

## **For the Classroom – Formation in Christian Chastity, Grade 3**

### **Theme: Mystery of the Triune God and the Human Family of God**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Students will know that God is a community of persons, just as the family is a community of persons.
  - A. There is one God and three persons in the one God.
  - B. This is the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.
    - God is three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
    - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are a communion of Persons because they have loved each other from all eternity. Forever and ever! Amen.
2. Students will know that God made us in His image and likeness and, therefore, God created us to be a part of His Family! This is done by adoption through the sacrament of Baptism.
3. Students will know that children show love and obedience to God by showing love and obedience to their parents.
4. Students will know that God calls each individual family to be part of a larger family called the Church, the Roman Catholic Church that Jesus made while He was on earth. It is still here today and will always be here until the end of the world!
5. Students will know that living lives of chastity is how we bind our families and the Church to God.

#### **VOCABULARY:**

Trinity - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. One God in three Persons. All living in a perfect communion of love as a family!

Family - The group of persons who are related to each other like father-mother-children. We are all members of God's family by adoption through the sacrament of Baptism.

Church - The large family of God that Jesus created while he was on earth 2000 years ago. It is a community of all believers in Jesus Christ who are bound together by a common love for Jesus. It is also called the Mystical Body of Christ, for through Baptism we are bound together in the life of Jesus. The Church is found in its fullness only in the Roman Catholic Church.

#### **Directions for Chalk Talk**

Tell the children that today we are going to talk about a special way that we can live with God. Tell them that every October the Church concentrates on a very special theme, Respect Life. Life, our very existence, is God's most precious gift to us. If we want to

respect this gift of life, we should learn to respect ourselves and others. One way, perhaps the most important way, we can respect ourselves and others is by living lives of "Chastity." Write the word on the chalkboard over to the right side. Chastity is "Respecting Ourselves and Others." Write this on the board underneath "Chastity" and draw an arrow to it.

Chastity helps us to live in community - to live with one another and with God. A community is a group which lives and works together. Can you think of some examples of community? Write the word "Community" far to the right at the top and list the children's answers. Examples might be "schools," "towns," etc. You're looking for the answers "families" and "church." Ask questions until you draw these answers out.

When I look at all the communities you children have mentioned, I notice something. All these communities are stronger when everybody gets along with each other, when everybody respects each other. Let's take, for example, a group of friends, Derek, John and Bill. Let's say they've been friends a long time, they're a community. Now let's say Derek hits Bill, because Bill won't play a game that Derek wants to play. And let's say John doesn't like this and goes to Bill and says, "We shouldn't be friends with Derek anymore." Look what has happened. Because Derek didn't live a life of chastity, because he didn't respect Bill and thought only about himself, the community that was Derek, John and Bill has been destroyed. Living a life of chastity is when we think about and respect others and when we think about and respect God and ourselves. So living lives of chastity, respecting ourselves and others, helps to create and maintain communities. Write the word "Community" underneath "Respecting Ourselves and Others" and draw an arrow to it.

Chastity sounds a lot like the word "love," doesn't it? In fact we can say that love equals chastity and chastity equals love.

Looking at the communities you all have mentioned. I notice that there are a lot of communities.

### **Discussion Questions:**

Question: Do you know why there are so many communities?

Answer: It's because God made people in His likeness and image. And do you want to know something fascinating? God, Himself, is a community. That's right! (Write "God" in the center of the chalkboard toward the top.)

Question: Does anyone know what the Holy Trinity is?

Answer: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

(Around the word "God," draw a triangle which points to the right. Label the top point "Father," label the left-point "Son," and underneath "Son" write "Jesus." Label the right-point "Holy Spirit.")

This is called a "mystery." There is only one God. But God, Himself, consists of three distinct persons: "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit." God is in community with Himself. The greatest minds that have ever lived have never completely understood this mystery,

but we know it's true, because God told us it's true in the Bible. It's not surprising that since God is a community and since we are made in God's image and likeness, that we always live in communities.

Now, of all the communities you children have listed, there are two that I want to concentrate on, because they're the two most important communities that we live in. The first is families. Write the word "Family" underneath the Holy Trinity triangle.

Usually, a family consists of a mom, a dad, and children. Draw an inverted triangle around the word "Family". Then label the top left corner with "Father," the top right corner with "Mother," and the bottom-center corner with "Children."

At this point, a child may raise the question, "But what if there's not a 'mommy' or a 'daddy' in the family?" Tell them you'll get to that in a minute, but that you want to make another point first.

Now here's something really cool. God loves us so much that he came up with a way that we could join the community of our families with His community of the Holy Trinity. Through the sacrament of Baptism we become God's adopted children. Write the word "Baptism" between the two triangles. Draw an arrow from "Family" to "Baptism" and an arrow from "Baptism" to "Jesus" and an arrow from "Jesus" to "God."

Through Baptism, we join with Jesus in His life, death and resurrection. We are united to Jesus who becomes our brother. Since Jesus is now our brother, God the Father becomes *our* Father. The love which exists between the Father and the Son - the Holy Spirit - comes to live in us. Through Baptism, we are drawn into the community of the Holy Trinity. All the sacraments strengthen our bond with the Holy Trinity, but it is the sacrament of Baptism which draws us into the Holy Trinity in the first place and makes Jesus our brother. Since Jesus is our brother, God is our Father. But you know what else it does? Who was Jesus' Mom? That's right, Mary. So if Jesus is our brother, who is our Spiritual Mother? (Mary) And Jesus had a foster-father who protected Him here on earth, didn't He? Who was that? (Joseph) When we're baptized, in a very real sense, Joseph becomes our Foster-Father and protector, too. When we're baptized, we not only are drawn into the Holy Trinity through Jesus, we're also drawn through Jesus into the Holy Family.

Sometimes, in our families here on earth, we may not have a mommy or a daddy in our family. We all have mommies and daddies, but maybe they're not in our family. That's sad, isn't it? But even when this happens, through our Baptism we always have a mother in Mary. We always have the best brother you could want in Jesus. We always have God as our Father. And we always have St. Joseph as our protector and foster-Father.

Now, looking at these two connected triangles, would you like to know what other community they represent, which is on our list of communities? Answer: The Church. Draw a large circle around both triangles and write above the triangles "The Church." This is what the Church really is. It's all the families which have ever lived or are alive today, united to God through Jesus. Draw a circle around Jesus' name.

In fact, the Church is called the Mystical Body of Christ because it is through Jesus that all of us in our families are united to God. All of this added together – people in families united to the Holy Trinity through Jesus - is the Church.

Oops. I forget something. Angels. Angels are spiritual beings, created by God the Father through Jesus, who have stayed with God. Write “Angels” to the left of “Son” and “Jesus” and draw an arrow pointing to and from Jesus. Explain that angels were created through Jesus. (Draw an arrow pointing from “Jesus” to “Angels.”) They have chosen to stay with Jesus. (Draw an arrow pointing to “Jesus.”)

There. Now the Church is complete.

So you see, this is why living lives of Chastity – respecting ourselves, respecting our moms and dads, respecting our brother and sisters, respecting others who also live in our families, and respecting God - is so important.

The Church can never be destroyed. But our relationship to the Church can be destroyed in the same way Derek’s relationship with John and Bill was destroyed. We want to always live lives of chastity to remain in and strengthen the Church. And one crucial thing we can do to remain in the Church is to pray always. I’m going to tell you a story now about a Saint who prayed always to remain united to the Holy Trinity and the Church.

### **St. Patrick of Ireland:**

St. Patrick lived 1600 years ago. He had many misfortunes happen to him. He grew up in England, but was kidnapped by pirates when he was just a young boy. He was sold as a slave in a different country called Ireland. As a slave he had to sleep outdoors and take care of the sheep for his master. God was with St. Patrick just like God is with you and me all the time. St. Patrick turned to God in prayer! He said 100 prayers to God every day. And St. Patrick listened to God in silence. God helped St. Patrick escape and he found his way safely home. But in his heart, St. Patrick knew that God wanted him to return to Ireland. St. Patrick could hear the little children of Ireland calling out to him in his heart. The children wanted to hear the stories that St. Patrick would tell about Jesus. After St. Patrick was ordained a priest and then a bishop, he was sent to Ireland where he taught the people about God using the shamrock. He taught them that God was One God, but Three Divine Persons. St. Patrick taught them something that Jesus taught him: “Pray Always!”

Now, lets review just a little bit.

### **Discussion Question:**

Question: How do we know that there is one God and Three Divine Persons in God?

Answer: Because Jesus told us. And Jesus is God.

Chastity is trusting in God, one God in three Divine Persons! Chastity is praying always. Chastity is obeying God's voice by obeying Mom and Dad! Choosing what is good and not choosing what is bad. Chastity is taking care of our bodies and respecting the bodies of others.

**Discussion Questions:**

Question: How do we become part of God's family?

Answer: By Baptism! In Baptism we are adopted into God's Family.

Question: What is the Church?

Answer: The Church is the Family of God. We enter into this family by Baptism. The true Church is called the Roman Catholic Church, since it was founded by Jesus Christ 2000 years ago and is still here today. It is also called the Mystical Body of Christ, because we live in Christ by virtue of our Baptism and by our life in the sacraments. The Church includes more than the people on earth. It also includes the people in heaven and the people in purgatory.

Question: What was the most important thing that St. Patrick did after he was captured and how did this affect his life?

Answer: He prayed! 100 prayers each day! Prayer made him a saint! Without prayer, we cannot become saints. Without prayer, we cannot get to heaven.

## **For the Classroom – Safe Environment Program, Grade 3**

**Theme: God gave us a conscience to know when something is good or bad.**

### **Objectives:**

1. Student will know the difference between a good touch and a bad touch.
2. Student will know that God gave them a conscience (inner voice) to know when something is good or bad.
3. Students will know they should protect themselves from things that are bad.
4. Student will know the Three-Step Rule for Safety.
  - Say “NO”
  - Run away
  - Tell a safe adult
5. Students will know how to identify Unsafe Adults using the following criteria:
  - An unsafe adult/person will try to confuse you or make you feel uncomfortable.
  - An unsafe adult/person will try to tell you not to tell your parents.
  - An unsafe adult/person will try to give you gifts or presents without your parents’ permission. You may even have a feeling that your parents would not want you to have it!
  - An unsafe adult/person will try to get you to be alone with him and in an isolated place, where no one is around.

Begin by reading to the children the two sections from the Catechism below.

### Catechism of the Catholic Church (1713)

Man is to follow God’s law – The Ten Commandments. Man must do what is good and avoid what is evil. The little voice that tells you to do good and not to do evil is called conscience. This is the voice of God inside of you. Listen to it! “Trust your Gut.”

### Catechism of the Catholic Church (1738)

Every person, created in the image of God, has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. In other words, there are limits to what people can do to you!

Then, talk to the children about the following:

Jesus is the Truth. We can know His truth about what is good and right by our reason. Our reason gives us the ability to think and know the truth. God gave us a conscience (an inner voice from God) to help us know what is right and what is wrong.

Conscience is God’s gift to us to know what is good and what is evil.

God also gave us safe adults (parents or guardians) who help us to know what is good and evil, safe and unsafe; how to listen to God and obey His Ten Commandments; and how to avoid dangers to our body and our soul.

The Ten Commandments are boundaries. They are rules that tell us how to behave. Boundaries are good! Boundaries keep us safe. Boundaries separate one area from another to keep things safe. A fence around a yard is a boundary. It can keep a dog or person from running into the street. It can keep the mailman safe from the dog when he is delivering letters to a house. A boundary can be a rule to follow so that you will be safe. Your Mom and Dad may have a rule at your house that you cannot have a computer in your room. Mom and Dad know that some things that come through the computer can hurt your mind, body, or soul. Some things on the computer you should not see. Some people who want to talk to you on the computer may want to hurt you. Your Mom and Dad set boundaries or rules for the computer to keep you safe.

A limit is a spot or edge of something beyond which you should not go. A football field has edges or sidelines. If you step over them you are “out of bounds.” Your Mom might give you a limit of how many OREO Cookies you may eat after school before supper-time. There is also a limit to how hard someone can push or touch you on the playground. Pushing too hard or slapping too rough is “out of bounds.” This is wrong.

In many ways, our bodies are boundaries. Our bodies are private areas, just like a fenced off yard, given to us by God, that belong only to us. For example, is it right for someone to hit you? No, of course not. As we just said, hitting is “out of bounds.”

We’ve been talking about chastity tonight, about respecting ourselves and others. If someone hurts you, they are not living a life of chastity. They are not respecting you or your boundaries.

Sometimes someone may touch you and it might even hurt like when you go to a doctor and get a shot. Even though a shot hurts, we understand the doctor wants to help us with his “safe touch.” Remember, God gave you a conscience to know right from wrong. Suppose someone gives you a “high-five.” Is this O.K.? Of course it is. You know this.

But it’s possible that sometimes someone may try to touch you and it will make you feel bad. You feel like they’ve gone “out of bounds.”

So, what should you do? First trust yourself. Trust your conscience. You know when touching is good like in a “high-five.” So, trust yourself if someone touches you and you feel bad and it seems wrong. If you feel bad, then do the following:

1. Yell “NO!”
  2. Run away
  3. Tell your parents or guardian.
- (Write these on the board.)

Many times an unsafe adult or person will try to do something bad and keep it a secret by taking you to a place that is hidden, where other people can’t see what they are doing. A place that others cannot see is called a “secluded area.” Stay away from secluded or

hidden areas where there are no other people. There is safety in numbers. Stick with a group of friends and safe adults.

If an adult or any person (even a person you thought you could trust) asks you to do something that makes you feel “uncomfortable” (a funny feeling in your stomach) and “confused,” you should not do it. If thinking about it makes you feel sick or uneasy, or you feel confused, here’s what we want you to do. (Write out the Three-Step Rule for Safety. Have the children yell out the Three-Step Rules for Safety. Have them yell these out a couple of times to drive home the point that if someone is trying to hurt them, this is what they should do.)

**MOST PEOPLE ARE SAFE!**

But here are four warning signs, red flags, stop signs, that you should watch for that indicate a person may not be safe and may hurt you. (Have these written on a handout, along with the Three Rules to protect yourself listed below. Pass them out to the children.)

### **Four Warning Signs to Watch For:**

- 1. People who let you do things your parents wouldn’t let you do.**
- 2. People who give you gifts without permission from your parents.**
- 3. People who ask you to keep secrets from your parents.**
- 4. People who want you to go to a hidden place alone and away from other people.**

If anyone asks you to do any of these things, be sure to tell your parents. Also, let’s talk a bit about number 3. There may be some secrets that are good. For example, suppose your grandmother is throwing a surprise birthday party for your mom and asks you to keep it a secret. Is this a good secret? Of course it is. Again, God gave you a conscience and you should trust it. If anyone tells you to keep something secret from your parents and your conscience tells you it would be wrong to keep it a secret, then tell your parents.

Based on these warning signs. Here are three other rules you should always follow to protect yourself from unsafe people.

## **Three Rules to Protect Yourself**

- 1. NEVER GO ANYWHERE ALONE WITH AN ADULT (EXCEPT YOUR PARENTS) UNLESS YOU HAVE YOUR PARENTS' PERMISSION.**
- 2. ADULTS, OTHER THAN YOUR PARENTS, CAN ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING THAT EVERYONE ELSE IS DOING, SUCH AS CHORES, AND EXPECT YOU TO DO IT. BUT, IF THEY ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING ELSE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT UNLESS YOUR PARENTS GAVE YOU PERMISSION.**
- 3. WHEN YOU ARE ASKED TO DO SOMETHING BY AN ADULT OTHER THAN YOUR PARENTS, TELL YOUR PARENTS WHAT HAPPENED, EVEN IF THAT PERSON TELLS YOU "NOT TO TELL."**

Conclusion:

Jesus is the Truth and He wants us to know the truth about what is good and safe. God gave us the ability to think (reason) and to know the difference between good and evil. God's voice inside us is called our conscience. We should listen to this voice of God within us to keep us safe. Our parents will help us stay safe. We must know our boundaries and the limits of what we can do. We should know what we should not do. Although most people are safe, we should be on guard for the few unsafe people. Unsafe people do not respect our boundaries and try to trick us by trying to make us keep bad secrets or by making us do things that are uncomfortable or confusing, usually in a place that is hidden from other people. There is safety in numbers. Do not go anywhere alone with an adult (except your parents) unless you have your parents' permission.

### **Activity:**

Trace shamrocks on green construction paper and have the children cut them out. Have them make their shamrocks with the name of each person of the Trinity on each leaf.

- The Father is the Creator and Protector of His Creation, His children, just like our parents protect us!
- Jesus is the obedient and loving Son, Who trusts the Father in all things, just like we trust our parents and tell them when someone is trying to hurt us.
- And The Holy Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son, just like the love that exists within our family.

**Closing Prayer:** My holy Guardian Angel, ask the Lord to bless my life each day and the lives of my family and friends. I hope that God may keep my soul and body clean and healthy. May I live my whole life in holiness and safety so that I may serve You with happiness and joy in this life, and be with you forever in heaven. Amen.

# KNOW THE RULES...

## GENERAL TIPS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS TO HELP KEEP THEIR CHILDREN SAFER

While many parents and guardians feel they are faced with new and unprecedented challenges when trying to keep their children safer in today's fast-paced and increasingly global society, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children offers these common-sense, general safety tips to help parents and guardians put these challenges into perspective.

1. Make sure you know where each of your children is at all times. Know your children's friends and be clear with your children about the places and homes they may visit. Make it a rule for your children to check in with you when they arrive at or depart from a particular location and when there is a change in plans. You should also let them know when you're running late or if your plans have changed so they can see the rule is for safety purposes and not being used to "check up" on them.
2. Never leave children unattended in an automobile, whether it is running or not. Children should never be left unsupervised or allowed to spend time alone or with others in automobiles, as the potential dangers to their safety outweigh any perceived convenience or "fun." Remind children to **never** hitchhike, approach a car or engage in a conversation with anyone within a car they do not know and trust, or go anywhere with anyone without getting your permission first.
3. Be involved in your children's activities. As an active participant, you'll have a better opportunity to observe how the adults in charge interact with your children. If you are concerned about anyone's behavior, take it up with the sponsoring organization.
4. Listen to your children. Pay attention if they tell you they don't want to be with someone or go somewhere. This may be an indication of more than a personality conflict or lack of interest in the activity or event.
5. Notice when anyone shows one or all of your children a great deal of attention or begins giving them gifts. Take the time to talk to your children about the person and find out why the person is acting in this way.
6. Teach your children they have the right to say **NO** to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touch or actions by others and to get out of those situations as quickly as possible. If avoidance is not an option, children should be taught to kick, scream, and resist. When in such a situation, teach them to loudly yell that the person is not their father/mother/guardian and then immediately tell you if this happens. Reassure them you're there to help and it is okay to tell you anything.

7. Be sensitive to any changes in your children's behavior or attitude. Encourage open communication and learn how to be an active listener. Look and listen for small cues and clues that something may be troubling your children, because children are not always comfortable disclosing disturbing events or feelings. This may be because they are concerned about your reaction to their problems. If your children do confide problems to you, strive to remain calm, noncritical, and nonjudgmental. Listen compassionately to their concern, and work **with them** to get the help they need to resolve the problem.
8. Be sure to screen babysitters and caregivers. Many states now have a public registry that allows parents and guardians to check out individuals for prior criminal records and sex offenses. Check out references with other families who have used the caregiver or babysitter. Once you have chosen the caregiver, drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing. Ask your children how the experience with the caregiver was, and listen carefully to the responses.
9. Practice basic safety skills with your children. Make an outing to a mall or park a "teachable" experience in which your children can practice checking with you, using pay telephones, going to the restroom with a friend, and locating the adults who can help if they need assistance. Remember, allowing your children to wear clothing or carry items in public on which their name is displayed can bring about unwelcome attention from inappropriate people who may be looking for a way to start a conversation with your children.
10. Remember there is no substitute for your attention and supervision. Being available and taking time to really know and listen to your children helps build feelings of safety and security.

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# Q & A on CHILD SAFETY

What are the most important things parents and guardians should know when talking to their children about this issue?

- ✎ Don't forget your older children. Children 11-17 are equally at risk to victimization. At the same time you are giving your older children more freedom, make sure they understand the important safety rules as well.
- ✎ When you speak to your children, do so in a calm, nonthreatening manner. Children do not need to be frightened to get the point across. Fear can actually work at cross-purposes to the safety message, because fear can be paralyzing to a child.
- ✎ Speak openly about safety issues. Children will be less likely to come to you if the issue is enshrouded in secrecy. If they feel you are comfortable discussing the subject matter, they may be more forthcoming to you.
- ✎ Do not confuse children with the concept of "strangers." Children do not have the same understanding of who a stranger is as an adult might. The "stranger-danger" message is not effective, as danger to children is much greater from someone you or they know than from a "stranger."
- ✎ Practice what you talk about. You may think your children understands your message, but until they can incorporate it into their daily lives, it may not be clearly understood. Find opportunities to practice "what if" scenarios.
- ✎ Teach your children it is more important to get out of a threatening situation than it is to be polite. They also need to know it is okay to tell you what happened, and they won't be a tattletale.

What are the most important things parents and guardians should tell their children about this issue?

- ✎ Children should always **check first** with you or a trusted adult before they go anywhere, accept anything, or get into a car with anyone. This applies to older children as well.
- ✎ Children should not go out alone and should always **take a friend** with them when they go places or play outside.
- ✎ It's okay to say **no** if someone tries to touch them or treats them in a way that makes them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused and to get out of the situation as quickly as possible.
- ✎ Children need to know they can **tell** you or a trusted adult if they feel scared,

uncomfortable, or confused.

- ☞ Children need to know there will always be someone to help them, and they have the right to be safe.

What is the biggest myth surrounding this issue?

The biggest myth is that the dangers to children come from strangers. In the majority of cases the perpetrator is someone the parents/guardians or child knows, and that person may be in a position of trust or responsibility to the family.

What advice would you offer parents and guardians who wanted to talk to their children about this issue?

Parents and guardians should choose opportunities or “teachable” moments to reinforce safety skills. If an incident occurs in your community, and your children ask you about it, speak frankly but with reassurance. Explain to your children that you want to discuss the safety rules with them, so they will know what to do if they are ever confronted with a difficult situation. Make sure you have “safety nets” in place, so your children know there is **always** someone who can help them.

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# CONOCE LAS REGLAS...

## CONSEJOS GENERALES PARA LOS PADRES, ABUELOS Y GUARDIANES PARA AYUDAR A SUS HIJOS A ESTAR MÁS SEGUROS

En una época en la que muchos padres, abuelos y guardianes sienten que enfrentan dificultades sin precedentes para tratar de mantener seguros a sus hijos en una sociedad vertiginosa y cada vez más globalizada, el Centro Nacional para Menores Desaparecidos y Explotados ofrece estos consejos generales de seguridad, fundados en el sentido común, para ayudar a los padres, abuelos y guardianes a poner estos desafíos en perspectiva.

1. Asegúrese de que sabe donde está cada uno de sus hijos en todo momento. Conozca a los amigos de sus hijos y hágales saber a sus hijos claramente cuáles son los lugares y hogares que pueden visitar. Haga obligatorio que sus hijos le avisen cuando llegan o salen de un lugar en particular y cuando hay un cambio de planes. Usted también debería avisarles cuando usted llegará con atraso o si cambian sus planes, para que ellos vean que la norma es con fines de seguridad y que no se la usa para “controlarlos.”
2. Nunca deje a los niños solos en un automóvil, ya sea que esté o no con el motor en marcha. A los niños nunca debería dejárselos sin supervisión ni permitirseles que queden solos o con otros en automóviles, dado que los peligros potenciales para su seguridad superan con creces cualquier conveniencia o “diversión.” Recuerde a sus hijos que **nunca** hagan dedo para subir a un vehículo, que no se aproximen a un auto o entren en conversación con alguien a quien no conocen o en quien no confían y que esté en un auto, ni que vayan a ninguna parte con ninguna persona sin pedirle permiso a usted primero.
3. Participe en las actividades de su hijo o hija. Como participante activo, usted tendrá mejor oportunidad de observar cómo los adultos interactúan con sus hijos. Si le preocupa el comportamiento de alguna persona, comuníquese a la organización patrocinante.
4. Oiga a sus hijos. Preste atención si le dicen que no quieren estar con alguien o no quieren ir a alguna parte. Esto podría ser una indicación de algo más que un conflicto de personalidades o de falta de interés en la actividad o evento.
5. Perciba cuando alguien preste mucha atención a uno o a todos sus hijos o comience a darles regalos. Tome el tiempo para hablar con sus hijos sobre esa persona y determinar por qué esa persona está actuando de esa manera.
6. Enseñe a sus hijos que tienen el derecho de decir **NO** a cualquier contacto físico o acción por otros que ellos no quieran o que los haga sentir incómodos o confusos. Enséñeles a avisarle a usted de inmediato si eso ocurre. Hágales sentir que usted está allí para ayudarlos y que está bien que le cuenten cualquier cosa.

7. Sea sensible a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento o actitud de sus hijos. Estimule la cooperación abierta y aprenda a ser un oyente activo. Mire y escuche las pequeñas pistas de que algo podría estar preocupando a sus hijos, porque los niños no siempre se sienten cómodos revelando eventos o sentimientos perturbadores. Esto podría ser porque les preocupa su reacción a sus problemas. Si sus hijos le confían sus problemas, esfuércese por mantenerse en calma, sin hacer críticas ni impartir juicios. Escuche compasivamente sus tribulaciones y trabaje **con ellos** para conseguir la ayuda que necesitan para resolver el problema.
8. Asegúrese de examinar a las niñeras y proveedores de cuidado. Muchos estados tienen ahora un registro público que permite a los padres, abuelos y guardianes verificar si una persona tiene prontuario penal o antecedentes de delitos sexuales. Compruebe las referencias con otras familias que han usado los servicios de esa persona. Después que haya seleccionado a la persona que proveerá el cuidado infantil, llegue sin anunciarse para ver cómo están sus hijos. Pregunte a sus hijos cómo fue la experiencia con esa persona, y oiga cuidadosamente las respuestas.
9. Practique medidas de seguridad básica con sus hijos. Torne una salida a un centro comercial o a un parque en una experiencia “educativa” en la que sus hijos puedan practicar pedirle permiso, usar teléfonos públicos, ir al baño con un amigo y localizar a adultos que puedan ayudarlos si necesitan asistencia. Recuerde que permitir a los niños usar prendas o llevar en público artículos con su nombre a la vista puede llamar la atención no deseada de personas que podrían estar buscando una manera de iniciar conversación con sus hijos.
10. Recuerde que su atención y supervisión no tienen sustitutos. Estar disponible y tomar el tiempo para realmente conocer y oír a sus hijos les ayudará a ellos a desarrollar sentimientos de seguridad y estabilidad.

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# Preguntas y Respuestas sobre seguridad infantil

## ¿Qué es lo más importante que los padres, abuelos y guardianes deben saber cuando hablan con sus hijos acerca de este tema?

- ✎ No se olvide de sus hijos de más edad. Los niños y jóvenes de 11 a 17 años también corren riesgo de ser víctimas de actos delictivos. Al mismo tiempo que les da más libertad, asegúrese de que ellos también entienden las importantes reglas de seguridad.
- ✎ Cuando hable con sus hijos, hágalo de una manera tranquila, que no cause miedo. No es necesario que los niños se asusten para que comprendan los peligros. En realidad, el temor puede ser contraproducente, ya que el miedo puede paralizar a un niño.
- ✎ Hable abiertamente de las cuestiones de seguridad. Es menos probable que los niños acudan a usted si el tema está envuelto en un manto de secreto. Si piensan que usted se siente cómodo cuando habla del asunto, serán más comunicativos.
- ✎ No confunda a los niños con el concepto de “extraños.” Los niños no tienen la misma idea que los adultos acerca de quién es un extraño. El mensaje “peligro-extraño” no es eficaz, ya que es más probable que el peligro para los niños venga de alguien que usted o ellos conocen, en vez de un extraño.
- ✎ Practique lo que enseña. Usted puede creer que los niños entienden su mensaje, pero hasta que ellos lo incorporen en sus vidas cotidianas es posible que no haya sido claramente entendido. Busque oportunidades para practicar escenarios de “qué pasa si...”
- ✎ Enseñe a los niños que es más importante huir de una situación amenazadora que ser corteses. Ellos también necesitan saber que está bien que le cuenten a usted lo sucedido y que no serán vistos como “cuenteros” por ello.

## ¿Qué es lo más importante que los padres, abuelos y guardianes deben comunicar a sus hijos acerca de este tema?

- ✎ Los niños siempre **deben avisarle** a usted o a un adulto de confianza antes de ir a cualquier lado, aceptar cualquier regalo o subir a un automóvil con cualquier persona. Esto se aplica también a los niños de más edad.
- ✎ Los niños no deben salir solos y siempre **deben hacerse acompañar** por un amigo cuando van a algún lado o juegan afuera de su casa.
- ✎ Está bien decir que **no** si alguien trata de tocarlos o los trata de una manera que los hace sentir asustados, incómodos o confundidos y escapar de la situación tan rápido como sea posible.
- ✎ Los niños necesitan saber que le pueden **contar** a usted o a un adulto de confianza si se sienten asustados, incómodos o confundidos.

- ✎ Los niños necesitan saber que siempre habrá alguien para ayudarlos y que tienen derecho a sentirse seguros.

### **¿Cuál es el mito más grande respecto a este tema?**

El mito más grande es que los extraños constituyen el mayor peligro para los niños. En la mayoría de los casos, el autor del delito es alguien a quien los padres o el niño conocen y esa persona puede ser alguien de confianza o estar en una posición de responsabilidad respecto al niño y su familia.

### **¿Qué consejo le ofrecería usted a los padres, abuelos y guardianes que quieren hablar con sus hijos acerca de este tema?**

Los padres, abuelos y guardianes deben elegir oportunidades o momentos propicios para la enseñanza para reforzar las reglas de seguridad. Si ocurre un incidente en su comunidad y su hijo le pregunta acerca de él, hable francamente pero con palabras tranquilizadoras. Explique a sus hijos que usted quiere discutir con ellos las reglas de seguridad para que sepan qué es lo que tienen que hacer si alguna vez enfrentan una situación difícil. Asegúrese de que usted tiene “redes de seguridad” establecidas, para que los niños sepan que **siempre** habrá alguien que los podrá ayudar.

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