

# Aware – Safe – Kids (ASK!)

A child abuse awareness curriculum  
for children ages 3 – 6 years in faith group settings

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## Introduction

Child abuse and neglect, collectively called child maltreatment, occur in every community: rich, poor, educated, less educated, rural, or urban. It is a pervasive and devastating challenge. Maltreatment that goes un-noticed and untreated can have long-term negative impacts on young children including failure to grow and thrive, depression, failure to succeed in school, debilitating injury, and death. Communities also suffer. The increase in mental health needs of those who have been abused, the related medical costs and loss of human talent and potential negatively impact the quality of life of all of us.

Adults teaching children in faith group settings may feel a special calling to contribute to this kind of prevention effort. God calls us to reach out to those in need. But child abuse and neglect are difficult, sad and sometimes fearsome topics, and “getting involved” may be difficult for some educators. To address these concerns, this curriculum (what we will do and how we will do it) which is presented as a group of activities, should be viewed as part of an “awareness” approach to helping children develop the skills to seek help if they need it. These activities are not intended to be a formal prevention or therapeutic intervention. Rather, each activity focuses on a common theme that promotes positive skill development. It is based on the Christian principles that Jesus has taught us: to be kind, to respect ourselves and others, to care for and treat others the way we would wish to be treated. These materials are based on approaches commonly used in early childhood education settings to help children recognize that they are worthy of safe and kind treatment, learn to build positive social relationships, understand

the differences between kind and hurtful touch, and discover that it is OK to ask for help if needed.

In order to promote these positive skills this curriculum aims to:

- raise awareness about child maltreatment among adult leaders in faith group settings
- teach children about kind and safe treatment for themselves and others
- introduce developmentally appropriate self-protective behaviors, such as identifying helping adults and knowing it is OK to ask for help
- partner with families to reinforce the healthful messages at home

Putting an end to child maltreatment, and supporting those who have suffered from abuse or neglect is a challenging but crucial long-term goal for our society. It has particular significance among faith group settings. It will rely on the sustained efforts of all members of the community, including educators in faith group settings. This curriculum is but one of many positive contributions that can be made to reduce the causes and address the impacts of child maltreatment. Participating in activities such as these is one way that adult educators in the faith group setting put into action the positive teachings of Christ in our world today.

### Guiding principles

The curriculum activities are based on the following principles and understandings:

- We are all God's beloved children.
- Jesus loves us, and teaches us to love and care for one another.

- Children are capable of learning developmentally appropriate abuse awareness concepts through familiar games and materials, and benefit from repetition.
- Children are supported best when educators in the faith group setting communicate with families about the topics being discussed.
- Families are the primary educators of young children and need the support of the faith community to help children develop in positive and loving relationships.
- Adult educators benefit from orientation, training, practice and mentoring (having others to talk to if teaching the topics is confusing or difficult), and access to additional resources.
- A positive adult attitude and comfort with the topic of child maltreatment and finding help, communicates that even difficult and emotional topics can be discussed, addressed, and resolved.

What does the curriculum offer?

1. Ten lessons to offer in the faith group setting for children ages 3 to 6 years. The lessons include a list of materials needed, instructions for gathering children to introduce the key message, a craft activity and game to help explore the key message, directions for summarizing the activity and a closing prayer. The activity approaches are founded on commonly used positive skill development practices for young children. Key messages help promote children's development of positive self-worth (*I am worthy of love and kindness*) and capability (*I can do things to help myself and sometimes I can help others, too*).

The lessons are designed to complete within 30 minutes. Some can be expanded by using both the craft and games to extend to a 40 minute period.

2. Take Home Messages for Families. These materials communicate the goal for each activity and provide games and activities to help families reinforce the awareness and prevention concept in the home setting.

What awareness and prevention topics are covered?

- I can be a friend and learn to treat others with kindness.
- There are different kinds of touching: good, bad and secret touching.
- Secret touching is bad touching and bad secret.
- I can say "Stop!" if I don't like the touching.
- My body has private parts and "no touch" zones.
- I can ask for help and find others who will help me.

Do all activities need to be presented?

Not all activities need to be presented to make a positive difference. This group of early childhood curriculum activities is designed to introduce a range of relevant concepts as part of a comprehensive awareness effort. The approach for each activity has been thoughtfully crafted, and each strives to promote a particular skill or introduce a relevant awareness concept. However, themes and messages are repeated across activities to reinforce key concepts. This allows that one or many activities can be presented. Specific activities can be selected to

present in a particular order depending on the time frame and goals of the education plan.

It is common for adults to vary in their opinions of the topics they wish to present for abuse awareness. The education team for the faith group setting may wish to review the activities and concepts and select the activities that are most fitting for their setting and the group of children served. It is often worthwhile to share with families the goals of the abuse and neglect awareness curriculum, so that they can ask questions and contribute to the awareness education program. Such discussions also help to guide families about how to reinforce the concepts at home.

#### Is it expensive to implement this program?

The curriculum activities are designed to use materials that are commonly available in children's classrooms, such as paper, glue, scissors and paint. Therefore, there should be no need for unusual purchases. A materials list for each activity is provided, and some activities suggest collecting paper scraps to reuse.

The Message for Families page may be emailed to families, or can be printed and distributed as a take-home message when the activity is presented. The Message for Families pages are formatted so that they can be printed on two sides of a half sheet of paper (rather than 1 side of a full page) – thus reducing paper waste. The project is also uses the Century Gothic font which is suggested to use less ink to print than other fonts – offering another potential resource saving.

## Orientation topics for adult educators

Adult educators will likely feel more confident about teaching these abuse awareness activities if they have basic information about child maltreatment. The following questions provide guidance for group or individual study using the Child Welfare Information Gateway as a reliable resource (<http://www.childwelfare.gov/>).

- How is child maltreatment defined?
  - Physical abuse
  - Neglect
  - Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
  - Abandonment, mental injury
  - Threat of harm
- What is the incidence of maltreatment in my community?
- Who are the typical perpetrators?
- Who is a mandated reporter in my state? What is my role?
- How do I recognize signs of abuse or neglect?
  - What can be observed?
  - What do children do or say?
  - What signs do parents display?
  - Do children often lie about abuse?
  - Why do children keep quiet about abuse?
- What do I do if I have reasonable suspicion that abuse has occurred?
- How do I make a report? What happens after a report is made?
- Am I ready listen, believe and reassure the child, and report the abuse?

## Resources for more information

Child Welfare Information Gateway. Available at: <http://www.childwelfare.gov/> .

This is the primary resource for information about child maltreatment. The site is managed by the federal government. It offers general information including definitions about types of abuse and neglect, data related to the incidence of maltreatment, reporting requirements for states and localities, information about how to report suspected abuse, and resources to help protect children and strengthen families.

CHILDHELP USA® National Child Abuse Hotline: Toll-free: 1-800-422-4453 (24 hours)  
(This is a national hotline that also reaches Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.)

National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY 14853. Available at: [www.ndacan.cornell.edu](http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu)

The Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Book provides State and national data on the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children.  
Available online at: <http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/KIDSCOUNT.aspx>

### Guide for leading the group

- Practice your opening words of greeting. Say what you mean to say. Use clear and simple language (avoid baby talk).
- Sit as children sit – on the floor or on a small chair.
- Smile and be expressive, but not silly.
- Tell children ahead how you want them to respond when you ask questions: listen, then raise your hand - or touch your head.
- Keep up the pace to hold attention; not too slow, not too fast, nice and steady.

### Steps in presenting the activities

#### 1. Plan ahead

- Read through the lesson and be familiar with the goals and process.
- Gather materials in advance. Set out materials so you are ready to go.

#### 2. Greet children and introduce the plan for the day

- Gather and greet everyone. Say each child's name.
- Introduce the topic. Describe what will happen next.

#### 3. Conduct the craft activity and game (if provided)

- Show the materials and tell children what they are making.
- Be flexible and don't worry about the product of the craft activity. Support all efforts and levels of participation.
- Warn children when it is almost time to finish. ("We have 3 more minutes.")
- Encourage children to help put materials back into a clean-up tub.

#### 4. Gather for a closing group to review the lesson.

- Say a closing prayer.
- Thank the children for participating and say good-bye.

**SAMPLE** Letter to Families about the ASK! Curriculum



Dear Parents,

We are excited to tell you about a special series of activities that we will be presenting in our children's classrooms to teach about God's love. The series, *Aware – Safe – Kids (ASK!)* is a curriculum designed especially for children ages 3 – 6 years. It is part of our child abuse awareness program.

The activities of the ASK! curriculum help children recognize that they are worthy of safe and kind treatment. Child appropriate activities teach positive social skills and introduce topics such as recognizing the difference between kind and hurtful touch, and learning that it is OK to ask for help if needed. All activities use familiar crafts and games to promote simple messages in ways children can understand. The activities have names like, *I Am a Friend, Being Gentle is Being Friendly, Hands are for Helping, Not Hurting, Secret Touching is a Bad Kind of Secret, This is My Private Self, I Can Ask for Help, and I Can Find a Helper.*

We will be sending home a Take-home Message for Families after each lesson. These will describe the key message for the lesson and offer ideas and activities for families to extend the positive lesson at home.

Together we can help our children have happy experiences as we focus on kindness, caring for others and ourselves, and remembering that Jesus loves us all.

**If you have any questions about our program, please feel free to contact**

\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

# Aware – Safe – Kids, ASK!

## Curriculum Activities

## I Am a Friend

**Goal:** To explore ways of sharing kindness with friends.

**Time estimate:** 30 minutes

**Craft activity:** Hand and hearts pictures

### **What you need:**

- Construction paper – for picture base
- Pages from brightly colored magazines; newspaper; other scrap paper
- Heart shaped cardboard templates or cookies cutters of different sizes (or heart shaped stickers)
- Crayons or markers
- Children's scissors
- Glue sticks
- Hand-held hole punch
- Yarn

### **Introduce the activity:**

1. Gather the children and ask them if they know what it means to be a friend. Ask how friends treat each other. Remind the children that Jesus asks us to be friends, and to treat other people the way that we would like to be treated.  
Ask:
  - Do we want our friends to share with us? Yes! So that means we should share with them.
  - Do we want our friends to hurt us? No! So that means we should never hurt them.
  - Do we want our friends to help us? Yes! So that means.....
2. Ask the children to give ideas about how friends help each other (like sharing toys, taking turns, holding the door open, helping their friend with a puzzle).
3. Tell the children that today you are going to make a drawing of their hand with hearts to show that they know how to share love with their friends. Then, if they want, they can give their picture to a friend.

### **Do the craft:**

4. Gather at the craft table. Provide each child a base sheet of paper. Encourage them to draw around one of their hands. Guide them to cut out heart shapes from the bright colored scraps to glue on their picture. They may also draw around the heart templates or cutters, and cut them out, or draw heart shapes directly on their picture. (You may want to provide some heart cut outs for children who struggle with cutting.) During this part of the craft, ask each child

to share a heart cut-out with one of the other children. Model this by making some heart cut-outs and sharing them with each child. Ensure that every child receives a heart cut-out from one of the friends. Reinforce the idea that being friends means sharing – like passing the paper and glue, and helping – by offering our hands to help and our hearts to love.

5. Show children how to use the hand-held hole punch. Help them punch 2 (or many) holes across the top or around the edge of the picture. Provide a length of yarn to thread in-and-out around the edge of the picture – for decoration or to help hang the picture.

**Gather for closing:**

6. Sit together again. If time allows, make up new words to the song, “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” like:

*If you’re a friend and you know it, clap your hands (repeat)*  
*If you’re a friend and you know it, then be sure you really show it,*  
*If you’re a friend and you know it, clap your hands (repeat)*

7. Say a prayer together:

Hello Jesus. Here we are together. We are learning how to be friends.  
We know that you want us to be friends with each other,  
and treat each other the way that we want to be treated – like by sharing and taking turns and helping each other.  
Help me learn to be a good friend, by sharing my hands to help and my heart to love other people.  
Amen

## I Am a Friend

### Take-home message for families



Jesus asks us to be friends, and to treat other people the way that we would like to be treated. Learning to be a friend is a first step in valuing relationships that include kind and helpful treatment of others. Families can continue to explore these ideas by talking about the ways we treat each other and the ways we like to be treated. The goal is to help children begin to notice how we use our hands to help each other, and our hearts, to share love. Here are some ideas to offer more opportunities for children to learn what it means to be a friend:

**Take a block walk.** Walk past your neighbor's houses and talk about what it means to live near each other in a neighborhood. Talk about ways we are friends with each other. Some neighbors you may know well and you may reach out to each other in a variety of ways, like sharing zucchini from your garden, or watering their plants if they are gone or saying hello when you see them. Other neighbors you may not know at all, but you still do things that are neighborly, like picking up garbage, and waving at them when they drive by. While you walk, talk about other ways you try to be a good neighbor.

**Send a note.** Invite your child to color a picture to send to a friend. Ask your child to dictate a story that you can write and send in an email to a friend. Provide sidewalk chalk and help your child create sidewalk art for neighbors to enjoy. Talk about how these and other ways send a friendly message of kindness and caring.

Say a prayer together:

Hello Jesus. Here we are together. We are learning how to be friends.  
We know that you want us to be friends with each other,  
and treat each other the way that we want to be treated – like by sharing and  
taking turns and helping each other.  
Help me learn to be a good friend, by sharing my hands to help and my heart  
to love other people.  
Amen

## **This is Gentle – That is Rough**

**Goal:** To introduce some of the vocabulary for talking about touching: gentle and soft (good sensations) and rough or scratchy (bad or possibly hurtful sensations).

**Time estimate:** 30 minutes

**Craft activity:** Play dough textures

### **What you need:**

- Purchased or home-made play dough (find recipes on the internet)
- Rice, lentils or similar items – about 1 cup
- Small baggies
- Items with various textures, such as: satin ribbon piece, pottery or plastic cup, cotton balls, stuffed animal, fleece scarf, sand paper, bumpy cardboard, textured stone, and pictures of items that would be sharp and hurtful to touch, such as pins, tacks or nails, or of walking with bare feet on a gravel walkway.

### **Introduce the activity:**

1. Gather children and ask them to help you explore the different words we use to talk about what we touch. Ask the children to use their fingers to touch some part of their clothing. Ask them, “How does your shirt feel?” Encourage them to use words to describe the sensation of the texture of their shirt: smooth, rough, soft, scratchy. Allow each child to name the sensation.

Guide the children to touch and name the sensation of touching their skin, their hair, their pants or shoes. Help them identify a wide variety of names of different sensations using the materials you have provided.

2. Ask the children which sensations they like best: gentle and soft, or rough and scratchy. Talk about the ways we touch other people – by using gentle touching that is soft and smooth, or using rough and scratchy touching? Help the children identify which kind of touching is “good” touching, and which is “bad” touching. Ask the children which kind of touching is more like God’s love for us.

### **Do the craft activity and play the game:**

3. Invite the children to the craft table. Provide each with some play dough. Allow them to play with the dough and talk about how it feels. Does it feel soft, smooth, gentle? Next ask the children to divide their dough in half – and put one portion to the side. Give each child a spoonful of the rice or lentils, and guide them to knead the grains into one portion of their dough. Allow the children time to play with this dough. Ask them to name how it feels. Is it bumpy

and rough? As time is available, let the children play with their play dough balls. Provide baggies so the children can take their dough home.

4. If time permits, play this game. Tell the children that today you are going to play an "I Spy" game. Have a child take a turn to look around the room and identify something that would feel soft and smooth, or rough and scratchy. Guide the child to say, "*I spy with my eye something that is soft and smooth (door surface).*" Have the other children try to guess. When the correct guess is made, move to the object and have all the children touch it to confirm the sensation. Guide the children to select and touch only appropriate surfaces. Remind children that they can tell with their eyes when something looks rough or sharp, and they should keep away from those things that could hurt them.

**Gather for closing:**

5. Review the words that describe good and kind sensations, like soft, smooth and gentle, and the words that describe bad or hurtful sensations, like scratchy, sharp and rough. Remind the children that Jesus wants us to be kind to one another, and that means touching each other kindly and gently.

Close with a prayer.

Jesus, I know that you want us to be kind and gentle with one another. That means touching each other with good and kind touches, and not using rough and scratchy touching which is bad touching. I am glad that you love me and want to teach and help me to be gentle. Thank you for all the people who are kind and gentle to me. Thank you for my beautiful world and all the goodness that is around me. Amen.

## **This is Gentle – that is Rough** **Take-home message for families**



As young children grow and learn, they discover new words to help express themselves and to talk about what they experience. Teaching a range of vocabulary words related to textures and touch, prepares children with the words they need to describe feelings and sensations including good or kind touching and rough or hurtful touching. At home, you can play games with your child to continue teaching words that explore tactile (touching) sensations.

Touch tag. Find a safe place to play outside where you can run. Take turns giving a direction, like, "Look for something that is smooth and soft. Go!" then run to what you see (smooth metal chair, water in a bird bath or puddle). Introduce a variety of tactile sensation vocabulary words that you might discover outdoors, such as a bumpy (sidewalk), rough (gravel walkway), scratchy (bush), smooth (leaves), warm (sun shining on a board), or cold (metal pole on a chilly day). Take turns.

I Spy With My Eye. When you travel in the car, or need a distraction for your child, play the, I spy game. Identify items by how they would feel to touch them. Say, "I spy with my eye something that is fuzzy (cat)." Ask your child to look and see if he or she can spot what you are talking about. Take turns. Introduce new words and help your child identify which touch sensations are good and gentle touches and which are rough and hurtful. Remind children to stay away from things that are rough, scratchy and hurtful.

Name that Touch. Sit with your child on the floor. Place several small and familiar items on the floor in front of you. Lay a towel over the items. Then take turns putting your hand under the towel and touching one item. Use words to name the item and describe how it feels. Examples: a block, hair brush, spoon, cup, ball, sock, lego, sand paper, twig or tree bark, textured paper towel, rock, orange, kiwi fruit.

Sit for a few minutes and talk about the ways that Jesus wants us to care for each other – by sharing good touches that are kind, gentle, smooth and soft.  
Say a prayer together:

Jesus, I know that you want us to be kind and gentle with one another.  
That means touching each other with good and kind touches, and not using rough and scratchy touching which is bad touching.  
I am glad that you love me and want to teach and help me to be gentle.  
Thank you for all the people who are kind and gentle to me.  
Thank you for my beautiful world and all the goodness that is around me.  
Amen.

## **Being Gentle is Being Friendly**

**Goal:** To practice the concept of gentleness.

**Time estimate:** 30 minutes

**Craft activity:** My Friend's Hand sponge painting

### **What you need:**

- Sock balls (created by rolling socks from the toe up, and tucking in the end)
- Small plastic or wicker waste basket or bucket
- Drawing or construction paper
- Sponge pieces – strips cut from clean sponges – one for each child
- Craft paint poured into a shallow dish or pan
- Hand washing area nearby

### **Introduce the activity:**

1. Gather children together. Remind them that Jesus wants us to love and care for each other, and one way we do that is to treat each other gently. Ask the children to give examples of what it means to be gentle, and have them demonstrate. For example:
  - How would you touch gently? (softly and lightly)
  - How would you move gently (move easily not suddenly, no pushing)
  - How would you speak gently (soothingly and tenderly)
2. Place the waste basket or bucket in the center of the circle. Give each child a sock ball and guide them to practice tossing the sock ball into the bucket. Observe the children and help them identify when they are throwing too hard and when they are throwing gently.

### **Do the craft:**

3. Gather at the craft table. Instruct the children that they are going to help each other to make a hand-print sponge painting. Help children work as pairs or a small team. Give one child a piece of paper and ask that child to place their hand on the paper with finger outstretched. Then guide the other child to use the sponge to dip into the paint and then gently pat the paint around that child's hand. Encourage the painter to pat gently on the paper all around each finger. The result will be a "shadow" hand print. Then have the children trade tasks. Provide guidance and while the children work, label each picture with the names of the children who worked together. Help the children wash up.

### **Gather for closing:**

4. Ask the children to say some of the words that describe how the gentle sponge painting felt. Remind them that there are many ways that we show gentleness, like touching gently, speaking quietly, and moving smoothly and easily.

Say a prayer together (use an especially quiet and gentle voice, and ask the children to follow your movements):

Dear God, thank you for sharing your friendly and gentle love with us.

(cross hands over chest)

Help us to grow to be gentle friends to all people.

(raise hands high above the head, like growing up)

And help us to be gentle friends who care about all our earth.

(arch hands from up high, out and apart and down to the side)

Teach us to also love ourselves.

(lay palms gently on each cheek)

And help us to be gentle friends.

Thank you God.

(fold hands in prayer position)

Amen.

## **Being Gentle is Being Friendly** **Take-home message for families**



Learning to be a friend has many aspects. Finding ways to approach and talk to a “new friend,” remembering concepts like taking turns and sharing, and understanding how to interact with a friend, like using kind and nice words and being gentle. Families can help children develop their understanding of treating friends gently with activities like these:

Go on a sensory scavenger hunt. Walk through your house looking for textures of different kinds. Touch different surfaces and name the textures using words like: smooth, soft, fuzzy, warm, scratchy, bumpy, rough, hard, and cold. Help your child to identify the words that describe the “gentle” sensations of touch. Take a walk outside, or while you ride in the car, listen for different sounds and name the type of sounds you hear, like: soft, comforting, peaceful, loud, blaring, scary, and harsh. Help your child begin to identify the words that describe “gentle” sounds. Talk about how friends use gentle touch and gentle sounds and words when they play together. Being gentle is being friendly!

Play the “Would you rather...” game. Ask your child, “Would you rather have your friend pat you on the shoulder, or bump you on the shoulder?” or, “... yell at you or ask you in a nice voice to come play.” Invite your child to offer a scenario.

Say a prayer together (use a quiet and gentle voice, and ask the children to follow your movements):

Dear God, thank you for sharing your friendly and gentle love with us.  
(cross hands over chest)  
Help us to grow to be gentle friends to all people.  
(raise hands high above the head, like growing up)  
And help us to be gentle friends who care about all our earth.  
(arch hands from up high, out and apart and down to the side)  
Teach us to also love ourselves.  
(lay palms gently on each cheek)  
And help us to be gentle friends.  
Thank you God.  
(fold hands in prayer position)  
Amen.

## **Hands are for Helping (not Hurting)**

**Goal:** To introduce the ideas that hands are for being useful and sharing kindness, not for hitting and hurting.

**Craft activity:** Handprint pictures

**Time estimate:** 30 minutes

### **What you need:**

- Construction paper in varying colors – or any appropriate “recycled” paper
- Craft paint (provide various colors, including skin tones, if available)
- Paint brushes (one for each child to paint onto the palms of their hands)
- Marking pens

### **Introduce the activity:**

1. Gather children in a group. Tell the children that today you are going to talk about hands and how hands can be useful to do things, and also to share good touches and kindness. Ask the children to hold up their hands, take a really good look and then take turns telling you something about their hands. Ask questions such as:
  - How many fingers do you have? Are they all the same size?
  - Do you see the places where your fingers bend? Do you see any wrinkles?
  - Can you touch your thumb with each of your fingers?Give the names for parts of the hand: palm, fingers, joints, knuckles, fingernails, and thumb.
2. Ask the children to help you make a list of the *Fun and Useful Things We Can do with Our Hands*. Try to make a long list of ideas such as:
  - eating, building blocks, carrying things, washing, turning the pages of a book, picking up toys, brushing their teeth, getting dressedWrite the ideas on a piece of paper. Affirm that the children can do many useful things with their hands. Post the list for families to see.
3. Now ask the children to give ideas of *Ways We Can Use Our Hands to Share Kindness*. Write these on another piece of paper. Guide children to think of kind activities, such as:
  - helping set the table, offering a toy to another child, carrying food to their dog, holding a door open for a friend, taking a flower to someone who is lonely, coloring a picture to make someone happyGuide children to also include ideas for kind touching, such as:
  - holding hands, patting someone's shoulder, petting a kitty.Affirm that children can share kindness and give many kinds of good touches with their hands. Post this list for families to see.

4. Ask children if hands can hurt others (yes!). Tell them that Jesus taught the people, that if they were doing something that hurt someone else, they need to stop. Hands can hurt other people if we do bad or hurtful touching. Tell them that no matter how young or old you are, hands are always for helping, not hurting. So we need to practice only using our hands to do fun and useful things, and to share kindness, not for hurting.

**Do the craft activity:**

5. Invite the children to the craft table. Help them roll up their sleeves or put on smocks. Invite them to select a piece of paper for their hand print picture. Show them how to use the paint brushes to paint the palm of one of their hands. Encourage them to fully paint their palms and fingers. Then show them how to press their palm onto the paper to make one (or many) hand prints. Provide one piece of paper for all the children to add their handprints for a group poster. While they work, write the children's names on their handprint pictures. Help them wash up while the hand print pictures dry.

**Gather for closing:**

6. Spend a few minutes talking about what the paint felt like on their hands. Ask the children to help you remember what hands are for: helping, doing fun and useful things, showing kindness, good touches, but not for hurting

Say a prayer together:

Thank you, God, for giving me my hands to do good things.  
You made me special, with my special hands.  
I am glad that I can use my hands to be useful,  
to do fun things and to be helpful.  
I am happy I can use my hands to show kindness to others.  
Help me to grow strong and caring,  
and help me to always remember that my hands are for helping, not hurting.  
Thank you for teaching me and for loving me.  
Amen



## **Hands are for Helping (not Hurting)** **Take-home message for families**

Talking with children about how they use their hands offers an opportunity to explore the many ways hands are tools for helping others and sharing kindness.

Make a list with your children of all the ways they can use their hands to do fun things, show kindness and be helpful at home. Post your list on the refrigerator and try to add at least one new idea every day this week.

As the list grows, your children will see that there are many ways that young people can use their hands to be helpers. This builds a realistic awareness that children are capable individuals, who can do good things.

Watch your children using their hands this week. When you see them doing fun, kind, and helpful things – remark about how they are kids who can do good things with their hands. Encourage them to watch for the fun, kind, and helpful things you do with your hands, too!

When it is appropriate, gently, but firmly remind your children that Jesus taught us, that if we are doing something that hurts someone else, we need to stop. Hands are for helping, not hurting.

Say a prayer together:

Thank you, God, for giving me my hands to do good things.  
You made me special, with my special hands.  
I am glad that I can use my hands to be useful,  
to do fun things and to be helpful.  
I am happy I can use my hands to show kindness to others.  
Help me to grow strong and caring,  
and help me to always remember that my hands are for helping, not hurting.  
Thank you for teaching me and for loving me.  
Amen

## **Good Touch is Good. Bad Touch is Bad and I Can Say “No!”**

Adapted from *Good Touch, Bad Touch, Secret Touch: Your Body Belongs to You*, (2003) University of Iowa Children's Hospital Child Protection Program. Retrieved 5-17-2010 from: <http://www.uihealthcare.com/topics/medicaldepartments/pediatrics/goodtouch/index.html>

**Goal:** To help children explore the difference between “good” touching and “bad” touching.

**Time estimate:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Craft activity:** Good touch – Bad Touch Pictures

### **What you need:**

- Picture pages. Draw or print-out picture pages: one with a smiling face, ☺ and one with a frowning - sad face, ☹
- Color page. Draw or print-out the drawing page for each child. Mark a line down the center of the page. On one side print, *Good touching makes you feel safe, and happy.* On the other side print, *Bad touching makes you feel sad and worried.*
- Crayons or marking pens

### **Introduce the activity:**

1. Gather the children in a circle. Say: Today we are going to talk about good touching and bad touching.
  - We want children to know that it's ok for you to decide who can touch you, like who can hug you or kiss you. And, it's ok to say, “no” if you don't want to be touched.
2. Let's talk about good touches.
  - What kinds of touches are good touches?
    - *Hugs, pats, gentle squeezes, kisses from people you love.*
  - How do you usually feel when you get a good touch? Allow time for children to respond; guide children to focus on good touches and good feelings like, *good, happy, glad*
  - Hold up the smiling face page.
  - Give some examples of times children might get good touches, say:
    - Good touches are like when Mommy or Daddy kisses you good-night, or hug you when you get hurt, or Grandma or Grandpa hug and kiss you when they come to visit.
  - Allow children to tell you when they get good touches like these.
  - Ask, children what they can do if someone gives them good touches?
    - Say, Thank you!

- If you feel like it, you can give a hug back.
- 3. Let's talk about bad touches.
  - What kinds of touches are bad touches?
    - *Hitting, kicking, pinching, scratching, slapping, hurting*
    - *Touching your body places where you don't want to be touched*
    - *Doing nice touches too hard! Like hugging too tight!*
  - How do you usually feel when you get a bad touch?
    - *Hurt, sad, crying, mad, scared, nervous, worried*
  - Hold up the frowning - sad face page.
  - Give some examples, say:
    - Bad touches are like when someone hurts you or touches a part of your body you don't want to be touched.
    - It is a bad touch if someone makes you touch them in a way that you don't want to.
  - Allow children to tell you other kinds of bad touch.
  - Ask children what they can do if someone gives them bad touches?
    - Say, Stop that! No! I don't like that! That hurts!
    - Move away from the person whose touch you don't like.

**Do the craft and activities:**

4. Show children the color pages. Point to each side of the page and read what is written. Invite children to draw pictures of themselves, looking happy from good touching on one side of the sheet and a picture of themselves looking sad from bad touching on the other side. Remind children of the messages while they draw. Write in any messages the children may wish to dictate for their families, such as, thank you for the good touching hugs. Or, thank you for keeping me safe from bad touching.
5. If time permits, invite the children to play a Good Touch, Bad Touch game. Gather in a circle. Use the picture pages and teach these movements:
  - When you show the smiling face page ask the children to hug themselves and jump up and down saying "Hooray! I feel good today!" Give an example of good touching
  - When you show the frowning- sad face, ask the children to jump into a position with their hands on their hips. Have them say, "No bad touching!" Give an example of bad touching.
  - Ask the children to watch as you hold up the picture pages, and make the movements. Show the picture pages slowly while children learn to make the movements. Then mix it up and increase the speed to get children responding and jumping quickly!

**Gather for closing:**

6. Review the difference between good and bad touches.

Say a prayer together:

Dear God. Thank you for telling us that we are all your children.  
We are glad for good touches that make us feel safe and loved.  
We don't like bad touches that make us feel hurt, sad or scared.  
Thank you for the good touches you bring to our world.  
We like it when people care for us.  
We like the warm sun, the cool rain, and the gentle breeze  
that bring us good touches from the world.  
Thank you for loving us.  
We love you too, God, and we send you this good kiss (blow a kiss).  
Amen

## **Good Touch is Good. Bad Touch is Bad and I Can Say “No!”** **Take-home message for families**



Touching is an important part of our world. It helps us learn.

It is also how we nurture our children, comfort them and share kindness.

Young children are still learning about how to guide and control their touching, and typically are not yet aware of the consequences of certain kinds of touching. Help this learning along by talking with your child about different kinds of touching.

Good touches include hugs, pats, gentle squeezes, and kisses from people you love. Good touches make children feel happy and glad.

Bad touches include hitting, kicking, pinching, scratching, slapping, hurting. Bad touches also include good touches that are done too hard, like hugging too tightly. Bad touches make children feel hurt, worried, scared and mad.

Show your child how and when to give good touches. Use a doll, stuffed animal or family pet. Take turns using kind and good touching like gentle petting, scratching and patting.

Tell your child that it is OK to say, “No!” to bad touching. Have your child pretend to speak for the doll, stuffed animal or pet. Ask, “Do you like to be scratched? Kicked? Or poked?” Have your child practice saying “No” to bad touches.

Say a prayer together:

Dear God. Thank you for telling us that we are all your children.  
We are glad for good touches that make us feel safe and loved.  
We don't like bad touches that make us feel hurt, sad or scared.  
Thank you for the good touches you bring to our world.  
We like it when people care for us.  
We like the warm sun, the cool rain, and the gentle breeze  
that bring us good touches from the world.  
Thank you for loving us, God.  
We love you too, God, and we send you this good kiss (blow a kiss).  
Amen.



**Good touching makes you feel  
safe, and happy.**

**Bad touching makes you feel  
sad and worried.**

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## **Secret Touching is a Bad Kind of Secret!**

Adapted from *Good Touch, Bad Touch, Secret Touch: Your Body Belongs to You*, (2003) University of Iowa Children's Hospital Child Protection Program. Retrieved 5-17-2010 from: <http://www.uihealthcare.com/topics/medicaldepartments/pediatrics/goodtouch/index.html>

**Goal:** To teach children that secret touching is not ok. They can say, "No!" and ask others for help to stop the secret touching.

**Craft activity:** Fold and Open Inkblot Pictures

**Time estimate:** 20 - 30 minutes

**What you need:**

- Picture pages. Draw or print picture pages: one with a smiling face ☺, one with a frowning - sad face ☹, **and one with a worried face**, 😟
- Manila or medium weight paper for painting (9"x 12")
- Craft paints (several colors) and small paint brushes
- Provide crayons and marking pens for children to illustrate good touches.

**Introduce the activity:**

1. Gather the children in a circle. Tell the children that you are going to talk about good touches, bad touches and secret touches. Tell them that Jesus loves every one of us. He wants us to be cared for and happy. And that is why today we are learning that it's ok for children to decide who can touch you, like who can hug you or kiss you. And, it's ok to say, "no" if you don't want to be touched.
2. Remind the children about good and bad touches.
  - Let's name some good touches?
    - Hugs, pats, gentle squeezes, kisses from people you love.
    - Hold up the smiling face page, Say good touches make your feel glad and happy.
  - Let's name bad touches?
    - Hitting, kicking, pinching, scratching, slapping, hurting
    - Touching your body places where you don't want to be touched
    - Doing nice touches too hard! Like hugging too tight!
    - Hold up the sad/frowning face page. Say, bad touches make your feel worried and sad.
3. Introduce the concept of secret touching.
  - There is also a kind of touching that is called secret touching. Secret touching is a bad kind of secret. Secret touches are:
    - When someone tells you not to tell other people about the touching.

- Sometimes a person might even tell you they will be mad at you or hurt you if you tell others about the secret touching.
  - Children usually feel bad about secret touches. Secret touches make you feel:
    - Sad, uncomfortable or nervous and worried
    - You might have an “uh-oh” feeling like you did something wrong.
  - Hold up the worried face page. Give some examples, say:
    - Secret touches are like when someone pretends to be nice to you, but then makes you let them touch you in ways that you don’t want, and then tells you to keep it a secret.
    - Secret touches are a kind of bad touching. The person who asks you to keep the touching a secret is doing something wrong – not you.
4. Tell the children that they can do these things if someone touches you and tells you not to tell about the secret touching.
- Move away from the person quick.
  - Don’t keep secrets about the touching.
  - Tell a grown-up right away – your mom, dad, relative or a teacher.
  - Stay away from the person who wants you to do secret touching.

**Do the craft activity:**

5. Give each child a sheet of paper and help them fold it in half (don't worry if it is not “perfect”). Then open the paper again. Encourage the children to paint a bit on their papers. Then remove the paint and have them fold their paper again with the painted areas inside. Show them how to rug their hands pressing down all over the folded paper. Tell the children that the paint inside of their picture is like a secret. When the secret is a bad secret, like bad secret touching, no one can help because they can’t see the secret. Now have the children open their paintings and discover the newly created design. Tell the children that if they have a bad secret and are worried, they can tell other people. This way they can find help for their worries. And then they will feel happier inside – like the beautiful picture they have made.

**Gather for closing:**

6. Remind children that touching is an important way we learn about our world and share kindness. Sometimes touching is a good kind of touching that we like. Sometimes touching is a bad kind of touching that hurts. But touching should never be a secret. Secret touching is a kind of bad touching.

Say a prayer together:

Dear God. Sometimes the world is a little confusing,  
like how there are so many kinds of touching.  
Thank you for helping me learn that secret touching is bad touching,  
and that touching should never be a secret.  
Thank you for the good touching in the world that helps me explore and  
learn; for my soft stuffed animal and my pillow,  
for bumpy and smooth rocks, warm baths, and good hugs and kisses.  
Thank you for these good things.  
And thank you for sending Jesus to teach us that you love us.  
Amen.

## **Secret Touching is a Bad Kind of Secret!** **Take-home message for families**



Touching is an important way we nurture children and share our love. But sometime certain kinds of touching are not nurturing and kind.

Talk with your child about good and bad touches.

- Good touches make children feel happy and glad.
- Bad touches make children feel hurt and mad.

Talk about good and bad secrets.

- Good secrets don't hurt anyone. They are fun surprises, like birthday surprises.
- Bad secrets can hurt other people. They are not fun. They make you worried.

Talk about secret touching. If someone touches a child and then tells the child not to tell others about the touching, this is secret touching. It is a kind of bad touching. Touching should never be a secret; secret touching is a bad kind of secret.

Play a good – bad secret game. Say, "I Am Thinking of a Secret." Ask your child to listen and then tell you if you are describing a good or bad secret. Try these ideas:

- Mommy has a special birthday gift for daddy. She said it's a secret, so don't tell.
- Gina has a new book to read to sister – but don't tell, it's a secret.
- Tommy is crying because someone did secret touching and told him not to tell.
- Celeste is worried because someone made her sit on his lap and was kissing her and told her not to tell.

No matter how young or old your children are, offer support and help them learn that secret touching is a bad secret. Tell them they can say, "No!" to secret touches. They can move away and tell a grown-up right away.

Say a prayer together:

Dear God. Sometimes the world is a little confusing,  
like how there are so many kinds of touching.  
Thank you for helping me learn that secret touching is bad touching,  
and that touching should never be a secret.  
Thank you for the good touching in the world that helps me explore and  
learn; for my soft stuffed animal and my pillow,  
for bumpy and smooth rocks, warm baths, and good hugs and kisses.  
Thank you for these good things.  
And thank you for sending Jesus to teach us that you love us.  
Amen.

## **Sometimes I Say Stop!**

**Goal:** To help children learn how to say, "STOP!" when touching is not wanted. Even "fun" touching like tickling can hurt when the play is no longer a game, but is instead a kind of bullying. This activity aims to use the familiar concepts, "red light" for stop, and "green light" for go, to introduce children to the idea that they can decide when to say "no" to touching.

**Time estimate:** 30 minutes

**Craft activity:** Stop and go signs.

### **What you need:**

- 4 inch sized white paper plates
- Red and Green construction paper
- Wooden tongue depressor or popsicle stick or piece of cardboard
- Tape
- Red and green marking pens or crayons

### **Introduce the activity:**

1. Gather the children in a group. Remind them that we are all God's children; that God wants us to be happy and to feel safe. Tell them that Jesus taught us, that if someone is doing something that hurts others, they need to stop. That is the way that we care for and love one another. Tell the children that to practice this lesson, today you are going to talk about traffic lights! Start by saying:
  - Have you noticed the color of the stop and go lights for cars?
  - What color light tells the driver to stop? What color tells the drivers to go?
2. Tell the children that the red light tells drivers to stop. This helps drivers know how to be safe. Sometimes children might need to say stop too. Like when someone is hurting them. Tell them that today you are going to do a stop and go activity to practice saying "Stop!" if someone is hurting them or making them feel uncomfortable or worried

### **Do the craft activity and play the game:**

3. Gather at the craft table. Show the children the craft materials. Give each child a plate and guide them to attach a stick to their plate. Then invite them to cut and paste red paper on one side of the plate, and green paper on the other side. While they work, remind them that red is the color for "stop", and green is

the color that means “go.” If children are interested, help them to write the words stop and go on their signs.

4. Gather in a circle to play the game. Tell the children to listen to what you say, and then respond by holding up their sign showing the red side for stop or the green side for Go!

Start with examples like these (you could write these on strips of paper and have children pull them out of a basket for you to read):

- A child in your class throws a block at you. Do you like that? No? Then say Stop! (Show the stop sign)
- Your friend asks you to play with the blocks together. Do you like that? Yes? Then say Go! (Show the go sign)
- Someone hits you with their hand. Do you like that? No? Then say Stop!
- Your Auntie Ruthie keeps kissing you and won't let you go. If you don't like that, then you say (Stop! )
- Someone is tickling you but it hurts. Do you like that? (Then say No!)
- Someone hits you with a wooden spoon. Do you like that? (Then say...)

5. Now ask the children to offer their ideas for the others to respond to. Help them form appropriate situations, and guide children to respond with Stop! Or Go!

### **Gather for closing:**

6. Sit down to rest and review that it is ok to say, “Stop!”

Say a prayer together:

Jesus, I know that you love me and want me to be safe and happy.  
You told us that when someone is doing something that hurts other people,  
they need to stop.  
Thank you for telling me that if someone is hurting me or touches me and I  
don't like it, I can say, “Stop!”  
Just like a red light means stop to the cars, I can say stop with my voice.  
Thank you for teaching me that I can say stop!  
Jesus, your love for us is like a green light that means go!  
Thank you, Jesus, for sending your love to me and to the entire world.  
Amen.

## **Sometimes I Say Stop!** **Take-home message for families**



Common themes, like red means “stop” and green means “go” are useful for teaching children about what’s OK and what is not OK. In our activities today we used the “red light, green light” concept to help children understand that it is OK for them to say “stop” when they don’t want to be touched.

Typically children are comfortable with good touches and will tell others to stop only if the touching hurts. Using the red means stop and green means go approach helps children signal when they want touching to stop – like tickling that doesn’t feel good, or bad touches that hurt, or secret touches that are not OK and make children feel scared and worried.

You can help extend this lesson at home by using the “red light, green light” approach for other topics.

Ask your child to help you think of “red light means stop!” activities in your family rules. Ideas: poking, pushing, fighting or running in the store are all “red light” activities – that means stop.)

Ask your child to help you think of some “green light means go!” activities for your family. Ideas: giving gentle hugs, working together, sharing, singing in the bath tub and running in the back yard are all “green light” activities – that mean go!

Make it a practice in your family, that when your child say’s no, you stop and listen (red light = stop!), talk about what is wrong and how to make things right (green light = go!)

Say a prayer together:

Jesus, I know that you love me and want me to be safe and happy.  
You told us that when someone is doing something that hurts other people,  
they need to stop.  
Thank you for telling me that if someone is hurting me or touches me and I  
don’t like it, I can say, “Stop!”  
Just like a red light means stop to the cars, I can say stop with my voice.  
Thank you for teaching me that I can say stop!  
Jesus, your love for us is like a green light that means go!  
Thank you, Jesus, for sending your love to me and to the entire world.  
Amen.

## **This is My Private Self**

**Goal:** To identify the areas of the body typically considered “private parts.”

**Time estimate:** 30 minutes

**Craft activity:** Portrait pictures

### **What you need:**

- Cardboard template in the shape of a person, or gingerbread cookie cutter to draw around
- Craft paper
- Marking pens
- Stickers, yarn, paper scraps
- Glue sticks
- Children’s scissors

### **Introduce the activity:**

1. Gather the children together. Invite them to play the Head-Shoulders-knees and toes game. Chant or sing together:  
*Head-shoulders-knees and toes; Knees and toes!*  
*Head-shoulders-knees and toes; Knees and toes!*  
*Eyes and ears and mouth and nose;*  
*Head-shoulders-knees and toes; Knees and toes!*  
Sing or chant the song slowly, then get faster, then sing v-e-r-y slowly. Then sit down.
2. Tell children that today you are going to talk about body parts. Tell them that each part of the body has a name. Point to a variety of body parts and give their names. Start with general and familiar parts like: arm, head, tummy, legs, feet, and ear. Ask the children to name some body parts. Have everyone point to the part that is named. Then name some body parts that children may be less familiar, such as chin, elbow, shoulder, wrist, knee, thigh, calf, and ankle.
3. Remind the children that we take care of our bodies in many ways. Ask if they can tell you some of the ways, such as: eating nutritious food, washing, sleeping, covering our bodies for protection from the wind, cold, sun burn; wearing shoes to protect our feet, wearing a hat to shade our eyes.
4. Explain that there are some parts of the body that everyone can see – like our faces, hair, hands. Explain that there are also parts of our body that we usually keep covered for comfort and protection and also for privacy. Tell the children that some parts of our body we call private parts – because they are parts of

our body that only we are in charge of. Describe that the private parts of the body are the areas usually covered by our swimsuit or underwear.

5. Tell the children that our body's private parts are important for us to take care of, keep comfortable and protect. Remind them that your family, child care provider, doctors and nurses sometimes help you take care of your private parts – like helping you get dressed or use the bathroom. Tell children that it is not OK for other people to ask to touch your private parts. Children can say, "No!" and then tell their family or teacher to make the touching stop.

**Do the craft activity:**

6. Gather at the craft table. Invite the children to draw around the body-template, then decorate the design. For very young children have some craft sheets by drawing on the body designs in advance. Encourage the children to add body parts like eyes, nose, ears, and hair. Invite children to cut paper scraps or use stickers to cover the private parts.

**Gather for closing:**

7. Ask the children to bring their Portrait Pictures and gather as a group. Have each child show their picture. Remind the children that the private parts of the body are good and useful parts. Remind them that it is not OK for other people to ask to touch your private parts. Tell them that it is Ok to say, "No!" and to go ask a grown-up for help.

Say a prayer together:

Dear God. Thank you for making me special with my amazing body.  
I am glad that my body can bend, and stretch, and reach.  
Thank you, for helping me learn how to take care of all my body parts, like how to eat nutritious foods, wash, and wear clothes that protect my body.  
Thank you for telling me that it is OK for some parts of my body to be private; and that only my helpers -- like my parents and doctors and nurses can help me take care of my private body parts.  
And thank you for helping me know that it is not OK for other people to ask to touch my private body parts.  
God I am glad that you made each one of us special.  
Thank you for loving me and for my good body.  
Amen.

## **This is My Private Self** **Take-home message for families**



Young children ages 3 to 5, are in the “in between” age of having all of their care needs managed by their parent or other care providers, and being able to care for themselves when dressing and toileting. Helping children learn the concept of “private parts” introduces the idea that there are places on the body (sometimes considered the area covered by the child’s bathing suit) that should only be touched by the child, their parent or caretaker, or a medical provider.

Families can extend this learning by teaching your children the names of all their body parts, and by using a phrase such as, “private parts” to describe the areas that are not appropriate for touching by others. Help your children learn that it is OK to say, “no!” if others ask to touch their private parts.

Say a prayer together:

Dear God. Thank you for making me special with my amazing body.  
I am glad that my body can bend, and stretch, and reach.  
Thank you, for helping me learn how to take care of all my body parts, like how to eat nutritious foods, wash, and wear clothes that protect my body.  
Thank you for telling me that it is OK for some parts of my body to be private; and that only my helpers -- like my parents and doctors and nurses can help me take care of my private body parts.  
And thank you for helping me know that it is not OK for other people to ask to touch my private body parts.  
God I am glad that you made each one of us special.  
Thank you for loving me and for my good body.  
Amen.

## **I Can Ask for Help**

**Goal:** To help children learn how to ask for help if they are worried or if they have experienced bad touches.

**Time estimate:** 30 minutes

**Craft activity:** Paper bag puppets

### **What you need:**

- Lunch sized paper bags
- Marking pens or color crayons
- Scraps of construction paper, ribbons, yarn
- Paste, glue or glue sticks, or tape
- Children's scissors

### **Introduce the activity:**

1. Gather children in a group. Engage in a short discussion about why and when children might ask for help. Use questions like these:
  - Have you ever needed help to do something? What did you do? Ask for help?
  - If you were feeling bad or scared – what would you do? Ask for help?
  - What words would you use to ask for help?
2. Tell the children that today you have supplies for them to make puppets for a puppet show.

### **Do the craft activity and game:**

3. Show children the craft supplies and give them time to create their puppet. While they work, help them to create a “character”, a person or animal that will help them show others how to ask for help. Help the children write their names on their puppets.
4. Gather the children in a circle. (The teacher should have a sack puppet made in advance). Show the children how to place the sack puppet over their hands. Demonstrate by introducing your puppet saying, *This is my puppet named Sam. Sam say hello to the children. Hello I'm Sam.* Ask each child to “introduce” their puppet.
5. Now ask the children to identify some of the times a child might ask for help. Give ideas as needed, like: help tying shoes or putting on clothes, help getting a

book off of the shelf or putting a puzzle together. Invite the children to use their puppet to practice asking for help. Use phrases such as,

- *Mommy will you help me tie my shoes?*
- *Daddy will you help me with this puzzle?*

Give the children some examples, and have them respond using their puppets.

6. This time introduce examples of times when a child may need to ask for help for personal safety reasons, such as: help when someone takes your toy, when someone hits you, when someone scares you, when someone touches you and you don't like it. Demonstrate using phrases like,

- *Teacher, this is important. Will you tell Gina to stop taking my toy?*
- *Mommy, this is important. Please tell Carl to stop hitting me and scaring me.*
- *Daddy, this is important. Will you tell Uncle Bill to stop touching me? I don't like it.*

Provide examples for children to practice. Ask them for other times they might feel unsafe, and use the child's ideas to practice.

### **Gather for closing:**

7. Gather in a circle. Remind the children that they can use their voices just like their puppets, to ask for help. Tell them that it is ok to ask for help when they need it, like if someone is scaring them, giving them bad touches or secret touches or hurting them.

Say a prayer together:

God, you are everywhere.

You are close to me – as close as my little finger.

I know that you want me to be safe.

Thank you for telling me I can use my voice to ask a grown-up if I need help.

If I am hurting, scared or worried, these are times I can ask for help.

I know that you are listening to me too, God.

Thank you for listening to me and for loving me.

I feel happy knowing that you are near.

Amen.

## **I Can Ask for Help** **Take-home message for families**



Young children are often told not to “tattle” or tell about the misbehaviors of others. This can be confusing when the child needs help when they are scared, if they are being bullied, hurt, or touched in ways that can harm them. Children need to know when it is OK to tell about these hurts and ask for help.

Sometimes tools like puppets or speaking by pretending to have a stuffed animal “talk” is a way to help children practice how to talk about important worries, such as being bullied, bad touching, or being afraid.

You can help your children practice at home. Tuck your hand inside a sock, bend your fingers forward and shape the sock into the palm of your hand to make a “mouth.” Introduce your child to “Mr. Worry Puppet.” Have Mr. Worry Puppet ask your child, “If I get scared, can I come and talk to you?” or “If someone is mean to me and pushes me, can I come to you and ask for help?”

Encourage your child to tell Mr. Worry Puppet that it is OK to ask for help when you are scared or worried. Be sure that Mr. Worry Puppet says thank you for listening and caring! Now let your child hold the puppet and ask you.

Say a prayer together:

God, you are everywhere.  
You are close to me – as close as my little finger.  
I know that you want me to be safe.  
Thank you for telling me I can use my voice to ask a grown-up if I need help.  
If I am hurting, scared or worried, these are times I can ask for help.  
I know that you are listening to me too, God.  
Thank you for listening to me and for loving me.  
I feel happy knowing that you are near.  
Amen.

## I Can Find a Helper

**Goal:** To help children identify the people they can go to if they need help.

**Time estimate:** 30 minutes

**Craft activity:** Straw blown bubble painting

### **What you need:**

- Paper
- Beverage straws
- Small paint brush or plastic eye dropper
- Tempera paint and small dish or container
- Marking pen or pencil

**Game:** Sock-ball balance

### **What you need:**

- Sock balls, 1 for every 2 children
- Heavy construction paper (9" x 12") or wash cloth, 1 for every 2 children

### **Introduce the activity:**

1. Gather the children together. Ask them to think about a time when they needed someone to help them. Ask them to say what kinds of help they have needed, like tying their shoes, reaching a book on a shelf, or helping them if they hurt their knee. Encourage each child to identify a time they needed help.
2. Tell the children that Jesus wants us to help each other; to give a person some water if they are thirsty, to share food if someone is hungry, and to try to find a helper if someone needs a special kind of help. Ask the children to think of helpers in their family. Generate ideas by asking questions like:
  - Who would you go to if you were hungry?
  - Who would you go to for help if you got a bump and were bleeding?
  - Who would you go to comfort you if you were sad?
3. Now ask the children to think of helpers in the community. Ask questions like:
  - Who could help you if you got hurt at school? (teacher)
  - Who could help you find the bananas at the grocery store? (sales person)
  - Who could help you find a book you wanted at the library? (librarian)
  - Who could help you if you got lost at a park? (police officer)
  - Who could help you if you got sick? (nurse or doctor)
  - Who could help you learn about fire safety? (fire fighter)
  - Who could help you learn more about how Jesus loves you? (pastor)

4. Remind the children that there are many people who are helpers: some helpers are in our family, and some helpers are in our community. Tell them that if they have a worry and need some special help, they can find a helper and ask for the help they need.

**Do the craft activity and play the game:**

5. Gather at the craft table. Tell the children that today they are going to make pictures by blowing paint drops. They can pretend that the drops are going to "find a helper." Pour a small amount of paint into a dish. Give each child a piece of paper and a straw. Guide them to use the paint brush or eye dropper to drip a drop of paint near the center of their paper. They can also accomplish this by dipping one end of their straw into the paint, holding their finger over the top open end of the straw to capture the paint drop, and then dripping the paint drop onto the paper. Then have each child use their straw to blow the paint drop across their paper. Encourage them to keep trying to blow other drops of paint to each corner of their paper. Tell them that this is just like going to find help when you need it. Help the children put their names on the paper and set them to dry.
6. Gather for the game. Divide the children into pairs. Give each pair a piece of construction paper (or wash cloth) and a sock ball. Have them place the paper on the ground and put a sock ball on the paper. Then have each child hold onto 2 corners of the paper and work together to lift the paper up without dropping the ball. Have them try walking across the room while working together to balance the ball on the paper. Ask them to try balancing the sock ball on the paper while they sit down on the floor. Provide encouragement for their efforts to work together.

**Gather for closing:**

7. Sit together and reflect on the lesson. Remind the children that we all need help sometimes, and that we can find the help we need by asking the helpers in our family and the helpers in our community.

Say a prayer together:

Jesus, you want us to be helpers, and to help other people when they ask us.  
Guide us to remember that if we need help, we can ask for help, too.

There are helpers in our family.

There are helpers in our church.

There are helpers in our community.

Thank you for all the people who help us.

And thank you for helping us with your love.

Amen.

## **I Can Find a Helper** **Take-home message for families**



Knowing “who are my helpers” is important for children of all ages. Young children feel more secure if they know who will help them if they get hurt, are lonely, or need help for other reasons. Families can guide children to know who to go to if they need help by identifying the helpers in the family and the helpers in the community.

Family helpers. Talk around the dinner table about the ways each person can provide help to the others in the family. Who can help if someone is hungry? Who can help if someone gets hurt? Who can help tie a shoe? Who can help if someone wants to read a book? Who can help draw a picture or sing a song? Who can help if someone is lonely? Who can help if someone has a private worry? Talk about how everyone in the family sometimes needs help and sometimes is a helper.

Community helpers. When you move about the community, talk with your child about the different helping roles in the community. Ask your child to identify what kind of help each community helper provides. Where would we find help if we wanted to mail a letter? Where would we find help if we were sick? Where would we find help if we wanted someone to fix a broken water pipe? Where would we find help if we wanted to learn how to play the piano?

Guide your child to recognize that certain kinds of needs are helped by people with certain kinds of skills. For example, would we call a plumber if we wanted to learn how to play the piano? Would we ask the letter carrier to help us if we were sick?

Remind children that sometimes we might need help for certain worries, like if someone was bullying us or treating us meanly or with bad touches. Tell your child who the helpers are they can go to, in the family (parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents) and in the community (teacher, pastor, police officer). Assure your child that there are people who love them and will be sure that they get the help they need for any special worry they may have.

Say a prayer together:

Jesus, you want us to be helpers, and to help other people when they ask us.  
Guide us to remember that if we need help, we can ask for help, too.  
There are helpers in our family.  
There are helpers in our church.  
There are helpers in our community.  
Thank you for all the people who help us.  
And thank you for helping us with your love.  
Amen.