



GRADE 7 - CLASSROOM

# COMPASS CHILD PROTECTION CHILDREN'S PROGRAM



**BOUNDARIES**  
Parent Handout

# BOUNDARIES

## Grade 7 - PARENT FOLLOW-UP SESSION

*with children who attended the parish/school session.*

### Instructions for the Parents

Your child attended a lesson on safe boundaries and accountability.

You are encouraged, sometime within the next week, to set aside 30 minutes for a discussion on this material with your child. This packet contains information to guide your conversation, as well as a step-by-step guide with suggestions.

### Session Overview:

The teacher introduced how boundaries are important and keep us safe. As we grow older, we need to learn to understand what the boundaries are, and keep ourselves within them.

Physical, Emotional, Verbal and Social media boundaries related to safety were discussed.

The concept of accountability was introduced, and the teacher helped explain how accountability can help teens stay safe as they start doing things independently.

The concept of integrity was introduced, and the importance of living according to the values they were taught was emphasized

At the end of the session, the class read the Bible verse 1 Chronicles 29: 17-19, followed by a prayer.

## Background Information for Parents:

*As you prepare to lead your child through a conversation on staying safe, this background information is for you, not your children, to better understand the issues.*

Child sexual abuse is a form of abuse that includes sexual activity with, or in front of, a minor. When a person engages in this way, they are committing a crime that can have lasting effects on the child. **A child cannot consent to any form of sexual activity.**

The following are forms of child sexual abuse:

- Sending obscene phone calls, text messages, images or other communication.
- Touching a child's private parts.
- Forcing or tricking a child to touch the private parts of an adult or another child.
- Having sex of any kind.
- Exposing oneself.
- Producing, owning, or sharing pornographic images of children.
- Trafficking children for sex.
- Engaging in any other sexual conduct that is harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical development.

Some behavioral signs in children that may indicate sexual abuse include sudden and intense fears, trauma, isolation from others, drastic disruptions in temperament and coping styles, hygiene changes (such as bedwetting, refusing to bathe or washing excessively), being over-protective of siblings, sleep problems or nightmares, inappropriate sexual knowledge, or behaviors beyond their years, or running away from home.

Most sexual abusers have a pre-existing relationship with their victims and/or families. Sexual abusers have gained access, authority, and often the trust of both the child and parent. They may involve themselves in a family's life as well as appear to do great things in the community – this is a way of being “hidden in plain sight” to gain access to children.

A process—often called “grooming”—is a way that abusers break down a child or young person's physical, emotional, and behavioral boundaries while, at the same time, damaging their relationships with adults, their spiritual life, their values, and their sense of self. Make sure to know who is in your child's life, both children and adults. As part of a grooming process, potential abusers (also called predators) might give presents to or offer favors for children.

Grooming bribes or “guilt gifts” might include unexplained clothing, cash, jewelry, phones or trips. Parents should **know the source of any gifts and treats their child receives**. Children and teens should ask their parents before accepting ANY gifts.

Abusers use grooming tactics with parents and caregivers, too. Predators may be eager to babysit; they may offer “a shoulder to cry on” or financial help. They may pose as the wise counselor with sage advice (what a stressed parent often needs) or the go-to neighbor with exciting “treats” or offer to take a child on a family trip with them (things a lower-income parent may not be able to provide). These intentional behaviors are designed to trick the parent into trusting their child with the predator.

A predator's boundary violations may become so entrenched into daily life that adults fail to recognize it. The people in a child's life become convinced that the predator's inappropriate behavior is

safe. If a child says that they have been abused, believe them—even if you think it's impossible.

It is common for children who are victims of abuse, including neglect, to blame themselves and believe a situation is their fault. Furthermore, this message may be reinforced by the person who is abusing them. It is our responsibility as their parents to let them know that it's NOT THE CHILD'S FAULT, they did NOT do anything wrong. This should be continuously reinforced—don't just say it one time and think that's enough. For kids to believe it, we have to say it over and over.

One of the most important ways we can keep our children safe is to have open and courageous communication. Encourage them to come to you when they are confused about anything or have questions. Clearly teaching the names of private body parts, enables a child to share with you accurately when they suspect abuse happening to a friend, or even to themselves.

Build strong communication bridges with your children so that when they have to talk about something heavy or hard, they are able to bring it to you with greater ease. For example, your child may step forward and share about a mistake they made, something a friend did, or an unjust situation. Your reaction to these situations determines their level of comfort in continuing to bring such things your way.

When your child does come to you, avoid reacting emotionally, and be supportive. Assure them that you love them and you will help them find a solution.

## PARENT-CHILD DISCUSSION

### A. Boundaries

In class, your teacher talked about boundaries. What are some boundaries that we, as parents, have asked you to follow?

Work with your child to make a list of safety rules, boundaries or expectations that you have in place in your home.

#### Ask:

Which of these do you find easy to follow? Which of these do you find difficult? Are there any that you do not follow? Are there any that you do not want to follow?

Talk about the different safety rules and boundaries specifically. Be open and strategize together ways that give your child the space and freedom they need, along with giving them structure and boundaries to follow. For some things you may be able to let your child know a particular age when they would be allowed to do that. Or, you can say that based on the way they follow the current boundaries, they would be given permission to do that.

### B. Accountability

Talk about the word accountability. In the class the teacher explained that letting others know what they are doing, where they are going, and being transparent with few responsible adults, can help them stay safe.

Talk about people that they think they can stay accountable to. Here are some areas of accountability you can discuss with your child:

- Letting your parents have complete access to all mobile devices, apps, games, computers at all times. Parents must know all passwords and login information for all of these.
- Letting your parents know where you are at all times.
- Sharing information about friends and other relationships with parents.
- Talking to parents about uncomfortable relationships or situations.

### C. Social Media Rules

Look at the activity book, at the page Social Media rules. Discuss any of the points where your child has scored low. Talk about changes in social media behavior so that they can stay safe while using the internet.

If your child has a social media account, ask them to view their activity over the past one week and assess it in light of the rules. It will help them see what they tend to do in social media, and will help them learn to use it carefully in the future.

### D. End with prayer.

End with a time of prayer, asking God to help them stay safe, be accountable and make good choices.