I AM WORTHY Facilitator's Guide

Middle School

#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
- Small dry-erase boards or paper for each table
- Printed Risk Radar Scale

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

Lead Teacher

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

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.”

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"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?"

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."

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Large Group Activity: Risk Radar Challenge (7–8 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Give each table a small dry-erase board or piece of paper.

Display the Risk Radar scale (see final page):

Say:

> “Not every situation fits perfectly into ‘safe’ or ‘unsafe.’”
>
> “Sometimes you have to look at what is actually happening and decide whether fear is simply intimidating you—or whether it is warning you.”
>
> “For each situation, your table can choose any number from 1 through 5.”
>
> “Be ready to explain what warning signs you noticed and why you chose your number.”

Read one scenario at a time. Have tables reveal their number together.

Risk Radar Scenarios

- “You want to audition for the school play, but you are afraid you will mess up in front of everyone.”
- “You are at a party with no adults around, and a fight breaks out.”
- “Someone strongly disagrees with something you believe and tells you so directly.”
- “You spend the night at a friend’s house, and they decide to sneak out after everyone is asleep.”
- “Someone threatens to hurt you and says, ‘You better not tell anyone.’”
- “You are at a friend’s house, and a movie is playing that is so violent it makes you really uncomfortable.”
- “A friend says, ‘If you were really my friend, you would do this,’ and pressures you to do something you know you should not do.”
- “You are offered a ride home, but you realize the driver has been drinking.”

Pause for brief discussion on selected scenarios.

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What Did You Notice?

Lead Teacher

Ask:

- “Which situations were hardest to score?”
- “What details made you move a situation higher on the Risk Radar?”
- “Why is it important not to treat every uncomfortable situation like it is unsafe?”

Say:

> “The goal is not to be afraid of everything. The goal is to pay attention.”
>
> “Sometimes fear is trying to intimidate us because something is hard, awkward, or challenging.”
>
> “Other times fear is warning us that something may really be wrong.”
>
> “When warning signs are there, pay attention and get help when you need it.”

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.”

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> “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.”

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.”

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“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:

> What qualities make someone a trustworthy adult you can turn to when you need help?

Closing Affirmation (1–2 minutes)

Lead Teacher

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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RISK RADAR SCALE

1 — Mostly Intimidation Fear

Uncomfortable or nerve-racking, but no real sign of danger.

2 — Pay Attention

Something feels a little off, but there are not many warning signs.

3 — Warning Signs Are Showing Up

Stop and think. Something may not be right.

4 — Serious Concern

Warning fear deserves attention. Get help from a trusted adult.

5 — Clearly Unsafe

Move toward safety and get help.