

Empowering Children to Stay Safe

This training guide aims to help children and young people to be aware of their personal safety and how they can be empowered to make wise decisions, choices and actions to help them stay safe.



Empowering Children to Stay Safe



Guidance Note

The purpose of this training is to help children and young people to be aware of their personal safety and what they can do to 'stay safe', not to frighten them, or to create an atmosphere of suspicion. In delivering this training to children, we need to ensure that we are empowering them by giving information that gives them confidence in a vulnerable situation. But we must be careful not to create ideas that either steal innocence or give ideas for how to cause unnecessary harm for others.

The emphasis therefore is not on types of abuse they might experience and look for, but on empowering them to be wise in their thoughts and actions, before and during a situation, as well as to reflect on afterwards. We hope it is simple and visual enough to be memorable.

Don't forget! Children are being taught about these issues at school. It would be good practice to find out what they're taught and at what ages.

What do children need to know to stay safe?

This session is designed to help children to consider the situations and experiences they find themselves in; acknowledge how that makes them feel; know they have choices in how they might respond and empower them to take positive action to protect themselves.

Important – before you start!

There may be children in your group who are in situations where they are not treated very well & you need to make sure that the leaders are fully aware of the nature of today's material and that they need to be sensitive to the possible impact that this session may have. You may want to consider having extra people on hand just in case you feel the need for extra support.

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Bible Study

Scripture Passage

It is not expected that you will read the whole of the passage to the children

1 Samuel 19 & 20 Saul, David & Jonathan

You could read parts of this, or act it out, or use the Brick Testament

[http://www.bricktestament.com/david vs saul](http://www.bricktestament.com/david_vs_saul)

This session is designed to take approximately 1 hour; the time of each section will depend upon the age of the children. We would suggest that you include this or similar material in your programme at regular intervals in order to make sure that this important message is kept at the forefront of the children's minds

You will need:

Under 7s

Pictures showing different emotions, if you cannot find these in a magazine, or on the internet, you could draw them onto paper plates.

Musical instruments or anything that makes a sound. Or signs with emotions written on them that you can place around the room

Beanbags

Large sheet of paper

7-11s

CD player and music

Cards with different emotions written on them.

Beanbags

Tissue paper (already torn & rolled into balls) glue and large sheet of paper

12+

Cards with different emotions written on them.

Old papers, tape, straws, hardboiled egg

Access to computer (internet connection would be an advantage but not essential)

Game

This game is designed to help the children to work out how they might feel in different situations. Ask them what makes them happy or sad, or what makes them feel uncomfortable. This game is designed to help the children to understand that feelings and emotions are a way for us to know that something is not right.

Under 7s Face the emotion:

The leader has a mixture of pictures of different faces that are showing obvious emotions, e.g. happy, sad, angry, afraid etc. Hold them up and get the children to tell you what type of emotion they think the picture demonstrates. You could also discuss how that makes them feel.

7-11s Musical emotions:

Dance around to music – when it stops, the leader shouts out an emotion which the children act (with or without sound).

12+ Acting out emotions:

Get the children into pairs or small groups give them cards with different emotions written on them and get them to act out what is on their card while the others in their team try to guess what emotion they are showing.

Bible story

1 Samuel 19 & 20. In the Bible story we see that Saul is angry with David, he does not treat him very well; David is feeling frightened and sad. Jonathan is someone who he can talk to.

Under 7s

Get some musical instruments that make different sounds (if you don't have instruments you could improvise). The idea of this activity is that the children make sounds on the instruments depending on how they feel.

Or as an alternative you could stick paper up in different points in the room with a different emotion written on each one and get the children to run to the places that they feel best fit the emotion (make sure you consider the reading ability of your group).

Read out different parts from the life of David and get the children to make a sound on the instruments (or run to the word) depending on how they think David would have felt.

David seeing Goliath for the first time

David telling Saul that he was going out to fight Goliath

David meeting Saul (he was in awe of someone so special – sometimes people can make us feel important and special so we allow them to say and do things that upset us)

David was chosen to play the harp for Saul

David lives away from home

David is shouted at by Saul (sometimes it is someone we know very well and trust who is not being nice to us)

Jonathan helps him
David has to leave his home
Jonathan is a reliable friend and stands by

7 – 11s

Have cards with the names and the different emotions written on them, give them out to the children; make sure you have enough cards for each child to have one. As you read the story get the children to hold up their card. As the story reaches the person and emotion that is on their card they can stand in line. You should end up with a line of children showing the differing emotions that were felt during the whole story.

12+

Go over the story of David & Saul; ask the children to consider the different people in the story and the positions that they took. You may want to divide the children into groups so that each group can consider one person each.

Saul

David

Jonathan

People who saw what was happening

Ask them to think about the following questions (you may want to add more to this list).

How should we react to each person?

How could we help?

What do we need to do?

Below are some thoughts to help you guide the groups to reach their conclusions.

Saul needed help; he should not have done what he did, even if he was feeling bad and depressed it was not right to lash out at David.

David needed to tell someone, for his own protection he needed to get away from the difficult situation.

Jonathan needed to be there to help, he was there to support David. David knew Jonathan was a reliable person.

People who saw what was going on needed to do something & not just be passive bystanders. Don't just let things happen without telling someone if you see something that is not right or worries you, even if you are not sure, it is still a good idea to tell someone.

Activity/Application

Sometimes things happen that we find upsetting or we are in situations where we do not feel safe. We need to help the children to know who they can trust and who they can tell if they are ever worried or concerned. The risk assessment style grid below may help you as you discuss this section, perhaps you may want to consider how David felt and what actions he took when he was worried about what Saul might do.

You may want to tell the children that they do not have to stay in a situation that is causing them harm or making them feel afraid. Make sure that they always tell someone.

Under 7s

When David felt afraid of Saul he went to his friend Jonathan who he trusted and asked for help. He made the decision to get away from Saul. Explain to the children that they were banging the instruments because they felt afraid or worried; now discuss with them what actions they could take and who could you trust to help them if ever they feel like David did.

7-11

Get the children to look at the emotions that they have just used in the telling of the story of David, Saul & Jonathan; ask them to identify and discuss what they could do & who they could talk to if they ever had any concerns.

12+

Discuss the situation that David found himself in alongside situations that may apply to young people today when they may not feel safe, cover times when individuals may make them feel troubled or uncomfortable. What can they do about it? Help them to see that there are always people that they can go to for help or advice

THOUGHTS	FEELINGS	ACTIONS
How do you respond?	Everything is fine	Behave as normal
What should I do?	I'm unhappy/uncomfortable	You can say "No!" to keeping things secret
What are my options?	I need to give an answer	You can say 'I don't want to look at that!' You can say 'I don't want to taste that!' You can say 'I don't want to touch that!' You can say 'I don't want to do that!'
Should I stay?	I want to leave	If you feel unsafe, then you have a choice to say, 'I want to go now'

Some 'what if's' for young people to discuss...

What if your friend shared a secret with you that he was going to meet someone he had only met through Facebook.

What if your friends were bullying someone?

Who would you speak to if you were scared, or being bullied?

What would you do if someone sent you a rude picture or video clip of someone you knew ?

Trust

Help the children to realise that there is always somebody who can help them, perhaps this may be a good moment to mention the church's Designated Person for Safeguarding so that they are aware that there is someone in the church who is willing to listen to them and help if they need it. It may be helpful to have a picture or get the designated person to visit.

***God is my refuge and strength
an ever present help in times of trouble.
Psalm 46:1***

We can always talk to Jesus but sometimes we may need to talk to someone else as well. Make sure that the children know that God is always there for them and that they can call on him any time night or day. In David's case Jonathan was part of God's provision for him in a time of great trial and God uses people as his hands and ears. You as the leader in your group may need to be that person for a child in need, whatever that need might be.

Under 7s Hold my hand:

Make up a very simple obstacle course – perhaps a figure of 8 around a couple of chairs – get the children into pairs (if your group is very large you may need to have more than one course in order to allow all of the children to take part). Put the children into pairs; get the first child to wear a blindfold and the second child to lead them around the course by holding their hand. This is a simple trust game but should help even the youngest appreciate that there are times when we may find ourselves in a difficult situation and need to trust someone to help us.

7-11s Beanbag stop and help:

Each child balances a bean bag on their head and walks around the room. If the beanbag falls the child must freeze. They can only rejoin the game when another child comes alongside and picks up the fallen beanbag and places it on the owner's head whilst keeping their own balanced on their head. Leaders could join in this activity to show that we are all there to help.

12+ Egg transportation:

You will need some straws, tape, old papers and a hardboiled egg. Get the children to build a structure that will enable them to get the egg from one place to another without breaking it (you do not need to tell them that the egg is hard boiled!) Make sure that the distance that they need to transport the egg is not unrealistic. This activity is designed to help the young people problem solve and to see that they need each other to manage the task. Hopefully if they build the structure well, it will be able to support the egg.

How to 'STAY SAFE!' - General Principles

These are questions that a child might ask themselves before they make choices about actions they take independently.

Should I be here on my own?

Does anyone know where I am?

Do I know where I can get help from?

The acronym SAFE is offered as a way for them to recall simple actions that can protect them getting into harmful situations. The children will need to see this as well as be encouraged to recite it. Simple role play can be used to help unpack each statement both individually or as an accumulative story.

Say where you're going & who's with you

Avoid being on your own

Find out where you could get help if you needed it

Enjoy yourself by staying safe!

Craft

Create 'stay safe' posters that each group can contribute to, these could be displayed in the church so that everyone in your congregation can feel connected with the theme. It will be a helpful way to get the children to remember the actions that they need to take in order to stay safe.

Under 7s

Make a collage using the letters **SAFE** that can be displayed in the church so that everyone can read and understand the message that the children and young people have been learning about today. If you scrunch up pieces of tissue paper into small balls they can be glued onto a card, it is advisable to write out the letters clearly to help the younger children to stay inside the lines.

7-11s

Make a collage as above but in the form of a tick list using the SAFE acronym. Get the children to colour in the words and tick them off as they agree on how they would do each one. This is a good time to go over what they have learned today.

12+

Put the young people into groups of 4 or 5 so that they can work together around a computer and all feel engaged. Ask them to design a stay safe poster that can be displayed in the church. If you do not have internet access you may want to find some pictures that you can place on a file so that they can have pictorial material available to use on the day. Make sure you have checked any copyright issues beforehand.

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