

SAFE ENVIRONMENT CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM

Seventh Grade

Overview

The lesson helps seventh grade students recognize their God-given dignity and equips them with the knowledge and skills to protect themselves and others. Through Scripture, discussion, and practical strategies, students learn how to respond to unsafe situations, avoid harmful influences, and live out their Catholic faith with courage and integrity. The lesson emphasizes the virtues of respect, temperance, and chastity, and provides guidance on issues especially relevant to seventh graders, particularly the development of healthy boundaries in relationships and online safety. Students are called to use good judgment, strengthen their moral character, and trust in God's grace to make choices that lead to freedom, joy, and holiness.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, seventh grade students will be able to:

1. Recite the **NO, GO, TELL** action plan, with an emphasis on using **assertive behavior**. (*Review of Sixth Grade*)
2. Define **conscience** in their own words and explain how our **moral conscience is formed**.
3. Provide examples of **healthy and unhealthy relationships**.
4. Understand how to set **good boundaries** for relationships and to recognize **violations of their boundaries**.
5. Identify and practice at least two ways to live out the virtues of **temperance** and **chastity** in their daily lives.

Part One: Respect for Ourselves and Others

God made each of us out of love and in His image. That means every person has dignity, value, and God created each of us out of love and in His image. That means every person has **great dignity and value**—not because of what we do, but because of who we are as His children. God always loves us, even when we make mistakes, and He calls us to love ourselves and others in return.

One way we do this is through the virtue of **respect**.

Respect means speaking and acting with courtesy, treating others as children of God.

We show respect in three main ways:

- **Through our words:** No abusive language, gossip, or talking behind someone's back.
- **Through our bodies:** Dress modestly, care for your health, avoid drugs, and remain chaste—saving sexual activity for marriage.
- **Through our actions:** Avoid hurting yourself or others, fighting, cheating, or stealing.

When someone disrespects you, it hurts because they're ignoring your worth as a child of God. That's why respect is so important—we protect and value our lives, which are far more precious than any treasure.

God calls us to be a gift to others, putting their needs before our own. Scripture tells us:

“We know what real love is because Christ gave up his life for us. And we also ought to give up our lives for Christian brothers and sisters... Dear children, let us stop just saying we love each other; let us really show it by our actions.”

(1 John 3:16–18)

And in Matthew 25, Jesus reminds us: Whatever you do for the least, you do for Him.

This is not always easy, especially when others treat us without dignity. But even then, we must remember who we are: **beloved children of God, called to love in action.**

Part Two: Uncomfortable Situations

Sometimes people do not respect our bodies. This can be done by an adult or another kid. They may try to trick us or touch us in ways that feel wrong. They touch us repeatedly even when we tell them to stop. Or they touch us on our private parts. This is called a **bad touch**.

Even if it doesn't physically hurt, a bad touch can make us feel scared or nervous. That uncomfortable feeling is your body's warning:

“Something is not right. Get away.”

It's important to **listen to those signals**. God gave us those feelings to protect us.

If someone touches your private areas when they shouldn't, it is **never your fault**. You cannot get in trouble for telling the truth—even if the person told you to keep it a secret.

When this happens, you must tell a **trusted adult**. These may include:

- A parent or relative
- A teacher or principal
- A coach or counselor
- A doctor, police officer, or firefighter

God placed these adults in your life to protect you. If one doesn't listen, **keep telling** until someone does.

Remember:

- Feeling uncomfortable is your body's way of protecting you.
- Trust those feelings.
- Get away, and tell a trusted adult.

Your safety matters.

Part Three: Setting Appropriate Boundaries

One way we show respect for ourselves and others is by respecting our boundaries and the boundaries of other people by not overstepping them or allowing someone to cross our boundaries. There are

boundaries that we put in place ourselves and boundaries that are put in place by other authority figures like our parents, spouses, teachers or lawmakers. Societies also establish boundaries that set limits on acceptable behavior.

All of these boundaries are in place to keep us safe. They are like the foul lines on a baseball field or the out-of-bound lines in basketball, soccer, or football. When the boundaries are clear, specific, and understood by everyone, it becomes much easier to avoid crossing over into inappropriate actions, feelings, or situations.

Boundaries are physical and emotional limits established in ALL relationships by or for a person. These boundaries vary depending on the relationship. No relationship is perfect. All relationships, whether it is between a parent and child, a boyfriend and girlfriend, or a teacher and student, are between two human beings, and as human beings, none of us are perfect.

Boundaries provide us with the promise of being in a relationship where both people are committed to preserving respect and trust and upholding the dignity and worth of one another.

There are many different types of boundaries: boundaries on time, emotions, knowledge, and our bodies. Boundaries are a good thing. Boundaries help to protect each of us. We are created by God as such valuable creations that we are too precious to NOT have our boundaries respected. It is important at your age to work on your skills related to respect and boundaries so that you might excel in your current relationships and learn for the future.

In a healthy relationship, each individual is respectful of the other's boundaries and does not cross them. In unhealthy relationships, boundaries are ignored, and people feel uncomfortable or violated. When physical or emotional boundaries are ignored, that is a violation of your personal dignity and value.

Often, it is easy to see when a physical boundary is crossed. Those are bad touches. However, It is more difficult to see an emotional boundary being ignored. Emotional boundaries are limits that we set on the amount and kind of information we disclose and the way we respect the feelings of others. Manipulative behavior, name-calling, sarcasm, put-downs, harassment, and ridicule are just a few examples of the ways that people can ignore our emotional boundaries.

Part Four: Warning Signs For Boundary Violations

For us to be safe, it is important to be able to identify warning signs of potential violations of our boundaries. This will help us stay out of risky situations and/or get away from the dangerous/unhealthy person and their behavior. These risks can come from adults or from other minors – they can happen in any relationship, even with people we otherwise trust.

Let's look at some warning signs that signal that someone is trying to cross your physical or emotional boundaries:

- A person gives you alcohol or drugs.
- A person tries to be alone with you, or asks you to keep a secret and then threatens you if you reveal it.
- A person tries to touch you after you have told them to stop.
- A person tries to win you over with gifts, special praise or consideration.

- A person uses conditions to get you to do something you might want. For example, “If you want a good grade, you need to have sex with me.”
- A person tries to isolate you from your support system (like friends and family).
- A person uses persistent private means of contact to be in touch with you (repeated calls, friend requests, text messages, etc.)
- A person tries to touch you on your private parts or in ways that make you uncomfortable.
- A person asks you many personal questions or shares too much personal information.
- A person is persistent in trying to talk you into what they want, even though you have said no.

You have a right to have your boundaries respected and a responsibility to respect the boundaries of others. It is important to recognize that when a person is trying to cross your boundaries and stop it immediately, even if that person is someone you know and like.

Part Five: NO, GO, TELL Safety Rules

When someone’s actions make you feel uncomfortable, follow the **NO, GO, TELL** plan. These three steps can help keep you safe.

1. NO

Say loudly and firmly: *“NO, I don’t like that!”*

Use your body to show it—step back and hold your hands up to signal “Stop.”

Saying “NO” shows that you respect yourself and want to stay safe.

And remember—if a friend ever says “NO” to you, respect their boundaries too.

2. GO

After saying “NO,” get away from the person quickly.

Move to a safe place where you can find help.

3. TELL

Tell a trusted adult what happened.

This is **not tattling**—it’s protecting yourself.

If someone touches your private areas, it is never your fault.

Never keep it a secret, even if someone made you promise not to tell.

If the first adult you tell doesn’t listen, **keep telling** until someone does.

God gave you trusted adults to keep you safe. Use your voice, get away, and tell.

Part Six: Moral Conscience Formation

Every day, we make choices:

- How we act
- What we say
- What we listen to
- Who we spend time with

These decisions are guided by something God placed within us: our **conscience**.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes conscience as:

“The inner voice of a human being, within whose heart the inner law of God is inscribed.”

It’s that voice that urges us to do good and avoid evil.

We all know moments when we sensed, deep down, that something wasn’t right. That was our conscience speaking.

Forming our conscience well is essential—so we can make choices that bring us closer to God. Our conscience is shaped through:

- **Scripture:** listening to God’s Word
- **Prayer:** speaking and listening to God
- **The Sacraments:** especially Reconciliation and the Eucharist
- **Guidance:** from parents, teachers, priests, and other spiritual leaders

We cannot do this alone—we need **God’s grace**.

That’s why the Sacrament of Reconciliation is so powerful. In confession, Christ forgives us through the priest, wiping our slate clean so we can start fresh, strengthened by His grace.

With a well-formed conscience, we can make decisions that respect our dignity and the dignity of others—living as God calls us to live.

Part Seven: Virtuous Living

To live a good and holy life, we need a well-formed conscience and the daily practice of **virtue**.

Virtues are habits that make it easier to choose what is right. The more we practice, the stronger we become.

Just like practicing a sport or instrument builds skill, practicing virtue shapes our moral lives. Prayer, Scripture, and the Sacraments give us the grace we need to live as Christ asks.

Two especially important virtues for your life are **temperance** and **chastity**.

Temperance

- **Temperance** is self-control, moderation, and mastery of our desires.
- Our desires are God-given and good—but we must not let them control us.
- This includes desires for food, possessions, money, independence, and sexuality.

Example: Eating is good, but overindulging is not. Temperance means knowing when enough is enough. Small acts of temperance—like stopping at one piece of pie—strengthen us for bigger challenges, such as controlling sexual desires.

Steps to grow in temperance:

- Pray daily for God’s grace.
- Practice moderation in small, everyday choices.
- Remind yourself: *“I’ve had enough—it wouldn’t be good for me to have more.”*

Temperance helps us respect our own dignity and the dignity of others.

Chastity

- **Chastity** is sexual self-control—saving all sexual intimacy for marriage.
- It moderates our sexual thoughts, desires, and actions, helping us see others as gifts, not objects.
- God created sexual desire for marriage, where it brings love and new life.

Without chastity, we risk becoming slaves to our desires—using others or turning to pornography, which harms both ourselves and others.

The world often says, “Do whatever you want.” But that path leads to pain, loneliness, and regret.

Chastity, on the other hand, is about saying **YES**:

- **YES to yourself:** “I have dignity and worth. I am worth waiting for.”
- **YES to your future spouse:** Even if you don’t know them yet, they deserve your respect.
- **YES to a hopeful future:** Free from disease, pregnancy outside marriage, and heartbreak.
- **YES to God:** Trusting His plan of joy for your life.

Chastity isn’t just a list of “No’s.” It’s a lifestyle of freedom, love, and happiness.

Strengthening chastity:

- Pray for God’s help daily.
- Seek the Sacraments regularly.
- Live with awareness of your dignity and the dignity of others.

The closer we live to Christ’s way, the more natural virtue becomes—and the freer and happier we will be.

Part Eight: Using Good Judgment / Internet Safety

God shows us how to live a full, meaningful life—but He also gives us **free will**, the ability to make our own choices. God gives us His Word and the virtues to guide us—but He also gives us **free will**, the ability to make our own choices.

Using that freedom wisely means practicing **good judgment**: thinking before we act, and choosing what keeps us safe and healthy.

Be Cautious of Strangers

Dangerous people don’t always look dangerous. They may smile, act friendly, or pretend to know you. They might offer gifts, rides, or secrets to win your trust. The “No, Go, Tell” approach will keep you safe.

- If you feel uncomfortable, **listen to your instincts**: “*This isn’t safe.*”
- Get away and tell a trusted adult.
- Always get permission from your parents before going anywhere.

- There is safety in numbers – stay with a “buddy” to keep yourself safe.
- Look ahead to know where safe adults (like police officers or coaches) might be if you need help.

Online Safety

Strangers online are just as dangerous as strangers in real life. Never interact with people you don’t know on:

- Social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc.)
- Video games or chat rooms
- Emails or texts

Rules for online safety:

- Don’t chat with people you don’t know.
- Never agree to meet someone you met online.
- Never share personal info—your name, address, phone number, school, pictures, or location.
- Remember: anything you post—texts, photos, or emails—can be saved and shared.

Before posting, always ask yourself: *“Would I want my parents, my teacher, or my future spouse to see this?”*

Set clear boundaries for yourself on internet, video game, and phone use.

If Something Feels Wrong

If you ever see or receive inappropriate or disturbing content online, **tell a trusted adult right away.** Always keep your parents or safe adults informed about what you see and who you talk to online.

God gave you the ability to make wise choices and people in your life to help you stay safe. Use both—and never face unsafe situations alone.

Closing Prayer

God of love,

You made each of us a temple of the Holy Spirit.

We know that we are precious in your eyes.

Be with us today—help us always to look out not only for our own safety, but for the safety of friends, family members, and all the people you place in our path.

Watch over us and guide us each day,
so that we may fulfill the plans You have for us.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

NO

GO

TELL

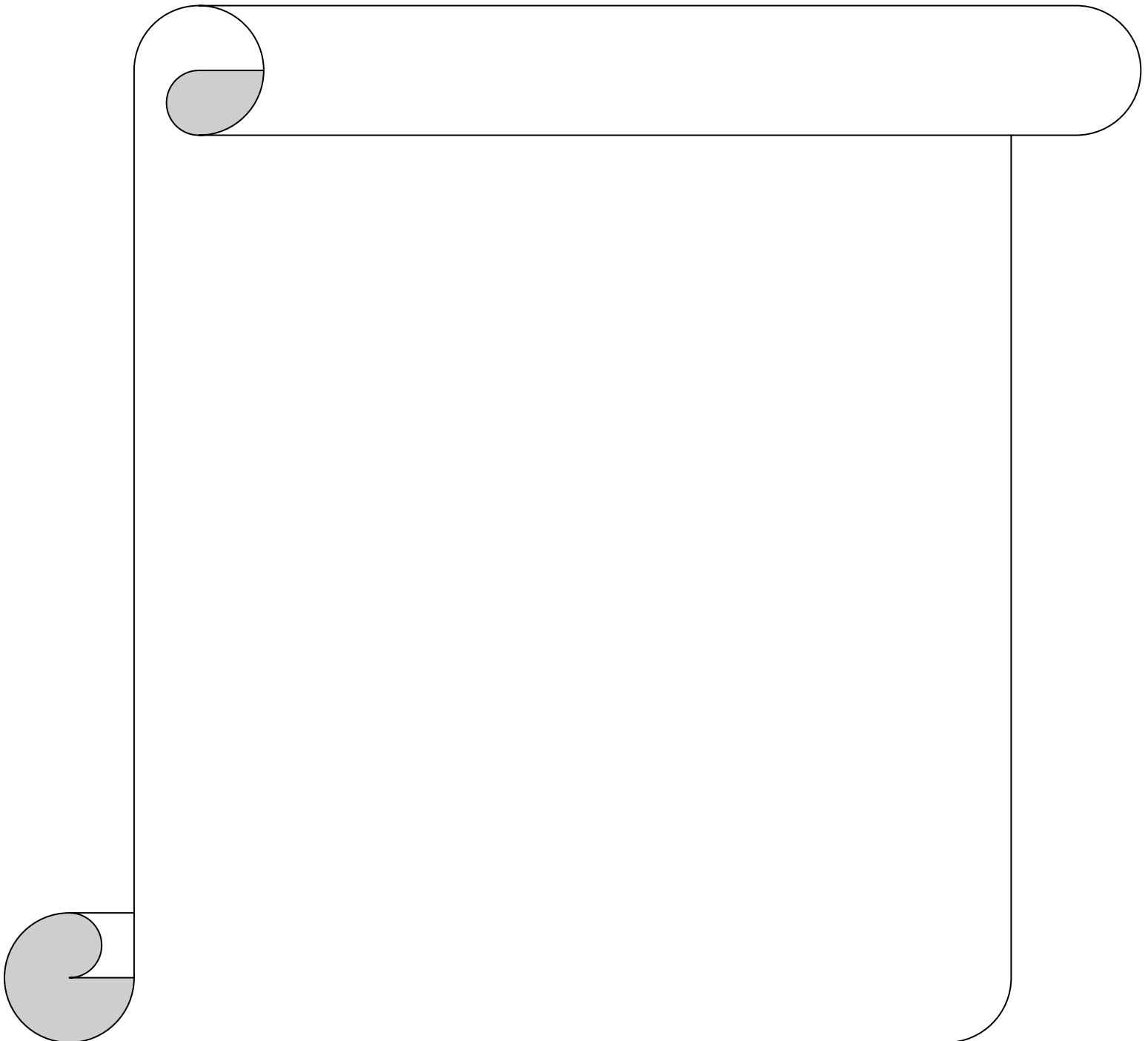
List of warning signs for boundary crossing

- A person gives you alcohol or drugs.
 - A person tries to be alone with you, or asks you to keep a secret and then threatens you if you reveal it.
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- A person tries to win you over with gifts, special praise or consideration.
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Name _____

Five Commandments of Internet Safety

Make a list of the rules to follow for being safe on the internet (including websites, Facebook, Instagram, chat rooms, etc.)



Ways to Live a Pure Life

1. Build and strengthen your personal character

- Train like an athlete – take little steps in the right direction everyday.

2. Purify your mind

- Stay away from junk food of the mind (inappropriate images, song lyrics, websites, etc.)
- Overexposure to bad behavior makes us numb to it.

3. Purify your body

- Modesty in how you dress - “Cover your B’s”:
 - For girls this means cover your breasts, belly, back, butt, and bra or other undergarments.
 - For guys this means belly, back, butt, boxers/briefs.

4. Stay where the odds are in your favor

- Avoid situations where you are likely to fail – stay away from temptation
- The easiest temptation to avoid is the one that doesn’t exist.
- Don’t test yourself or someone you love to see how far you or they can go before they fail or sin or give into temptation.

5. Pray and receive the sacraments, especially the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist

- Pray for strength in your life of purity. Pray for your future spouse and vocation. Also pray for all the people who don’t know about chastity –that they may know the joy that comes from living a chaste life.
- Remember that you cannot live out a life of chastity alone...it’s impossible! You NEED God.

6. Have a reminder

- Keep a holy card in your wallet with a saint known for chastity.
- Put a crucifix over your bed.

7. NEVER GIVE UP & KNOW YOU ARE NOT ALONE

- Remember: “Christ is calling you; the Church needs you; the Pope believes in you, and he expects great things from you!” (John Paul II, 1999.)