

Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

Introduction

Safety is a basic human need. In order for children to develop emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually, their basic needs must be met. For this reason, as well as the genuine love and concern we have for our children as members of our family and Children of God, we must commit ourselves to providing a safe environment in which we can teach our children and foster their spiritual growth. It is imperative that the environment we provide not only keeps our children free from physical and emotional harm in general, but also decreases the likelihood that they will become victims of abuse. Child abuse, sexual abuse in particular, occurs when an adult with a tendency toward abuse has contact with children in a context where environmental / social inhibitions are compromised and the child's resistance has been lowered.

The following curriculum was designed to be a routine part of our education with children, both to promote and model safe environment principles and to build resistance to abuse by teaching our children about right relationships and what to do when something is not right. It is the goal of this curriculum to provide children with direct education about right relationships and to educate them through teachable moments in our relationships with them.

Overview

This module is designed for use during the first regular class session. It introduces the Code of Conduct that guides adult interactions with youth, in the context of a discussion of God's rules, Church rules / Tradition, and establishment of classroom rules. If children are clear about the rules adults are expected to follow and how such rules are protective of them, they will be more resistant to efforts of a potential perpetrator to bend the rules.

Student involvement in the identification of clear expectations during the first class period helps increase their compliance with the rules and promote a safe environment by decreasing potentially harmful incidents of child behavior and increasing the likelihood that positive reinforcement versus punitive strategies for maintaining the educational environment can be utilized. Finally, an environment of open communication is established as children are allowed input into the development of classroom rules, and encouraged to communicate their feelings and seek help when feeling pressured to break the rules.

Objectives

- Introduce students to the classroom setting, catechist, and each other.
- Introduce the concept of rules as protective, pro-social, and consistent with God's teaching
- Establish classroom rules and review adult code of conduct.
- Encourage communication when a child feels pressure to break the rules.

Session Outline

- Introductions
- Opening Prayer
- Why Do We Have Rules?
- What Are God's Rules / the Rules of God's Church?
- Establishment of Classroom Rules
- Code of Conduct
- Communication
- Closing Prayer

KNOW THE **RULES**

for Adult/Child Interactions

Avoid being **Alone**

USE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

-NOT CRITICISM, COMPETITION, OR COMPARISON

No Physical Punishment

Don't

Give or
Accept

Expensive Gifts

NO ALCOHOL, DRUGS, OR TOBACCO

KEEP
CLEAR

BOUNDARIES

Report Suspected Abuse

Don't Humiliate, Ridicule

Threaten or Degrade

PRACTICE

GOOD COMMUNICATION

BE PATIENT

TREAT EVERYONE WITH

RESPECT

SHOW COURTESY, DIGNITY. CARE



The Diocese of Grand Island
Child Protection Office
(308)382-6565

Supplies

- Chalkboard and chalk –or- Flip chart and markers
- Pens, pencils, Poster-board for "Our Class Rules" activity
- Crayons, markers, colored pencils, (magazines, scissors, glue -optional) for "Our Class Rules" activity
- Scissors, glue / glue sticks, crayons, markers or pencils for "The Ten Commandments" and "My Trust Tree" optional activities

Activities / Hand Outs

"Our Class Rules," "Know the Rules" coloring book

Optional Activities

"The Ten Commandments," "My Trust Tree"

I. Introductions

- **Welcome each child as they enter the classroom by introducing yourself.**
- **Introduce the regular curriculum / theme for the year / semester if applicable.**
- **Have each child introduce themselves to the group.**

II. Opening Prayer

**Dear God,
Thank you for bringing us together as we begin a new year of Religious Education. Please be with us as we get to know each other and plan our year together. Help me to listen and share in our discussion today. In your name we pray.**

“...Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”
Matthew 5:19

III. Discussion: Why Do We Have Rules?

Pose the question: “Why do we have rules?”

Write responses on the chalkboard / flipchart.

(You are likely to get responses such as “so things are fair,” “so no one gets hurt,” “to keep everyone safe,” “to help everyone get along,” “to create a good learning environment,” etc...)

If no one identifies “safety, positive learning environment, helping people get along, etc” be sure to add them in some form.

Save the list to refer to in later activities.

IV. What Are God’s Rules?

Invite students to name some of “God’s Rules.”

Review the Ten Commandments as “God’s Rules”

Optional Activity:

“The Ten Commandments”

In this activity, help students cut out the Commandments and glue them in the correct order as you review.

Discuss “the Golden Rule” Jesus tells us to “Love your neighbor as yourself” We should treat others how we want to be treated.

V. Establishment of Classroom Rules

Ask students: “What rules do you have at school / at home?”

Record responses on the board.

State: “We need to set some rules for this class.”

Point to rules written on the board and ask: “Which of these rules do you think we should use in our classroom?”

What other rules do you think we need?” **Circle from / add to the previous list.**

Where possible, regroup and rephrase the rules identified by your class to resemble the general rules of your religious education program, etc.

Note: Most rules fall under a few categories that can be objectified with specific examples (e.g. Keep hands and feet to yourself / respect other’s space, etc are categories that include a variety of physical acting out behaviors; Respect others feelings / use respectful language covers use of appropriate / non-offensive language vs. name calling or ridicule, etc.; Create a good learning environment would include listening, taking turns, raising your hand, being quiet, etc).

This is a useful activity as it helps the students better understand the general rules and helps them feel connected as they see that the rules identified by the adult authorities are the same rules they identified as a class.

Summarize the rules for the class and write them on a poster-board that will remain in the classroom throughout the year.

You may wish to have each child draw or cut out a picture that illustrates an example of each rule, or have students decorate the poster to increase their ownership.

Activity

“Our Class Rules”

In this activity, students make their own list of the classroom rules and draw or cut out pictures to illustrate an example of each. Students may need adult assistance to label each picture with the rule it represents. This is an important activity as it increases retention of the rules as well as providing “take home” information to share with parents.

VI. Code of Conduct

State: “The adults who work with you have agreed to follow some rules too.”

Activity:

“Know the Rules for Adult/ Child Interactions Coloring Book”

Give each child a copy of the coloring book. While the students are coloring, discuss the importance of code of conduct “rules” in terms of keeping them safe from harm and free to seek help from their parents or other trusted adults. Compare the code of conduct rules to other rules the children may already be familiar with. Be sure to cover the following rules:

Safety in Numbers / Teachers and students don’t meet alone. **State:** “When we meet together we will always try to have more than one teacher or more than one student in the room.”

Ask how many children have learned in swimming lessons to “never swim alone.”

Ask: “Why do we have that rule?” (reinforce responses such as “so there is someone there to help / get help if you need it”) **or Ask children who saw the movie “Toy Story”** “Why did the toys have to find a “moving buddy?” (“so no one would get lost, so no toys were left behind”) **or Ask who had learned from their parents or from pre-school to “stay with the group,”** etc.

State: “Always having someone here to help, someone who can go get help if we need it, someone to notice if something isn’t right...those are some of the same reasons we don’t meet alone here.”

Keep Clear Boundaries **State:** “Boundaries are the lines that separate one thing from another. “

Ask: How many of you play a sport like soccer? What does it mean when someone or something is “out of bounds?”

State: It means that the boundary line was crossed. You have boundary lines too— where your body ends and something else begins. (To illustrate you may chose to draw around a toy, doll, or adult volunteer, making a line image on paper.)

State: “The adults who work with you will try not to cross your boundaries.” “Just as you are expected to respect your classmates’ boundaries by keeping your hands and feet to yourself, etc., the adults here won’t hit or spank you and they won’t touch you without your ok.

Practice Open Communication.

State: “Communication is a big word for ‘talking to each other’.”

Ask: “Who knows the difference between a secret and a surprise?”

State: “A secret is something you keep to yourself and don’t share with others. A surprise is something you wait to tell someone.” “The adults who work with you will not ask you to keep secrets.” “We want you to tell your parents about anything / everything you do here and with other adults.” “We want you to share how you are feeling and to tell an adult if something isn’t right.”

VII. What to do if you feel pressure to break the rules.

State: “ It is important to tell an adult if you feel pressure to break the rules or if someone else is breaking the rules...especially if the person breaking the rules is an adult. The rules are there to keep you safe and help you learn.”

Distribute “When to Say No to an Adult” **handout. Tell students to review this information with their parents at home.**

Optional Activity

“My Trust Tree”

In this activity, students identify trusted adults in their lives.

Ask students to name the adults in their life whom they trust—those who help them when they need something.

Help students write the names or titles of such individuals on the leaves and cut them out. Assist them in gluing the leaves on their “Trust Tree” **Encourage children to tell these adults when they feel pressure to break the rules.**

VIII. Closing Prayer

Lord,

Thank you for the rules you have given to guide us. We are thankful for rules to keep us safe, to help us get along, to make us all feel welcome and accepted. Please help us to follow our classroom rules so we all have the opportunity to learn more about you and our Catholic faith. Give us courage to share our feelings and ask for help if we feel pressure to break the rules.

In your name we pray.

Amen.

Remembering the Rules

After establishing classroom rules, it is important to think about how your students will remember the rules and be motivated to follow them.

Clear Expectations: Posting the rules is a good way to help children remember them. For very young children it is helpful to include a picture that represents the rule. Having the rules posted in your classroom / meeting space gives you a concrete way to remind them of the rules, by directing the child's attention to the poster and pointing to the rule that needs to be addressed. Young children may need to be reminded frequently of the rules. Often a reminder is enough to help a child change their behavior.

Practice: Children benefit greatly from repetition of information and practicing behaviors. Repeating the rules as a group and practicing through role-play or "behavior drills" (practicing in response to various situations as you would a fire drill or tornado drill) can be effective means of helping children learn and remember the rules for adult / child interactions.

Reinforcement: Children are more likely to remember rules when they are reinforced for practicing them. Descriptive praise is one effective way to reinforce children for following the rules. Additional reinforcement strategies may be helpful. Some examples include:

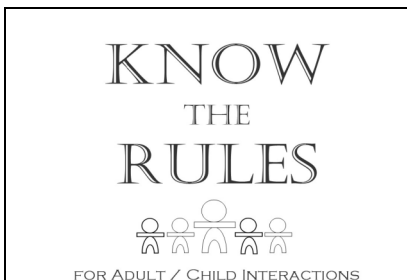
"Sticker / Star Chart" – It can be motivating for children when their individual compliance with rules is acknowledged on a chart (similar to an attendance record).

"Marble Jar" – A marble jar is a form of classroom reinforcement – when class members are doing an especially good job of following the rules add a marble to the jar. When the jar is full, celebrate with a special class activity / privilege / reward.

Logical Consequences: In some cases children may have more difficulty remembering a rule (especially if the rule requires changing a habitual behavior). It may be necessary to implement consequences to help them remember to follow the rule in the future. The most effective consequences are logical consequences—those that have a logical cause-effect relationship with the behavior. For example: a child who disrupts the learning environment may be expected to assist with a task to prepare the for the next class, a child who violates another child's boundaries may be expected to engage in a helpful behavior, a child who is not on task may be expected to spend extra time completing a task while others have free time, etc. Identifying consequences in advance helps you to implement them fairly and consistently and lets children know what to expect.

Activity Sheets and Handouts

Activity: Know the Rules for Adult/Child Interactions Coloring Book



Activity: Our Class Rules

K-3 Optional cut-outs for "Our Class Rules" activity.

Our Class Rules

Ask questions
Ask for help
Get help

Be Patient
Wait your turn
Say hello

Be quiet

Optional Activity: My Trust Tree



Optional Activity: The Ten Commandments

Grades K-2 Cut and paste on Ten Commandments Worksheet.

The Ten Commandments

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- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

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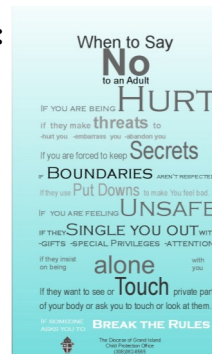
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Handout: When to Say 'No' to An Adult



Handout: Know the Rules for Adult/Child



Additional Supplemental Activities can be found at: <http://www.gdiocese.org/childprotection/education.php>
Resource Sheets: Safety and Boundaries