

SAFE TOUCH PROGRAM

Lesson, Ages 4th – 6th Grade:

Part 1: Boundaries

Boundaries are rules, like speed limits or rules in the classroom. They help us know what we can or can't do, what is safe or not safe, and when everyone knows them and follows them, then we are all safer. There are all kinds of boundaries and rules. There are rules about how we talk, how we act, and how we interact with others.

Discussion questions:

1. Have you ever felt a funny, uncomfortable feeling when someone crosses a boundary and you know something bad is going to happen?
2. Let's talk about examples of getting that uncomfortable feeling. What does your body do when something feels wrong? How does your body react when you are scared or upset?
3. Does it feel different to you when you have done something wrong than when you are around someone else who is doing something wrong? What about when someone is asking you to do something wrong? If it feels different, how?

Part 2: Safe Touch

Some rules are about touch. People touch people all the time. Some touches are accidental, while some are on purpose. Some touches make you feel really good, like when you're sick or sad and your mom hugs you. Other touches can feel bad or uncomfortable.

Discussion Questions:

1. Let's talk about ways or times we have been touched when it made us feel safe and good.
2. Let's talk about ways or times when being touched does not make us feel safe or good.
(*Expect and elicit discussion about non-sexual touches, such as a fight with a friend, getting pinched by your brother, or getting a shot at the doctor's office.*)

Think of wearing a swimsuit. Sometimes people need to touch or examine you in those places that would be covered by a swimsuit. But these parts of our bodies are private, and there are rules or limits for touching someone in the swimsuit area. People need your parents' permission and your permission to touch you in those places (like a doctor or a nurse). If someone touches you in those areas without permission, or if they ask you to touch them in those areas, you might get that bad or uncomfortable feeling that tells you something is not right. If you get that bad feeling, you have the right to say no and to get away, and you should tell someone what happened and how you feel.

This is true whether this person is an adult, an older child, or even someone your age. It is also true whether the person is a stranger or is someone you know.

Sometimes you are touched by someone and it does not feel uncomfortable, but you are not sure that it is ok. When that happens you should talk to your parents, teacher, or another safe adult about it. Examples of this would be if someone tickles you or pats you and you are just not sure.

If they try to give you presents, or ask you to keep a secret or to do something that you know breaks the rules, you should talk to your parents about it.

Being safe, taking care of our bodies and being respectful of them is important to learn. This is especially true because God gives us our bodies and they belong to him. One of the most important skills for being safe and being respectful involves talking to our parents or another safe adult about situations that we do not understand or where we do not feel OK.

Part 3: Learning to say NO when you feel that funny, uncomfortable feeling

If someone touches you in a private area or does something else that gives you that bad or uncomfortable feeling:

- The first thing you should do is immediately say NO, I don't like that, stop. Stop now.
- Second, you should get away from that person immediately, if you don't feel safe.
- The third thing you should do is to go to a safe adult and tell them you need help. Tell an adult immediately; don't wait. Tell them what happened and how it made you feel -- even if someone asked you or told you not to tell.

A safe adult may not be the same person for everyone. It may be a parent, teacher, neighbor or close relative. It is someone who cares about us, will listen to us and can help us with our situation. If you tell one adult that you need help, and they don't help you, keep telling! Keep telling until someone helps you feel safe.

Discussion Questions:

1. We talked about three steps you should take if you get that funny, uncomfortable feeling. What are these steps?
2. Sometimes people who behave inappropriately tell kids not to tell anyone about it. Talk about what to do if that happens.

Part 4: Rules to help children be safe

1. Always use the Buddy System and never go places alone. Predators usually focus on the "loners."
2. Always let someone know where you are going and with whom you're going to be.
3. Never get into a car or go with a person unless a parent has given permission.
4. Being safe when you're on the internet is very, very important. Never tell anyone your name, your address or phone number, or the school that you go to while you're online. It is strongly recommended that you only talk to people you know in real life while online. The internet is NOT a safe place to make new friends – you never know who you're really talking to. NEVER agree to meet someone "in real life" who you met first online. If someone online asks you personal questions, says something mean to you or about you, or asks to meet you in person, let your parents know immediately.
5. It's all right to be suspicious of adults who seem to be too friendly. Trust your instincts or feelings when it doesn't feel right.
6. Tell your parents or another adult that you trust if anyone offers you money or gifts; if someone wants to take your picture and if any adult asks you to keep a secret.

7. No one should ever touch you on parts of your body that are private to you. Nor, if they ask you to, should you ever touch anyone on those parts also.
8. If someone threatens you, yell "No" or "Stop" immediately. Screaming and attracting attention is the surest way of scaring someone off.
9. Trust your feelings! If a situation doesn't feel right, leave it and get help if needed.
10. Never keep secrets. If something comes up that seems difficult to handle, tell your parents or a trusted adult. If that person doesn't listen, go to another person who will listen. Keep telling until someone really hears you.
11. Sometimes, strangers say certain things in order to get kids to come with them. Never go with a stranger, even if they say something like:
 - The stranger has lost his pet and needs your help to find it,
 - The stranger is lost and needs directions,
 - Your mom or dad is hurt or sick and told the stranger to pick you up, or
 - You have won a contest or are invited to a "modeling tryout"

(Note: these are common lures that are used by child abductors.)