

SAFE ENVIRONMENT CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM

Fifth Grade

Overview

This lesson equips fifth grade students to understand their God-given dignity, show respect for themselves and others, and recognize when situations or behaviors are unsafe. Students will learn how to respond assertively using the NO, GO, TELL safety plan, stand up against bullying, and practice good judgment both in person and online. Through Scripture, Catholic teaching, and practical safety strategies, students will be encouraged to live with kindness, courage, and responsibility—protecting themselves and others while honoring God in their daily choices.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the fifth grade student will be able to:

1. Expand on the NO, GO, TELL safety plan and explain a detailed action plan for responding to unsafe situations.
2. Define bullying and cyberbullying in their own words.
3. Provide examples of bullying and cyberbullying, and describe appropriate Christian responses rooted in love, respect, and justice.
4. Understand important concepts about using good judgment and internet safety.

Part One: God's Love for Us

God loves each of us. He created us with love – for love. Made in His image and likeness, we have great dignity and value. We don't have to earn this dignity – it's a gift.

God loves us always, even when we disobey Him. He calls us to love ourselves and our neighbors. One way we do this is by showing **respect** – for ourselves and for others.

How do we show respect?

- **With our words:** no cursing, gossip, or talking behind someone's back.
- **With our bodies:** dressing modestly, caring for our health, avoiding harmful substances.
- **With our actions:** not hurting, fighting, cheating, or stealing.

We respect valuable things – treasures, prized possessions, expensive belongings – because they matter to us. Our lives are even more valuable. They are gifts from God. We must protect and treasure our own lives – and the lives of others.

God calls us to give ourselves for others, to put their needs before our own. The Gospel of John tells us:

"We know what real love is because Christ gave up His life for us.
So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters...
Let us not just say we love each other; let us show it by our actions." (1 John 3:16-18)

Sometimes, living this out is hard – especially when others don't value us as God's gift, and we feel threatened, violated, or unsafe.

Part Two: Uncomfortable Situations

Sometimes people do not respect our bodies. They may try to trick us – or hurt us – with **bad touches**.

We know we are not safe when our bodies feel uncomfortable. That feeling is our body's way of saying: **"Something bad is happening."** We must listen to it. Trust your instincts.

A bad touch might not hurt physically – but it still makes us feel unsafe. It can be scary. You might feel nervous about telling someone.

But it's important to tell a **trusted adult**. Trusted adults can be:

- Parents or relatives
- Teachers, principals, coaches
- Guidance counselors
- Doctors, police officers, firefighters

When someone touches your private areas when they are not supposed to, that is a **bad touch**:

- It is **never OK**
- It is **never your fault**
- You **can't get in trouble** for telling, even if someone told you to keep it a secret

God gave you trusted adults to protect you. They need to know when you feel unsafe.

When you feel uncomfortable, your body is saying: **"This is not safe! Get away!"** God made us with these feelings for a reason. And when we feel unsafe, there are rules we can follow to help.

Part Three: NO, GO, TELL Safety Rules

When something feels wrong or unsafe, or we feel comfortable, we follow **three special rules**:
NO. GO. TELL.

1. NO

Say loudly: **"NO! I don't like that!"**

Stand tall, step back, put your hands out like **"Stop!"**

This shows you respect yourself and want to stay safe.

Remember:

If a friend says "NO!" to you, respect their boundaries and stop.

2. GO

After saying "NO," move away quickly.

Go to a safe place.

Find someone you trust.

3. TELL

Tell a trusted adult what happened.

You are **not tattling** – you are protecting yourself.

If someone touches your private areas:

- It is **not your fault**
- Do **not** keep it a secret
- Even if someone told you not to tell, **tell anyway**

If the first adult you tell doesn't believe you or doesn't help you – tell another.

Part Four: Beware of Tricks

To stay safe, it's not enough to just know the **NO, GO, TELL** plan—we also need to be aware of the **tricks** that predators might use to trap us.

Think of it like preparing for a hike: You'd check for wild animals, bad weather, or dangerous cliffs. In the same way, knowing how predators operate helps you avoid danger.

Sexual predators often use **tricks** or **lures** to gain a child's trust. Here are some examples:

- **Bad News Trick:** Pretending something bad happened to your parent and saying they were sent to pick you up.
- **Bribe Trick:** Offering gifts or treats in exchange for something inappropriate.
- **Help Me Trick:** Asking for your help—like finding a lost pet or carrying something.
- **Game Trick:** Using playful games that involve touching.
- **Internet Trick:** Pretending to be your age online, trying to get you to send inappropriate content.
- **Power Trick:** Using their position—like a coach, teacher, or priest—to pressure you.
- **Meet Me Trick:** They try to get you to meet them alone somewhere away from your parents.
- **“You're Special” Trick:** Giving you special attention to gain your trust.

These are not always obvious. That's why you need to **stay alert, trust your instincts**, and **ask questions**. If something feels off, it probably is.

Know the signs. Be prepared. And always follow **NO, GO, TELL** if someone tries to trick you.

Part Five: Bullying and Cyberbullying – Part One

Let's talk about bullying—and how it's different from simply being assertive.

Being assertive means standing up for yourself with confidence while respecting others.

Being aggressive means hurting or demeaning others.

Bullying is a form of aggression.

Here's what bullying looks like:

- One or more people intentionally cause injury or discomfort.
- It can be physical, verbal, or emotional.
- It leaves the person feeling hurt, scared, or violated.

People may be bullied because of their appearance, race, religion, voice, abilities, or anything that makes them unique.

But here's the truth: Jesus treated *everyone* with dignity, and we are called to do the same.

Bullying can happen anywhere—school, sports, the neighborhood, online, even in video games.

When it happens online or through technology, it's called cyberbullying. Cyberbullying can include:

- Hurtful messages or posts
- Harassment in online games
- Spreading rumors or sharing private photos
- Creating fake photos or videos with AI that are embarrassing or hurtful

It's dangerous because it's often hidden from adults—but the hurt is real.

If you're being bullied—whether in person or online—use the **NO, GO, TELL** plan:

- **NO** – Speak up assertively.
- **GO** – Get away from the bully or log off.
- **TELL** – Report it to a trusted adult.

Remember: No one deserves to be bullied. Seeking help is a way of saying, *"I am worth more than this."*

Part Six: Bullying and Cyberbullying – Part Two

Let's talk about what it means to respond to bullying as a Christian.

If we see someone being bullied, our responsibility is clear:

- Help them.
- Get help for them.
- Stand up for them.
- Protect them.
- **Never** join in.

Here's something important—sometimes we participate in bullying without realizing it. If you:

- Stand by and do nothing...
 - Laugh when someone's being picked on...
 - Walk away so you "don't have to deal with it"...
- You're actually helping the bully.

Instead, we need strategies to take action. Effective strategies:

- Get a teacher or other trusted adult.
- Stand next to the person being bullied and offer support.
- Speak up assertively to tell the bully to stop.

- Remove the person from the situation.

Ineffective strategies:

- Physical violence
- Humiliating or hurting the bully in return

Let's look at a real scenario:

Dan is walking to class when his friend Scott knocks his bag to the floor, laughs, and pushes it toward a group of boys. The boys dump his bag out and laugh at his belongings while other kids watch. Dan feels embarrassed and exposed.

In situations like this, think about your options:

- Speak up for the person.
- Get an adult immediately.
- Stand by them so they aren't alone.
- Remove them from the crowd.

Remember: doing nothing is still doing something—it's choosing the bully's side. As Christians, we are called to stand up for others, not stand by.

Part Seven: Being a Defender Against Bullies

Being a defender means stepping in to help someone who's being bullied—just like the Good Samaritan stepped in to help the man who was hurt.

Defending someone can look like:

- Telling the bully to stop: "Hey, leave him alone!" or "That's not cool—enough already!"
- Standing with the person being bullied so they're not alone
- Refusing to join in or laugh along
- Getting a trusted adult right away

It's easier to ignore bullying—but Jesus calls us to *do what is right*, even when it's hard.

The Good Samaritan didn't walk past the man in need—he stopped, helped, and cared for him. Jesus tells us, "Go and do likewise." That means when we see someone being hurt—physically, emotionally, or socially—we don't look the other way. We act with compassion.

Living like Christ will sometimes make us stand out, but it's worth it. Jeremiah 17:7-8 reminds us that those who put their trust in God will be strong, steady, and fruitful—like a tree planted by water.

When we choose to defend others, we show mercy, live our faith, and make the world safer for everyone.

Part Eight: Using Good Judgement / Internet Safety

God gives us the example of how to live your life to the fullest by following His word, but He also gives us free will, which means that He allows us to make choices in our own lives. God created you with brains so that you can think before you act. Making a good choice, a choice that keeps you healthy and safe, is an example of using good judgment.

One way we can use good judgment is to be cautious of strangers. If you feel uncomfortable around a person, trust your instincts and get away. Always pay attention to the people and vehicles that are around you. Keep a look out for anything or anyone suspicious. Sometimes strangers may try to give you a gift or a ride home or tell you a secret. Always get permission from a teacher or parent before you go anywhere.

Being cautious of strangers also means that we should be very careful about talking with people online that we do not know. Do not agree to meet with somebody who contacts you online. Do not give out any of your personal information, our address, or pictures of yourself. Tell your parents or teachers or another trusted adult and stay away from them.

It's always good to have boundaries for yourself when using the internet, playing video games, or texting. Let's come up with some good boundaries or rules to have for internet, video game, and cell phone use to keep you safe. (Have students brainstorm online boundaries. Then ask for some volunteers to share their answers with the whole group.)

If anything on the internet makes you feel uncomfortable (something inappropriate or naked pictures or gross images), tell a trusted adult. Always talk to your parents about what you see online, whom you talk to, and any messages you get through email or on your phone. Your parents want to keep you safe, and they may check up on what you're doing online – that's a good thing!

God gave you the ability to make good choices so that you can keep yourself safe. He put people in your life who love you and whom you can trust. If you ever feel unsafe, get in contact with someone you trust right away.

Closing Prayer

Lord, when I am lost—watch over me and help me.
Lord, when I am afraid—watch over me and help me.
Lord, when I am lonely—watch over me and help me.
Lord, when I am in danger—watch over me and help me.
Lord, when someone hurts me—watch over me and help me.
Lord, when I feel uncomfortable—watch over me and help me.
Lord, when someone calls me names—watch over me and help me.

Amen.

NO

GO

TELL

Name _____

Personal Action Plan Against Bullying

Fill in the chart below with your personal action plan against bullying. You may make up your own bullying scenario or use a real one.

Describe the bullying situation: Dates, location, who is involved, and details of the bullying	Describe the desired outcome: What would you ideally like to happen? What prevention or safety measures would you like to be put in place?	Describe what you can do to help: How can you help make this happen? What role do you play in making this happen? How can you help the person being bullied?

Name _____

True or False Quiz

Circle TRUE or FALSE for each statement.

Being assertive means saying NO in a firm, loud voice.	TRUE or FALSE
Walking home alone is one way to stay safe.	TRUE or FALSE
If a stranger approaches you in a car and asks if you want a ride, you should get in their car.	TRUE or FALSE
It is a good thing to keep a secret if someone sends you inappropriate pictures online.	TRUE or FALSE
God put people in our life that we can trust.	TRUE or FALSE
You should feel free to share personal information with a person you meet online.	TRUE or FALSE
It is ok to tell a trusted adult about a bad touch.	TRUE or FALSE
Using good judgment means making good choices using your brain.	TRUE or FALSE

Name _____

Online Boundaries

Create a billboard in the box below advertising one rule for online safety. The billboard must include one slogan describing the rule, and illustrations of the rule.