

(Place on parish letterhead.)

(Date)

Dear Parents,

The safety of your children is always uppermost in your mind. We have taken many additional steps in recent years to do our part in ensuring that your children will be in a safe place when they are participating in a program in *(your parish)*. All of our staff and volunteers have received the required background checks and training. We are implementing a program to help your children recognize the steps they can take to keep themselves safe. Lesson plans have been prepared for different age groups among the students and these are being provided to you. We are also providing an information sheet for you that may help you with matters that can affect your own children. As children grow, it is helpful to review the information provided there and apply it to the new set of circumstances that children face in these pre-teen and early teenage years.

You are encouraged to spend some time reviewing this information yourself, and then sitting down with your children. Each of the “rules” noted contains some application to common sense safety tips that you may share with your children. Other parts of the “rules” apply to some of the decisions that you make as parents for the safety of your children. A question and answer segment provides some suggestions on how you can best address these concerns with your children. Our goal is to equip both you and your children with the knowledge that can help to keep them safe.

For young people, friendships outside the home are very important. Parents should know who their child’s friends are, and where they spend their time. Especially note if your child is “hanging around” with students who are several years older. This is always a red flag for parents. Media influences are very much a part of the cultural formation that young people receive. Monitor movies, books, and especially computer use. Computers with Internet access should be in a “public” area of the home under the watchful eye of parents. Children alone on the computer can be susceptible to the activity of strangers via chat rooms. We strongly discourage single dating for young people; that should be put off until late in the high school years. Mixed group activities are best for children in the middle school and early high school grades.

The basic point is that parents need to be involved with their children. The more you know about the daily events of your children’s lives, the better you are able to spot any danger signs that may surface. The more regular your communication with your children, the more free they are to come to you with their concerns.

May our Lord bless you and your family.

Sincerely yours,
(DRE)

For the Classroom – Formation in Christian Chastity, Grade 5

Grade 5 – Lesson Plan 1

Theme: God Made Us To Know The Truth

Objectives:

1. Students will know that Jesus wants us to know Him and follow the truth.
2. Students will have a greater understanding of how we can live out the truth through the virtue of chastity.
3. Students will demonstrate an appreciation for how our bodies are an expression of the truth of our dignity as adopted sons and daughters of God.

Begin by telling the children that every October, the Church dedicates the entire month as “Respect Life” month and that we are going to talk about how we can respect life by respecting ourselves and others. Then, tell them the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Our Lady of Guadalupe:

In 1531, on a hillside in central Mexico, Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our mother, appeared to an Aztec man named Juan Diego five times. She appeared to him as a pregnant Aztec princess. After one of the apparitions, as Juan was hurrying to be with his uncle who was very sick and thought to be near death, Mary told Juan not to worry and that his uncle would be healed. When he arrived at his uncle’s home, his uncle was completely better.

The Blessed Virgin also told Juan, who had recently converted to the Catholic Faith, to tell the local bishop, Bishop Zumarraga, that she wanted a church built there, at the sight of the apparition. When Juan told this to Bishop Zumarraga, the bishop demanded a sign. Mary, who identified herself to Juan as the Ever-Virgin Mother of the True God, told him to pick some roses from the hillside and deliver them to the bishop. Juan obediently found and picked the roses, which was a miracle in itself since the roses were not in season at that time. When he opened his tilma (cloak) to show the bishop the flowers, not only did the beautiful roses fall from the tilma, but miraculously painted on the tilma was a beautiful image of Mary as she had appeared to Juan Diego.

The bishop had a church built at the site of the apparitions. This site is one of the most visited pilgrimage sites in the world today, with several million people visiting it each year. The tilma contains the same image that our Blessed Mother left on it almost 500 years ago. After the apparitions millions of people living in Mexico and elsewhere in the Americas converted to Catholicism. One of the effects of this was that human sacrifice, commonly practiced by some of the native people up to that time, ceased. Thus, the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe were instrumental in the saving of, and respect for, human life. It is for this reason that Mary is invoked under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe as Patroness of the Unborn. She is also invoked under this title as Patroness of the Americas. Juan Diego was recently canonized a saint.

After completing the story, lead the children in the following prayer. (Have a handout with the prayers, quotations from Scripture and the Catechism, and the “Key Concepts” ready for the children. After reciting the prayer together, have the children take turns reading the rest aloud.)

Opening Prayer: Our Lady of Guadalupe, please obtain God’s grace, protection and spiritual health for my family and for all families. Make our homes safe and pure, a home which recognizes the kingship of Jesus - a sanctuary of peace, joy, and love. Help us to image in our family, the Holy Family of Nazareth - Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Help us to know and live out the truth of Christ’s love for us and for all people, and to realize that the more we live chaste, pure lives, the better we will know and live out the truth. Bring us God’s grace to always respect and defend human life, which is so precious a gift from the Father. Intercede for us with Jesus, that we may be granted the grace of living holy lives and of going to heaven one day to live eternally in happiness with the Holy Trinity, with you, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and with all the blessed. Amen.

St. Joseph, Patron of Family life, pray for us!
Saint Juan Diego, pray for us!

Quotation from Sacred Scripture:

*Behold, the virgin shall be with child
and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,
which means ‘God is with us.’ (Matthew 1:23)*

Quotation from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (2466):

In Jesus Christ, the whole of God’s truth has been made manifest. “Full of grace and truth,” he came as the “light of the world.” He is the Truth. “Whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.” The disciple of Jesus continues in his word so as to know “the truth [that] will make you free” and that sanctifies.

“Key Concepts” Reading:

How we come to know and live out the truth.

Jesus is the Truth. He wants us to know Him and follow the Truth so that we can choose what is good and live joyful lives. God reveals His truth through Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the teaching office of the Church, i.e., the Pope and the Bishops in union with Him (the Magisterium). We can also know the truth about what is good and right through reason (our ability to think, understand, and judge). Going to Mass, receiving the Holy Eucharist, going to Confession, and daily prayer are essential for us to know and live out the truth.

Each person has dignity imparted to him or her by God. Every baptized person is an adopted son or daughter of God the Father. Because of the dignity that God gave us, we are to respect others and ourselves in thought, word, and deed.

Discussion Questions:

Question: What do we know about Jesus from the Bible?

Answer: He is God, Son of God, Son of Mary and Foster-Son of St. Joseph, Savior, miracle worker, God in the flesh, our friend, etc.

Question: How can we show our family and friends that we know the truth?

Answer: By acting as Christ would, by sharing the Gospel with them, by following the teachings of Christ and His Church, etc.

Activity:

In class have the students write a might list, which explains three ways we might respect others in thought, three ways we might show respect for others in word, or three ways we can show respect for others in deed. (Choose one of these three topics.) Then, have them share their answers with the class.

Summary:

If we want to know the truth, we need to do all we can to learn about Jesus. By reading the Bible, learning the teachings of the Church, and following the teaching of the Pope and the Bishops in union with him, we will come to know Jesus and the Truth. The Church teaches that each person is a unique creation and should be treated with dignity and respect.

Closing Prayer: Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas and of life, pray for us!

Saint Juan Diego, pray for us!

For the Classroom – Formation in Christian Chastity, Grade 5

Grade 5 - Lesson Plan 2

Theme: God Made Us To Know The Truth

Objectives:

1. Students will know that Jesus wants us to know Him and follow the truth.
2. Students will have a greater understanding of how we can live out the truth through the virtue of chastity.
3. Students will demonstrate an appreciation for how our bodies are an expression of the truth of our dignity as adopted sons and daughters of God.

Tell the children you will tell them a story about a woman who knew God's truth and acted on it. Then, tell the story of St. Gianna Beretta Molla which follows.

St. Gianna Beretta Molla:

St. Gianna Beretta Molla was a devoted, pious, and loving wife, mother, and doctor who lived in Italy. In 1962, while she was pregnant with her fourth child, a doctor discovered that Gianna had cancer. The doctor recommended abortion, but Gianna refused. Shortly after giving birth she died from complications. As a result of her heroic sacrifice, St. Gianna is considered a patron saint of the pro-life movement.

Opening Prayer: Dear Saint Gianna, you showed the power of a mother's love. You sacrificed your own life, so that your baby daughter might live. Please intercede for us and all our unborn brothers and sisters. We ask that all mothers will choose life for their unborn children, as you did, and that each child will be respected and protected, the way that you cherished your own children. Amen.

Review:

So far, we've learned what truth is, that Jesus embodies truth and is Truth, and how we can know the truth. We have also learned that we could live out the truth by going to Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation, going to the sacrament of Penance frequently, praying every day, and following the commandments. Finally, we learned that everyone has dignity because we are all made in God's image and likeness and that we are His sons and daughters. Now we turn to what our conscience is and how we can correctly form our conscience in the truth. We will also focus on the truth that everyone has dignity because we are all made in the image and likeness of God. Because of this we must respect every human being and work to protect the life of every person from conception until natural death.

(Prepare a second handout with the following quotes and readings, and have the children take turns reading them aloud.)

Quotation from Sacred Scripture:

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. (Jeremiah 1:5)

Quotation from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (2270):

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person--among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.

“Key Concepts” Reading:

The proper formation of conscience respect for human life.

God gives each of us a conscience, which is His inner voice that inspires us to do good and avoid evil (CCC 1795). Our conscience helps us to identify the near occasions of sin, which are the persons, places, and things, that so easily lead to sin. We need to do our part to form our consciences correctly. We can do this by listening to God’s Word, through prayer, by going to Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation, by frequently going to Confession, by following the teachings of the Church, and by obeying our parents.

The first and most important way in which we demonstrate respect for ourselves and others is by upholding the right to life. Every human being is a gift from God to be cherished from conception to natural death. Abortion is the deliberate killing of an unborn child and is, therefore, a grave sin.

We have a duty to care for the sick and the suffering. We must never kill a sick or suffering person in the name of compassion. This is called “euthanasia,” which is a grave violation of the fifth commandment. Again, all persons have the right to life--from conception until natural death. We must pray for those who harm themselves or others through abortion or euthanasia, or by supporting abortion and euthanasia.

(Teacher’s Note: All biological concepts and related questions are to be covered at home by the parents of the child.)

Discussion Questions:

Question: What can you do to show respect for human life?

Answer: Pray for an end to abortion and euthanasia; practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy; speak up for life when you see someone advocating a stance which is contrary to the right to life, etc. We also show respect for life when we treat our classmates with respect and kindness.

Question: In what ways can you show how much you value other people, especially younger children?

Answer: Helping younger students with their homework; collecting food, clothing, and toys for needy families; performing acts of kindness for younger brothers and sisters or other students, etc.

Activity:

Have your students say a Rosary or decade of the Rosary for an end to abortion and in reparation for the sins of abortion. If it is possible to say it in front of the Blessed Sacrament in a church or chapel, that is even better.

Summary:

Our conscience is our guide for helping us to understand what's right and wrong. But in order to form our consciences correctly, we need to listen to God's Word, pray, go to Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation, go to Confession regularly (once per month is a good practice), follow the teachings of the Church, and obey our parents. Every human being is a gift from God whose life is to be treasured. Abortion is a grave sin, because it involves the deliberate killing of an unborn child. We have an obligation to care for the sick and the suffering. The fifth Commandment forbids murder, including the killing of those who are ill or have physical or mental disabilities. We must pray for those who have died through abortion and euthanasia and for those who have committed these sins. We must pray for the protection of the right to life of every single human being, since every human person is made in the image of God.

Closing Prayer: Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the unborn, pray for us!

For the Classroom – Safe Environment Program, Grade 5

Theme: Wise Decisions / Being Prudent

(Have a handout for the children with the following prayer and quote from the Catechism. Recite the opening prayer together, and have the children take turns reading the quote out loud.)

Opening Prayer: Lord, thank You for another day of life. Give me the grace and strength to live it well. Help me to use the hours wisely, for I cannot have them back. Help me to make amends for little slights or petty words inflicted on my friends. Lord, thank You for another chance to use a little better the gifts You have given me. For yesterday is over, and tomorrow's far away, and I remain committed to the good I do today!

Catechism of the Catholic Church (1806):

Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it; “the prudent man looks where he is going.” “Keep sane and sober for your prayers.” Prudence is “right reason in action,” writes St. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle. ...The prudent man determines and directs his conduct in accordance with this judgment. With the help of this virtue we apply moral principles to particular cases without error and overcome doubts about the good to achieve and the evil to avoid.

Objectives:

1. Student will know to avoid dangerous and harmful activities.
2. Student will know the importance of a “buddy system” and how to implement it.
3. Student will develop a safety plan.
4. Student will practice assertive body language.

Begin with the following discussion:

Jesus is the Truth. We can know His truth about what is good and right through reason (our ability to think, understand, and judge). We have a conscience to know right from wrong, good from evil. It is wise and prudent to formulate a plan to avoid dangerous situations. God gave us our parents, friends, and teachers to help us know when and how to avoid dangers. It is prudent to have a “buddy system.” That is, you never go alone. Always have a “buddy” with you.

Now that you are older, parents are giving you more responsibilities. You must be prepared for unexpected emergencies. To have a “safety plan” is very prudent. Here are some good rules for your plan. (Have these rules on a handout and go over them with the children.)

Always be with a group when outdoors.
Be aware of your surroundings.
Never hitchhike.
Use well lit streets, walkways, and playgrounds.
Do not use shortcuts.
Carry identification with you.
When home alone, be sure you have emergency phone numbers and a phone number of a neighbor or a near-by friend.
Never answer the door unless you know the person.
Always be alert and be cautious of your surroundings. Do not daydream.
Stand up straight and walk with authority.

Activities:

You have read the “Safety Plan.” Sit in small groups and discuss what else you can include in “your safety plan.”

Discuss with your parents your plan and ask for their guidance when you are on an outing.

Practice saying “No” and acting in an assertive way by responding to these situations listed below:

- You are walking home from school and a car with a young man pulls up and asks you for directions. How can you respond to this situation?
- You are babysitting your younger brother and sister and the doorbell rings. How would you respond to this?
- You answer the telephone and you do not recognize the voice on the phone. The person says very unkind words to you. What will you do?
- Your friend and you are shopping at the mall and a stranger is following you, asking you questions. How would you respond to this situation?

Conclusion: Jesus is the Truth and He wants us to know and follow Him. We can also know the truth about what is good and right through reason. Jesus wants us to be happy and safe and he gave us the gifts and tools to make good choices and have a plan in case of danger. Always travel with a buddy, and be sure you have a plan in case you become scared or feel unsafe.

Closing Prayer: Hail Mary

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, comuníquesele 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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