



Adventist Risk Management, Inc.



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Talking to Our Kids About General Safety

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🔗 [Child And Youth](#), [Early Education](#), [Primary Education](#), [School](#)

Some kids are born risk managers. These are children who pay attention and follow the rules. But others are not natural risk managers. These are the kids who may wear t-shirts that read “If I’m quiet, you’d better come find me!” With these kids, mischief is always afoot.

Whether low-risk or high-risk, both types of children hold a special place in God’s heart. If you work in children’s ministry, you are responsible for the safety of the children placed in your care. You can help protect kids and make your ministry a safer place by teaching children three simple safety subjects.

#1 Know the rules and why we keep them.

Talk to kids about the rules your ministry has in place and why they are essential. Children who understand the rules can follow them and recognize the value of following those rules. By grasping the purpose of these rules, they will be more motivated to follow them. Some general safety rules to review with kids include:

- A no-bullying policy and how to respect your neighbor. Explain what bullying is, including physical, emotional, and cyberbullying. Talk to kids about the harm bullying does, how to report instances of harassment, and how bullying will be handled in your ministry.
- Read more about building [a Bully-Free Zone](#).
- Healthy touch and unhealthy touch, and how to report uncomfortable situations. Teach children what types of touches are okay, and what kinds of touches should not happen. Teach children who they can talk to if they are ever touched in a way that makes them uncomfortable.
- Use the free resource [“Good Touch and Bad Touch”](#) for talking points on appropriate touch for staff and children.
- The Buddy System: Always take a buddy and tell an adult where you are going. Talk to children about the importance of staying together and why it is unsafe to wander off alone. Explain that your ministry makes sure children are safe at all times, and that means sticking with your buddy and always telling an adult where you are going.

#2 Watch your surroundings and act when you see any danger.

Talk to kids about being alert to their environment and how to respond to dangerous situations. In an emergency situation, the untrained child’s response could be to freeze up and not respond, or to panic. Either reaction may put the child in more danger and make it more difficult for you to bring them to safety. A child who has been taught to look for risk and to respond appropriately can help prevent dangerous situations from unfolding, and help themselves and their friends react safely.

Talk to children about situational awareness. Teach them how to look for threats, and what to do when they see something they think is dangerous. Some examples of this could be a loose power cord not taped down at church that creates a tripping hazard, walking around with sticks in a way that could hit someone else while on a camping trip, or wandering away from the group at camp without telling an adult.

A handy tool for teaching children about situational safety awareness is the [Spy Danger App Game](#). Additional resources for talking to children on responding to active shooter situations, earthquakes, and fires can be found in the Sabbath School

Teacher guides at [SafetySabbath.com](https://www.safetysabbath.com).

#3 Be accountable to yourself, each other, and God.

Talk to children about being accountable to themselves, each other, and God. A strong sense of comradery and accountability among kids will help them stick together, take care of each other, and hold each other to the safety standards of your ministry.

Being accountable should be a continuing conversation with the children in your ministry throughout the year. This can be done with a group discussion at the start of the year and regular reminders throughout the year on being accountable to follow the rules, looking out for each other, and representing the ministry they are a part of, and the God they worship.

Children are resilient, but on this earth, we are not immortal. Accidents (unintentional injuries) are the leading cause of death among ages 1–14. Talking to kids about safety during your ministry year, teaching them to know the rules and why we keep them, how to recognize and respond to danger, and to be accountable to themselves, each other, and God, will help the kids in your ministry be more safety conscious and prevent accidents and death.

References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/child-health.htm>

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