

# Safe Environment Children's Program

## Lesson 1 for Grades 9 through 12: Safety and Honesty

**Theme:** Applying the Eighth Commandment: **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.** We do not lie or gossip about others; we always tell the truth.

“Love rejoices in the truth...”

*1 Corinthians 13:6*

**Principle:** Young people must guard against those who may want to harm them. They must respect their own health and safety and the health and safety of others.

**Catechism:** *Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God. -- #2319*

*Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature... -- #1930*

**Goal:** To assist educators, catechists, youth ministers, and other caring adults in teaching young people how to prevent or reduce the risk of sexual abuse.

**Objectives:** Through this lesson the catechist, teacher, or youth minister reinforces the parents' safety message about protecting private body parts.  
Upon completion of this lesson, the young people should be better able to:

- Understand the rules about safe and appropriate touches and other boundary issues.
- Keep themselves safe and out of danger.
- Protect themselves from people who might touch them in a way that is uncomfortable or otherwise inappropriate.
- Name their safe friends and safe adults.
- Respond in an appropriate manner to unsafe situations.

### **Activity #1: Review and discuss the vocabulary words**

- **Peer Pressure** – the strong influence of a group – especially of young people – on members of that group to behave as everyone else does.
- **Unsafe touch** – harmful touches committed by an individual or group that physically, sexually, or psychologically harms a young person. This touch is often from people who either cannot or choose not to see the harm in their actions.

- **Boundaries** – the limits that define one person as separate from another or from others. Boundaries promote and preserve personal integrity. Boundaries give each person a clear sense of “self” and a framework for how to function in relation to others. Boundaries bring order to our lives and empower each of us to determine how others will interact with us.
- **Honesty** – telling the truth at all times. Honesty means to avoid telling a lie even to protect someone, and to avoid keeping silent when you know that telling the truth is the right thing to do.

### **Activity #2 Honesty is the Best Policy**

Make copies of the handout: “Honesty is the Best Policy.” Instruct the students to read the article and lead a discussion of the four points contained in the article.

### **Activity #3: Telling the Truth**

Make copies of the handout: “Telling the Truth with Dignity and Respect for Others.” Ask the students to follow the directions and write about ways that they can communicate the truth in the ten scenarios.

### **Suggested Prayer to end the lesson**

#### ***Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel***

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.  
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the devil.  
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,  
and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host,  
by the power of God, cast into hell Satan,  
and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world  
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

You've heard it said before – **“Honesty is the best policy.”**

Do you believe it? Sometimes it is hard to see. Especially when we've messed up and it seems like knowing the truth causes us more trouble or causes others more pain. In those situations, how can honesty be our best bet?

1. God's plan for us is forgiveness. If we have messed up, are truly sorry, and are willing to make things right, God will forgive us and asks others to do the same. In a right relationship, telling a lie to cover up our mistakes doesn't make things better. What makes things better is owning up to our mistakes, asking for forgiveness, and working to make things right. If we are so fearful of rejection or retaliation that we have to hide our mistakes – that's not a right relationship.
2. “What you don't know won't hurt you” rarely holds true. For starters, very few “secrets” are never found out. Think about how you would feel if you found out someone had been dishonest with you. Would it challenge your trust in that person? Would things really be ok if you never found out? What if someone you were in a relationship with was maintaining a relationship with someone else? Would it be ok as long as you didn't know? Would that be a healthy relationship?
3. We might think that we are sparing other's feelings by not telling them how we feel. The truth is, hiding our feelings isn't fair to others. Think about it – if someone does something that bothers us and we don't tell them – we deny them the opportunity to stop doing the thing that annoys us. If we don't tell them how we feel, what happens to our feelings? Unexpressed feelings have a way of growing. Often what happens if we don't share our feelings is: a) they don't stop doing the thing that bothers us, b) our feelings grow bigger and bigger, and c) we resent them more and more – or – we start to avoid them.
4. Sometimes others bend the truth to meet their own needs. They say what we want to hear – or say whatever it takes to get what they want. Individuals who abuse others often gain control by misleading others. They often maintain control by involving their victim(s) in keeping secrets and telling lies. Would you call that a right relationship?

Think about your significant relationships:

- Can you be honest about your feelings? If not, what gets in the way?
- Are you honest about your behavior?
- Do you give others the chance to change their behavior by letting them know how you feel about it?
- Are the significant others in your life honest with you?
- Do the significant others in your life offer you the same courtesy?

If you are in a relationship that isn't based on honesty, seek help. It often takes many honest voices to erase the impact of one false friend.

# "Love Rejoices in the Truth..."

*1 Corinthians 13:6*

## **Telling the Truth with Dignity and Respect for Others**

In addition to being one of the Ten Commandments, honesty is an important quality of right relationships. Showing respect and dignity for others is also an important quality and something we strive to do as Catholics. For each of the following scenarios, think about how you could communicate the truth in a way that is respectful of others.

1. A friend asks you to go to a movie and you already have plans:

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2. Someone you don't know well asks you to go somewhere alone with him/her:

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3. Someone invites you to a party and you know you should not go:

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4. Your mom asks, "How do you like my new haircut?"

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5. Someone you "like" wants to "go too far."

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6. Someone you don't like asks you to go out:

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7. An adult asks you questions that are too personal:

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8. Someone who sits too close asks, "Do you mind if I sit here?"

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9. You are chatting with someone online and he/she wants to meet you:

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10. Your youth minister or teacher asks you to stay and help clean up again and he/she doesn't seem to ask anyone else to help:

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