. Please call if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,
Eileen Faber
Coordinator of Religious Education