

## Lesson 3 for Grades K, 1 & 2

## Boundaries: You Have Rights!

### PRINCIPLE

Children must understand they have a right to be safe, and they are allowed to create boundaries to protect themselves in situations where they feel uncomfortable, or where they could be harmed.

### OBJECTIVES

Through this lesson, the adult lesson leader reinforces the parent's message about boundaries. After Lesson 3, children should be better able to:

- Identify various types of boundaries
- Begin to set their own boundaries and communicate them to others
- Honor appropriate boundaries in different types of relationships
- Technology Component: Understand boundaries can apply for Online activities, too

### CATECHISM / SCRIPTURE

*Freedom is exercised in relationships between human beings. Every human person, created in the image of God, has the natural right to be recognized as a free and responsible being. All owe to each other this duty of respect. The right to the exercise of freedom, especially in moral and religious matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person. This right must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and public order.*

—Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1738 (1997)

### Background for Lesson Leaders:

Before beginning this session, the Lesson Leader should read the *Teaching Boundary and Safety Guide*, as it gives a wealth of information regarding boundaries and how to address them.

While adults are the chief protectors of children, there are still ways we can teach children to better protect themselves when faced with tough situations. Personal boundaries are established during our early years, and adults must help children to create their own proper boundaries and respect the ones that are in place—understanding that children will model adult behavior. Some boundaries are “non-negotiables” for children (such as touching/physical boundaries), but others are unique and are impacted based on the youth's individual perceptions, personal history, values, goals, culture and concerns.

Using our voice, and the word “no” are effective ways to establish a boundary. Sometimes children may not be aware they're allowed to say “no” to an adult or older youth.

Most people will accept and respect our boundaries if we are clear about them. But, with some people, we must frequently and clearly uphold and reset our boundaries.

Children may have difficulty with this concept at this age. They can see boundaries in a very literal and visual way (such as a fence around a yard), but they can also learn that words create boundaries. One boundary is created if, for example, a child says, “I don't need any help. I can do it myself.” Some other words and phrases that can create boundaries for children are “no,” “don't do that,” “give me five” (instead of a hug), and “leave me alone.” Obviously, when you think about it, there are many examples of using words to create boundaries. By using as many examples as possible, you can help young children begin to develop an understanding of the more abstract meaning of the term boundary—and, obviously, that abstract meaning is most germane to helping children learn to protect themselves from sexual abuse.

### This age group: Dealing with the primary age—key concept is “activity”

Young children have lively and vivid imaginations, are growing less self-centered, and are becoming more conscious of others. Their attention span is short—approximately 20 minutes. They build on concrete experiences, love to learn, and are highly inquisitive. However, they rely almost entirely on others to define good and bad, and safe versus unsafe behavior—but they do understand “rules”, which is another phrase for boundaries. At this age, children are beginning to differentiate between the positive and negative aspects of everyday life. They are beginning to question adults' expectations of blind obedience. At the same time they are learning how to respect and care for their own bodies in terms of hygiene, eating, and activity. Parents and caring adults should make every effort to create an environment with honesty and trust, where children are free to ask questions about life and their own bodies to set the stage for each child's life-long relationships with others. This is the time to discuss safe and unsafe behaviors, and to enable children to practice safety away from home.

**ACTIVITY OPTION #5: What is this boundary?**

**Activity:** Children will have an opportunity to look at images of various boundaries and safety rules. Some are very obvious, while others are more abstract. The activity will help children to understand that creating and maintaining their own boundaries are a regular part of life—just like any other safety lesson.

**Directions:** The Lesson Leader will begin with the discussion, pass out the handouts, give children time to answer the questions on the worksheet, and then gather the students together again to discuss the answers.

**Discussion:** **Explain the following to children:** Boundaries promote safety, and there are lots of different types of boundaries that we encounter every single day, all day long!

A boundary is a line, a limit. It's between us and other people or things. On our end, setting a boundary means respecting our own safety and needs.

On the other hand, boundaries are also necessary to listen to the needs of others for their own safety. For example, we have physical boundaries that are personal to each of us and that keep us safe. Unlike a wall or a fence, you can't always see our physical boundaries, but they are in place for our protection. They say when and where it's OK to touch us, and when we don't feel like being touched.

Behavioral boundaries are the behaviors, or things, that you will do and won't do. This includes your safety rules. Sometimes people don't know what your rules are, and you have to say them out loud, or address them, firmly. Sometimes people don't care about your boundaries, and that's wrong—you may have to try to get away from these types of people.

**Introduce the worksheet:** Let's look at this activity and see some examples of all kinds of different boundaries and safety rules that we follow, and then we're going to answer the questions and talk about how we can make our own safety boundaries.

**Gather the children for a discussion of the worksheet answers.** Below are the questions and proposed answers, along with discussion items:

1. What are examples of typical safety lessons that we have to know about to be safe?

*water safety  
bicycle safety  
sun safety*

*crosswalk safety  
sports safety  
gardening safety*

*car safety (road rules, seatbelts)  
fire safety (stop drop and roll)*

2. Which images could illustrate the boundary of "leave me alone" or "don't touch me?"

*rose with thorns  
stop sign*

*barbed-wire fence  
hand symbol*

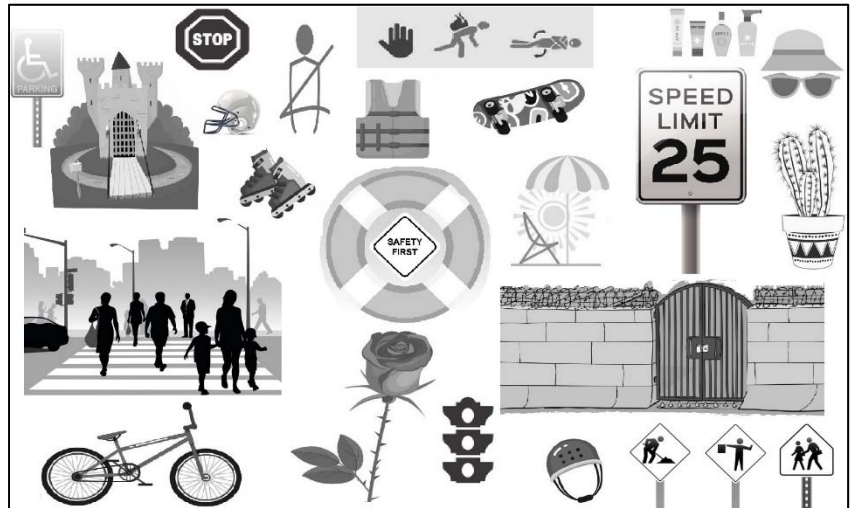
*locked door*

**Note:** The worksheet template is included in the downloaded set of materials at the end of this packet.

The Lesson Leader should review the handouts (and particularly the images) to become familiar with the concepts and all the possible answers that could be derived from the questions.

**SUPPLIES**

Writing utensils  
Pre-printed lesson pages to complete



**Note:** The children may come up with additional answers that could apply in the different examples. Guide the discussion, affirm them whenever possible, and gently correct when necessary.

Do ensure that all answers listed below are addressed.

3. What are some activities that need additional safety precautions?

*bicycling*  
*skateboarding*

*rollerblading*  
*crossing the street*

*football*  
*driving / riding in car*

4. What are some examples of safety lessons and rules that we follow to be safe when we are in the car?

*following the speed limit*

*stopping at stop signs*

*following traffic light rules*

5. What are some examples of safety lessons and rules that we follow to be safe when we are walking outside or playing sports?

*walking on the crosswalk*  
*wearing helmets / knee pads*

*looking both ways to cross*  
*following game rules*

*holding hands to cross*

6. What are some examples of safety lessons and rules that we follow to be safe when we are out in the sun?

*wearing a hat*  
*using sunblock*

*using a sun umbrella*

*wearing sunglasses*

7. Which images show that a boundary has been placed to create a safer environment for themselves?

*castle with moat*  
*locks in doors*

*barbed wire fence*

*walls*

8. What images show what we do to help uphold and respect others' boundaries? And, how do they work? (Hint: sometimes the things that we do to protect ourselves can also be the things that we do to help protect others!)

*stop at stop signs*  
*don't park in special needs parking spots*

*drive extra carefully around "men at work" signs*  
*drive extra carefully around "children crossing" signs*

**For the next section, ask the children to look more closely at the castle, and describe this scenario to them.** The picture you see is a private castle. It's owned by someone, and no one else is allowed to go in there without special permission of the owner.

**Ask these follow-up questions, then continue the discussion:**

- How has the owner of the castle placed a boundary to protect himself? **Answer:** *The owner has placed a moat around the castle.*
- And what does that boundary of a "moat" do? **Answer:** *the moat gives the castle more personal space, like a force field you CAN see. Also, the moat and extra space protect the castle from harm. The owner of the castle also knows that the moat is there, so if anything comes into the water, the owner knows what to do to respond.*
- What does the castle have to do in order to uphold the boundary of the moat? **Answer:** *The owner of the castle has to be diligent and always ensure that it has water in the moat, for the moat to work as a protective boundary from harm.*
- What if someone does breach the boundary of the moat to get to the castle? **Answer:** *The owner has to take more protective measures and talk right away to someone who can help.*

**Explain the following point to children to help transition to action items for question #9:**

We are like the owners of the castle with the boundary of the moat. Except, we are the owners of our bodies, though, instead of a castle. And instead of the boundary of the moat, we have our own personal space—like a forcefield that you CAN'T see. So what are ways that we can protect ourselves, if someone tries to violate our personal safety rules, like when someone tried to go through the castle's moat?

**Now proceed to ask them about the answer to #9 on their worksheets:**

9. What can you do if someone makes you feel uncomfortable, violates your boundaries, doesn't listen to you when you say stop, or is hurting someone else?

*tell a safe adult right away*

*say: "No!"*

*say: "I don't like that, please stop"*

*try to leave the situation to get help*

*say: "leave me alone!"*

*say: "don't touch me there, my body belongs to me"*

**Concluding statements:** You're the boss of you! We can't control others, but we can try to protect ourselves by doing and saying specific things to set a boundary, and get help right away if something scary or bad happens.

If you're in a situation where you don't feel right, or you feel scared or uncomfortable, or nervous, anxious, humiliating or embarrassing, listen to your intuition! If someone is asking you to do something you don't like, it is ALWAYS OK to say "no."

**ACTIVITY OPTION #6: Netsmartz "It's OK to Tell" video: Be safe online and offline, too!**

**Background:** This 8-minute video is shared with permission from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and can be played for children as part of an activity to help them understand it's "OK to tell" when feeling uncomfortable, sad, scared or confused. It is designed to open a simple discussion with children about boundaries and safety.

**Description:** Watch Clicky, Nettie and Webster race to stop Look-At-Dis Louie from spreading bad pictures online. But they better get to him fast, before he turns the whole town gray!

Click here for the link: <https://www.netsmartz.org/NetSmartzKids/ItsOkToTell>

**End the lesson with a prayer**

The Lesson Leader may invite the children to create their own prayer, he/she may lead a prayer, or may use the suggested prayer below.

*Dear God,*

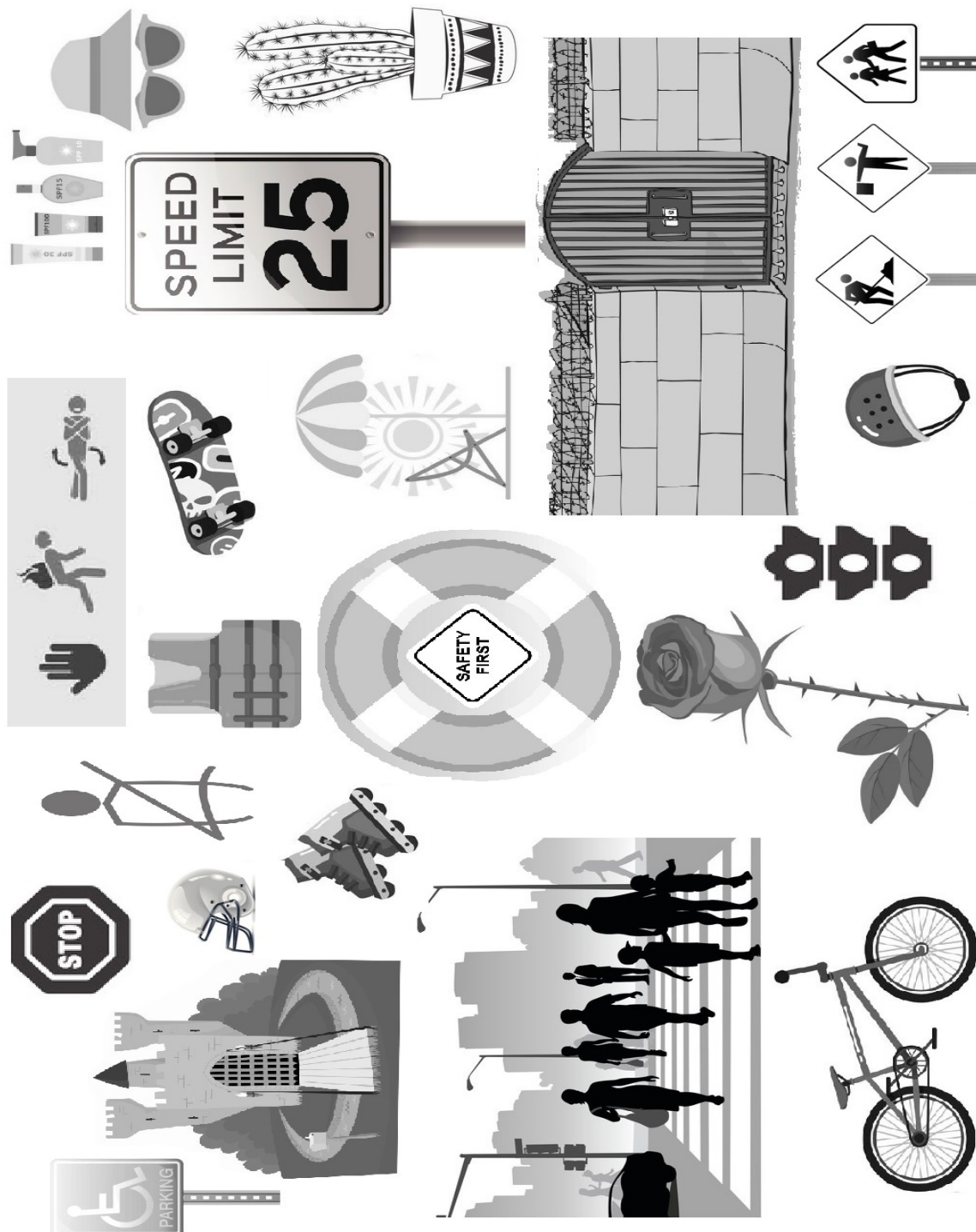
*Sometimes when things happen, I get scared. Sometimes I just get mixed up—like when a person I care about does something that makes me feel uncomfortable or scared. When that happens, help me remember that I am special and give me courage to tell an adult what happened. Thank you for loving me and for giving me safe adults and parents who want to keep me safe and happy. Amen*

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### ACTIVITY OPTION #5: What is this Boundary?

**Instructions:** Look at the images on the first page, and answer the questions about boundaries on the second page. Some images will be used multiple times. Each question has at least 3 specific answers, but there could be additional answers to add. After completing the activity, the Lesson Leader will lead a discussion.



**ACTIVITY OPTION #5: What is this Boundary? (cont.)****Questions:**

1. What are examples of typical safety lessons that we have to know about to be safe?  
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2. Which images could illustrate the boundary of “leave me alone” or “don’t touch me?”  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are some activities that need additional safety precautions?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What are some examples of safety lessons and rules that we follow to be safe when we are in the car?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What are some examples of safety lessons and rules that we follow to be safe when we are walking outside or playing sports?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What are some examples of safety lessons and rules that we follow to be safe when we are out in the sun?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Which images show that a boundary has been placed to create a safer environment for themselves?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What images show what we do to help uphold and respect others’ boundaries? And, how? (Hint: sometimes the things that we do to protect ourselves can also be the things that we do to help protect others!)  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What can you do if someone makes you feel uncomfortable, violates your boundaries, doesn’t listen to you when you say to stop, or is hurting someone else?  
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