I AM WORTHY Facilitator's Guide

Older Elementary

#3 | I Deserve to Feel Safe at All Times

Lesson Overview

This lesson (30–45 minutes) helps students understand that because their lives matter and they are worthy of love, they are also worth protecting. Students will learn the difference between warning fear and intimidation fear, practice recognizing when something is truly unsafe, and identify trusted adults they can go to for help.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand that they are worth protecting and deserve to feel safe.
- Recognize the difference between warning fear and intimidation fear.
- Identify when a situation may be truly unsafe and know to speak up and get help.

Supplies Needed

- Bag or pillowcase
- 3–4 protective items, such as an oven mitt, bike helmet, sunglasses, bandage, or umbrella
- Two signs: Warning Fear and Intimidation Fear
- Journals
- Pencils

Introduction: What Do These Protect? (4–5 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Before class, place 3–4 protective items inside a bag.

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Say: “I brought a mystery bag today, and everything inside has something in common.”

Invite a few students to pull out one item at a time.

For each item, ask:

- “What is this?”
- “What does it protect us from?”

Possible examples:

- An oven mitt protects our hands from heat.
- A helmet protects our head.
- Sunglasses protect our eyes.
- A bandage protects a cut while it heals.
- An umbrella protects us from the rain.

Ask: “What do all of these things have in common?”

Allow a few responses.

Say:

> “They all protect something worth taking care of.”
>
> “Over the last few weeks, we have learned:
>
> My life matters.
>
> I am worthy of love.
>
> And if your life matters and you are worthy of love, then there is another truth you need to know:
>
> You are worth protecting.”
>
> “Think about a little child reaching toward a hot stove. The child may not know it is dangerous, but that does not make it safe.”
>
> “Sometimes someone who knows more than we do can warn us about danger. We do not have to learn everything the hard way.”

Ask: “Why is it sometimes better to learn about danger from someone else instead of learning the hard way?”

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Allow a few responses.

Say: “That brings us to today’s affirmation.”

Students repeat: “I Deserve to Feel Safe at All Times.”

Teaching Truth #1: Fear Can Warn You or Intimidate You (2–3 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say:

> “Fear can be confusing because sometimes it helps us, and sometimes it tries to hold us back.”
>
> “We are going to call these two kinds of fear warning fear and intimidation fear.”
>
> “Warning fear tells us, ‘Pay attention. Something may be dangerous.’ Imagine stepping too close to the edge of a steep drop. Your heart starts pounding, and you quickly step back. That fear helped protect you.”
>
> “But sometimes fear shows up when we are actually safe. The mean voice in our head may tell us we aren’t good enough, that we will fail, or that other people will laugh at us.”
>
> “Maybe you want to audition for the school play or raise your hand in class, but the mean voice says, ‘Don’t do it. You’ll embarrass yourself.’ We’ll call that intimidation fear.”
>
> “Let’s practice telling the difference.”

Large Group Activity: Warning Fear or Intimidation Fear? (5–6 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Place a Warning Fear sign on one side of the room and an Intimidation Fear sign on the other.

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Say:

> “Let’s see how good you are at being fear detectives.”
>
> “I’m going to read a situation. If you think it sounds like warning fear, move toward the Warning Fear side.”
>
> “If you think it sounds like intimidation fear, move toward the Intimidation Fear side.”
>
> “Listen carefully, because both kinds of fear can make your heart beat fast.”

Read:

- “You are about to cross the street and a car comes speeding around the corner.”
- “You want to audition for the school play, but you are scared you might mess up.”
- “Someone dares you to climb somewhere that could be dangerous.”
- “You know the answer in class, but you are nervous about raising your hand.”
- “You smell smoke coming from a room.”
- “You want to introduce yourself to someone new, but you feel shy.”

After selected examples:

Ask: “What made you choose that answer?”

What Did You Notice?

Lead Teacher

Ask:

- “What helped you decide whether the fear was warning you or intimidating you?”
- “Can both kinds of fear feel strong?”

Say: “When fear shows up, stop and ask whether it is warning you about danger or intimidating you because something feels challenging.”

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Teaching Truth #2: When Something Is Truly Unsafe, Speak Up and Get Help (5–6 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say:

> “Knowing what kind of fear we are feeling is important. But when warning signs are real, we also need to know what to do next.”
>
> “Something can be hard, upsetting, or uncomfortable without being unsafe. Someone can disagree with you or correct you without being unsafe.”
>
> “But if someone threatens to hurt you, bullies you, pressures you to do something dangerous, or you believe someone may actually harm you, take those warning signs seriously.”
>
> “When something is truly unsafe, you do not have to handle it by yourself. Speak up and tell a trusted adult.”
>
> “That could be a parent or caregiver, teacher, counselor, principal, coach, relative, or another trustworthy adult.”
>
> “If someone threatens you and says, ‘You better not tell anyone,’ that is not a reason to stay quiet. It is a reason to speak up.”

Ask: “What should you do if someone is making you genuinely afraid for your safety?”

Allow students to respond.

Say:

> “Sometimes home can be difficult too.”
>
> “Families go through hard things. Adults may disagree. Parents may divorce. Life at home may sometimes feel stressful or upsetting.”
>
> “Hard does not always mean unsafe.”
>
> “But if someone is hurting you, threatening you, or you truly believe you are in danger, tell a trusted adult and ask for help.”

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Talk It Out (2–3 minutes)

Table Leaders

Ask:

- “What is the difference between being uncomfortable and being unsafe?”
- “Why might someone be afraid to ask for help?”

Students do not need to share personal experiences.

Journal Reflection: My Safe People (4–5 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say:

“Take a few quiet minutes to think about what you learned today.”

“Think of two or three trustworthy adults you could talk to if you ever felt truly unsafe or needed help. Write their names in your journal.”

“Choose people you trust to listen to you, take you seriously, and help you when you need it.”

“You do not have to share your answers.”

Journal Prompts:

How can you know the difference between warning fear and intimidation fear?

Closing Affirmation (1–2 minutes)

Lead Teacher

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Say:

> “Today we learned that fear can warn us about danger or intimidate us when something feels challenging. When something is truly unsafe, we can speak up and get help.”
>
> “Let’s say today’s affirmation together.”

Students repeat:

“I Deserve to Feel Safe at All Times.”

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