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## **Safe Environment Lesson for Family Faith Formation Groups**

### **Outcomes**

- ✓ Students will know that God placed adults in their lives to help keep them safe.
- ✓ Students will be able to identify trusted adults.
- ✓ Families will be encouraged to openly communicate about personal safety.

### **Gather the following for this lesson:**

- White board (or large paper taped on wall) and markers
- Paper, pens, colored pencils or thin tip markers, scissors and glue sticks for tables
- Family Discussion Card Printables (one for each family) (included with this lesson)

### **Part One: Opening Prayer and Introduction**

1. Begin by reading an opening prayer or Scripture passage (see suggested prayers at the end of this lesson).
  
2. Tell the families that today's lesson focuses on personal safety. We will talk about keeping safe at home; away from home; online. We will discuss ways that adults can help children to stay safe, and the importance of communicating as a family about personal and online safety.

### **Part Two: Group Discussion**

*Present the following information to the group:*

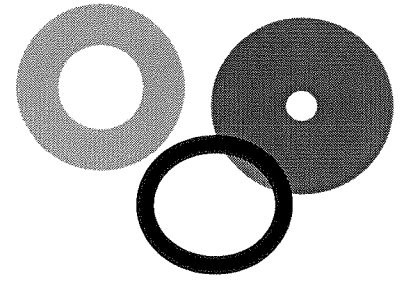
God entrusts adults-- parents, stepparents, grandparents, and many other caring adults-- with keeping children safe. It is one of their most important God-given responsibilities. Ask the group to think of some of the ways that adults keep children safe:

- At home
- Away from home
- Online

(Depending on age of the participants, you will get many different responses to this question. See Appendix A for examples and ideas to kick start the discussion).

Write some of the main themes on a white board or large paper on the wall.





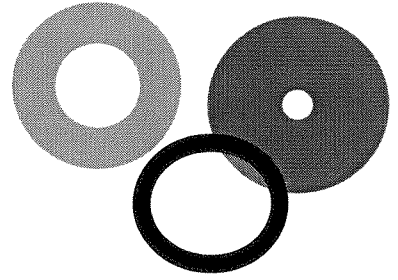
### **Part Three: Family Activity**

Break into family groups, and have the families complete the following activities:

1. Brainstorm characteristics/qualities of adults they trust, and write these qualities on a piece of paper. Then, as a family, discuss some people who exhibit these qualities and whom the children could go to if they have a problem or concern. See Appendix B for examples.
2. Distribute the Family Discussion Card sheets. Have the families cut them out, color them, and glue them into a deck of cards to use for discussion starters at home. Encourage them to come up with additional questions and write them on the blank cards. Families can begin their discussions while making the cards together and take them home to continue these discussions.

### **Closing Prayer**

The group facilitator leads a prayer asking God to bless the adults who are present and to help them keep safe the children whom He has entrusted to them.



## **Suggested Prayers/Scripture Readings**

### Prayer to the Holy Family

By Pope Francis from *Amoris Laetitia*

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendor of true love; to you we turn in trust.

Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division; may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing.

Holy Family of Nazareth, make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family and its beauty in God's plan.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, graciously hear our prayer.

Amen.

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### Parent's Prayer

All praise to You, Lord Jesus, lover of children: Bless our family, and help us to lead our children to You.

Give us light and strength, and courage when our task is difficult. Let Your Spirit fill us with love and peace, So that we may help our children to love You.

All glory and praise are Yours, Lord Jesus,  
For ever and ever. Amen.

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### A Family Prayer

We bless your name, O Lord, for sending your own incarnate Son to become part of a family, so that, as He lived family life, He would experience its worries and its joys.

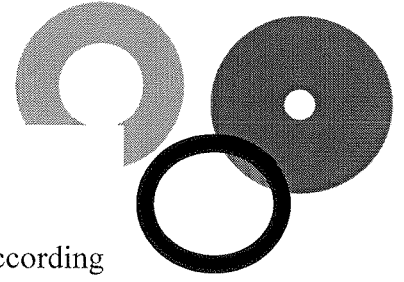
We ask You, Lord, to protect and watch over this family, so that in the strength of Your grace its members may enjoy prosperity, possess the priceless gift of Your peace, and, as the Church alive in the home, bear witness in this world to Your glory.

We ask this thought Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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### Luke 2:41-52

<sup>41</sup> Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover.<sup>42</sup> When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. <sup>43</sup> After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. <sup>44</sup> Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup> When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. <sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup> When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

<sup>49</sup> "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

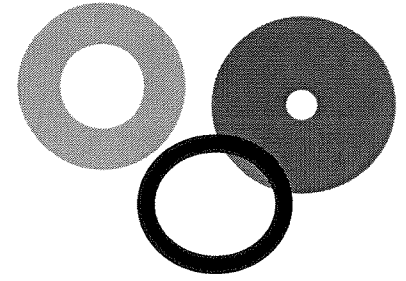
<sup>51</sup> Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

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### A Prayer for Protecting God's Children

Dear Lord, We ask You to bless us, Your holy people. Open our hearts to Your call to be the "ears, eyes, and voice" of children and young people everywhere. Give us the vision and grace needed to fulfill the special commitments that each of us has made to making our homes, churches, schools, communities and world a safer place for all God's Children.

Amen.



## Appendix A

### **Examples: Ways adults keep kids safe**

*At home ... Trusted adults help kids at home when they...*

Set house rules

Don't run with scissors, don't use sharp knives, don't use the stove, etc.

TV shows, video games, computer use rules

Don't answer the door if I'm home alone

Take care of me every day

Listen to me when I have a problem and help me solve it

Are there for me to talk to

*Away from home ... trusted adults help kids away from home when they...*

Ask where I will be

Make sure I bring a friend if I'm going someplace

Help me cross the street (crossing guard, police officer)

Make sure people follow rules (police officer)

Watch/supervise me (teacher, school staff)

Teach me about God and how to be a good person (priest)

Treat medical problems (doctor)

Help me find my parents if I get lost in a store (store worker)

If I go to them with a problem, they help me talk with my parents about it

Make sure I don't keep secrets from my parents

*Online ... trusted adults help kids online when they...*

Sets rules about computer use (times, places)

Set parental controls on devices

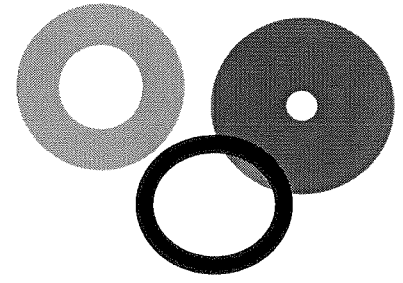
Tell you to come to them if you receive uncomfortable messages or pictures

Set rules about what sites you're allowed to go to and what apps you can use

Check computer history

Talk with kids about problems they could encounter and what to do





## Appendix B

### **Examples- Characteristics of Trusted Adults**

- Caring
- Have your best interest in mind
- Watch out for you/protect you
- Set safety rules and make sure you follow them (don't run in the street, be home on time, don't play with electricity, computer-related rules, etc.)
- Check on you when you're out
- Give sound advice
- Can go to them with a problem and they will believe and help you
- Don't ask you to keep secrets from your parents
- Don't let you do dangerous things

### **Examples of Trusted Adults**

Parents

Teachers

Police Officers

Family Friends









Clergy/Church Workers

Coaches



Counselors

Doctors and Nurses

**Family Discussion Cards:** Use these cards to jump-start conversations with your kids!

<p><b>Family Discussion Card</b></p> <p><b>Talk about a time when you felt scared. What did you do?</b></p> 	<p><b>Family Discussion Card</b></p> <p><b>What would you do if you saw someone you respect breaking the rules?</b></p> 
<p><b>Family Discussion Card</b></p> <p><b>What would you do if you received a text message from someone you don't know?</b></p> 	<p><b>Family Discussion Card</b></p> <p><b>What's your favorite Web site and why?</b></p> 
<p><b>Family Discussion Card</b></p> <p><b>What would you do if you received an IM, text, or picture that made you feel uncomfortable?</b></p> 	<p><b>Family Discussion Card</b></p> <p><b>Have you ever been bullied or seen someone else being bullied? What did you do?</b></p> 
<p><b>Family Discussion Card</b></p> <p><b>Do you have a trusted adult in your life? Who is it and why?</b></p> 	<p><b>Family Discussion Card</b></p> <p><b>Have you ever teased or bullied someone else? Why do you think you did that and did anyone intervene?</b></p> 
<p><b>Family Discussion Card</b></p> <p><b>Name someone with whom you would feel comfortable talking to if you had a problem you couldn't solve on your own.</b></p>	<p><b>Family Discussion Card</b></p> <p><b>What do you do when you need to make an important decision and are confused about the right course of action?</b></p>

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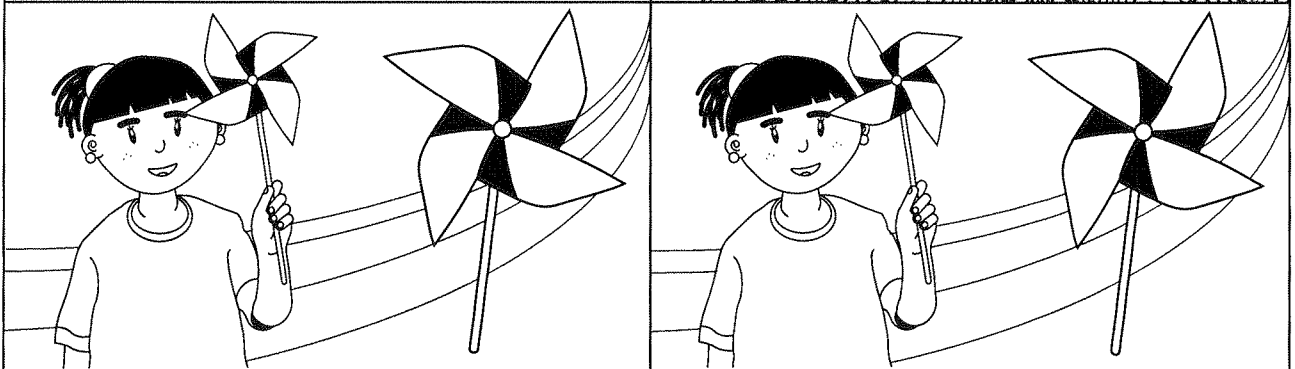
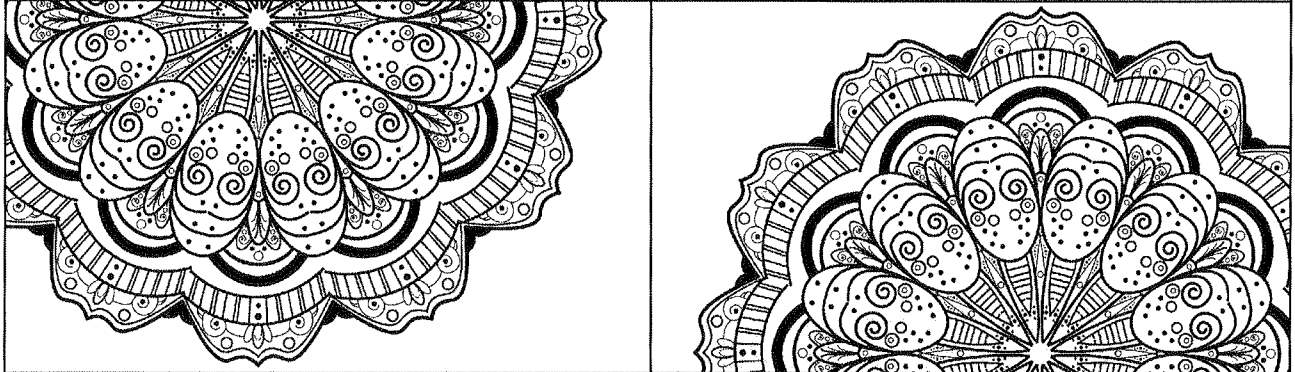
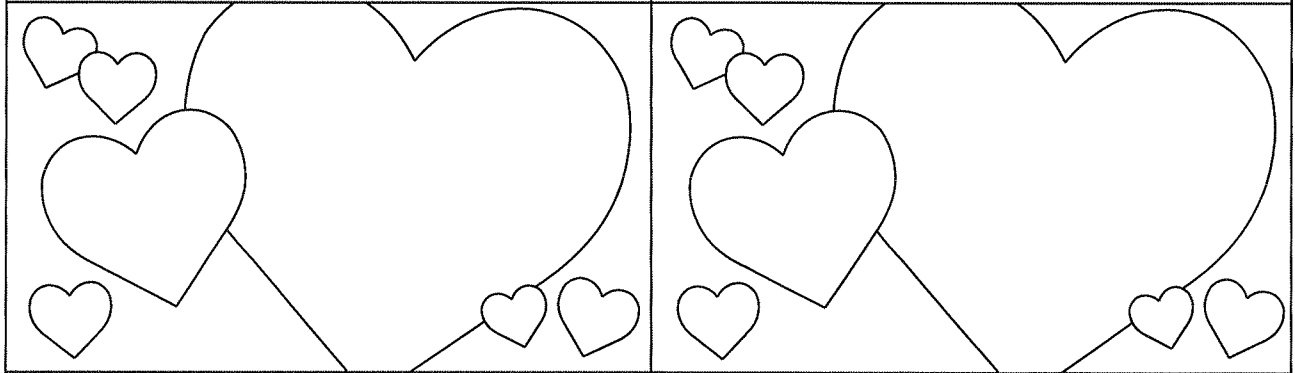
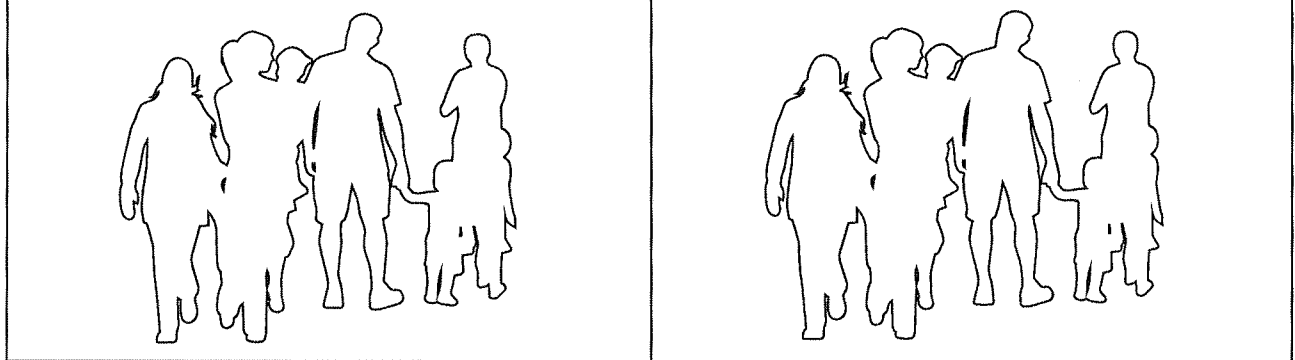
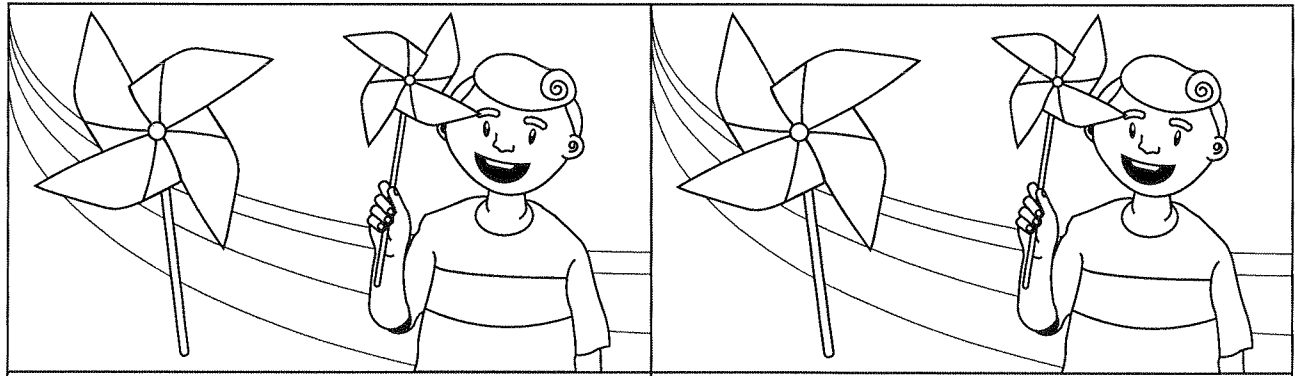
<b>Family Discussion Card</b>	<b>Family Discussion Card</b>
<p><b>Talk about a time when you needed support. Who did you turn to?</b></p> 	<p><b>Talk about a happy childhood memory.</b></p> 
<b>Family Discussion Card</b>	<b>Family Discussion Card</b>
<p><b>Does your family have rules about TV and computer use? What are they or what do you think they should be?</b></p>	<p><b>Talk about a time when you felt pressured to do something you did not want to do.</b></p>
<b>Family Discussion Card</b>	<b>Family Discussion Card</b>
<p><b>Did you ever know someone who was abused? What happened? Did they get help? How?</b></p>	<p><b>What are some secrets you would want to keep? What are some secrets you should not keep?</b></p>
<b>Family Discussion Card</b>	<b>Family Discussion Card</b>
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Write your own questions. Write your own questions.

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