

THIRD GRADE: Building Boundaries for Young Children: Secrets: Those You Keep and Those You Share

Child Development:

Parents remain the strongest influence for third graders, but the peer group continues to grow in importance as well. Third graders are social and are looking outside the family for new ideas and activities. Typically, they play with their same-sex peers.

Lesson Overview:

The focus of this program for third graders is continuing to build emotional and behavioral boundary skills. The corresponding lessons are designed to reinforce the concept that some secrets are good while others are not. The accompanying activities help the students learn to make decisions about which secrets can be kept and which should be told to a trusted adult.

Objectives for Third Grade Students:

Students will:

1. Learn about different types of secrets.
2. Learn how to recognize a bad secret.
3. Learn how to tell a trusted adult when someone has asked them to keep a bad secret.

THIRD GRADE: Lesson Plan A

Learning Objective 1:

Learn about different types of secrets.

Estimated Lesson Time: 20 minutes

Materials needed:

None

Activity:

Teacher:

“What is a secret?” (*Takes some ideas from class*)



“A secret is something you know but are not supposed to tell.”

“Why would we ever need to keep secrets?” (*Ask the class for examples.*)

“Some things are kept secret because they are surprises.” (*Ask the class for examples.*)

You know what someone is getting for their birthday, but you’ve been asked not to tell so that you won’t spoil the surprise.

- ▶ Should you keep this secret?
- ▶ Why?

“There are other kinds of secrets, too. Some things are secret because someone would get into trouble if another person found out. Sometimes people should be in trouble, but sometimes all they need to do is apologize.”

- ▶ For example: [You can ask the class for an example.]

You call your sister a name in an argument. She says she is going to tell your parents. You apologize and ask her not to tell. You know you have hurt her feelings, and you do not want to do that again.”

- ▶ Should your sister keep this secret?
- ▶ Why?

“Some things are secret because the information is private. If others knew, someone would be embarrassed.”

- ▶ For example: [You can ask the class for an example.]

Your best friend made a bad grade in math. He told you about it but asked you not to tell.”

- ▶ Should you keep this secret?
- ▶ Why?

“These all seem to be secrets you can keep without hurting anyone or making yourself feel bad. Like presents you want to unwrap, secrets can be hard to keep secret, but the surprise at the end will make someone happy. It is good to keep this kind of secret. We call these kinds of secrets ‘good secrets’ or secrets that bring goodness to you and others.”

“But some secrets aren’t so good. In fact, they can be downright bad. We call them “bad secrets” because they make you feel bad or they hurt you or someone

else. Some secrets are like dark clouds. They may make you feel afraid or that something bad is going to happen. Your intuition tells you that if you do not tell someone about this bad secret, you or someone else could be hurt. Adults need to know about bad secrets so that they can help you stay safe.”

“What are some secrets that might be bad?”

“A bad secret is something that makes you feel funny. Your intuition tells you it is bad.”

- ▶ For example: [You can ask the class for an example.]

You see someone steal something in a store. This person tells you not to tell anyone about it.

- ▶ Should you keep this secret?
- ▶ Why?

“A bad secret is one where someone is in danger.” For example: [You can ask the class for an example.]

You know that your brother takes off his helmet when he’s riding his bike. He tells you that “you better not tell.”

- ▶ Should you keep this secret?
- ▶ Why?

“A bad secret is when someone breaks rules about touching.”

- ▶ For example: [You can ask the class for an example.]

An adult breaks rules about touching you but says they will hurt your dog if you tell.

- ▶ Should you keep this secret?
- ▶ Why?

Student Assessment/Reflection:

Teacher:

“How would you feel if you were keeping a bad secret? What would you do?”

THIRD GRADE: Lesson Plan B

Learning Objective 2:

Learn how to recognize a bad secret.

Estimated Lesson Time: 20 minutes

Materials needed:

“Gift – Good Secret” Card “Dark Cloud – Bad Secret” Card Pencils

Activity:

Teacher:

“Now that you know we have different kinds of secrets, let’s see if you can tell which one is which.

[Teacher hands each child a “Gift” card and a “Dark Cloud” card.]

I’m going to say a secret, and when you hear it, I want you to hold up the “Gift” card if you think it is a good secret and the “Dark Cloud” card if you think it is a “Bad Secret.”

Before the exercise, make sets of one “Gift” card and one “Dark Cloud” card to give each child.



THIRD GRADE: Lesson Plan B

Secrets

- ▶ Your grandmother tells you that she's giving your grandfather a surprise birthday party. She asks you not to tell.
- ▶ Your friend is being bullied, but he doesn't want you to tell anyone.
- ▶ A stranger offers you candy while you are playing at the park. The stranger says he wants you to have it but not to tell your mom.
- ▶ You know what your little sister is getting for Christmas, but you are not supposed to tell.
- ▶ An older boy takes your Nintendo DS. He says that he'll beat you up if you tell anyone.
- ▶ You made a "Mother's Day" card at school and the teacher says not to tell your mother about it.
- ▶ Your coach gives you money and tells you it's for playing so well at the game last week. He tells you not to tell the other kids or your parents about this.
- ▶ You are at Joel's house with his big sister Carrie. She lets you play on her computer because it doesn't have a filter.
- ▶ Sometimes you see things on the Internet that make you feel uncomfortable. Carrie has told you not to tell anyone what you did on the computer.

THIRD GRADE: Lesson Plan B

Student Assessment/Reflection:

Teacher:

Discuss the fact that the students can decide for themselves whether to keep a secret. Ask why they should not keep a bad secret just because someone tells them to.

THIRD GRADE: Lesson Plan C

Learning Objective 3:

Learn how to tell a trusted adult when someone has asked them to keep a bad secret.

Estimated Lesson Time: 15 minutes

Materials needed:

Safe Adult Identity Page

“Dark Cloud – Bad Secret” Card Telling Secrets Activity Page Scissors

Glue

Activity:

Teacher:

“The way to do the right thing when someone tells you a bad secret is to tell an adult you trust.

When we talked about good and bad secrets last time, we said that bad secrets can make you feel bad or uneasy if you don’t tell them. Give me an example of a secret that would make you feel bad.” (*Kids respond*)

[Teacher hands out Safe Adult Identity Page.]

“Name some adults in your life that are safe, and explain why you trust them.”

Name: _____

Safe Adult Identity Page



_____ is a safe adult in my life because:



_____ is a safe adult in my life because:



_____ is a safe adult in my life because:

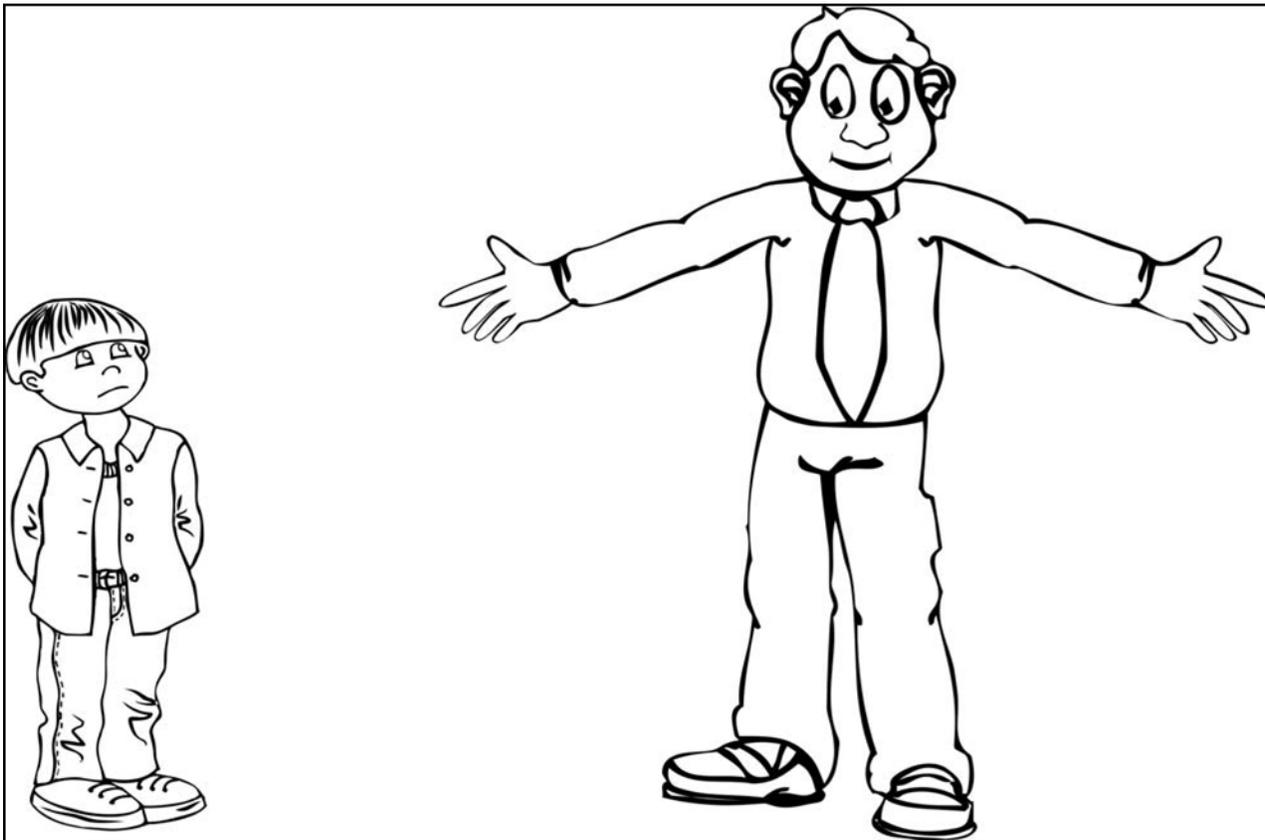


_____ is a safe adult in my life because:

THIRD GRADE: Lesson Plan C

Telling Secrets Activity Page and “Dark Cloud” Bad Secret [Teacher’s Copy]

[Teacher hands out Telling Secrets Activity Page and a “Dark Cloud” Bad Secrets for the child to cut out the shape.]



Teacher:

“The first thing we are going to do is cut the “dark cloud” bad secret out with your scissors. Now place your “dark cloud” bad secret on the child.”

“How does that child feel holding this big, “dark cloud” bad secret? See how big it looks against the child?”

“Now place your “dark cloud” bad secret on the adult.” (*They do that*)

“See how much smaller the “dark cloud” bad secret looks now? That’s because adults are bigger and know how to take bad secrets and keep them from hurting you or others. Let’s give the bad secret, then, to the adult. Glue the “dark cloud” bad secret onto the adult.”

“Now that the adult has the big “dark cloud” bad secret, how do you think the child feels?”

SHORT STORIES: How to Give a Bad Secret to an Adult

Teacher: Depending on the amount of time you have or want to spend, you can read all of these scenarios or simply pick a few.

Teacher:

“You want to give a bad secret to an adult, but you may think you shouldn’t because they would worry. You may NOT want to tell them because you’re afraid you’ll get into trouble or be embarrassed. These kinds of bad secrets are the ones you really need to share as soon as you hear them.

Trouble is...you’ve got to know what to say when you need to tell a secret like that. There is no right or wrong way.

Here are some ways other kids have given bad secrets away to an adult.”

Telling a Secret

Sophia broke her grandmother’s vase. Then she cleaned up the pieces and hid them in the trash. That night she couldn’t sleep. The next morning, Sophia went to her grandmother and said, “Gramma, I need to tell you something, but I don’t want you to be mad.” To her surprise, Sophia’s grandmother replied, “Come tell me what you need to tell me, baby. It’s ok.”

- ▶ To the class: What do you think happened when Sophia gave her grandmother the bad secret? Why?

At school one day, Andrea told Rachel that she and her brother had been playing the “Dare” game. Each day one would dare the other to do something dangerous to see who was more afraid. Just yesterday, Andrea said she had waded through the creek even though she didn’t know how to swim just to show her brother that she wasn’t afraid. She told Rachel that the game was starting to scare her, but she knew her brother would be mad at her if she didn’t play or if she told someone what they were doing. At dinner that night, Rachel was so worried that she couldn’t eat. Finally, she said, “Mom and Dad, my friend told me something but

asked me not to tell. I promised that I wouldn't, but now I know that I have to tell you because I promised to keep a bad secret before I knew it was bad. I'm worried about her and afraid she'll get hurt if I don't tell." Rachel's dad put his fork down, looked at Rachel, and said, "It sounds as if your friend needed to tell someone. She doesn't want to get hurt. And you don't want her to be hurt. I'm glad that you can recognize that this is a bad secret. Tell us what's going on, so we can help her. This isn't the kind of secret you can keep. It's too big."

- ▶ To the class: What do you think happened when Rachel's parents took charge of the bad secret? Why?

Aiden's next door neighbor, who worked with Aiden's father, had been inviting him over to play video games. Aiden was feeling uncomfortable, though, because the man also wanted him to do things he didn't want to do. He had never forced Aiden to do anything, but he told Aiden not to tell anyone about his house, how close they sat together on the couch or how much time they were spending together alone. Aiden wanted to end the friendship, but he was worried because he didn't know what would happen to his father's job if he did. Afraid to tell his parents, Aiden went to his teacher, "Ms. Reyes, someone has been bothering me. An adult. He told me not to tell. But I think this is a bad secret to keep. I'm afraid that if I do keep the secret and not give it away to an adult the man who told me not tell will get my dad in trouble at work. Can I tell you?" Ms. Reyes took Aiden into the hallway and said, "Thank you for coming to me. The best way to keep yourself safe in this case is to tell me the bad secret and how this person is bothering you. I promise to listen, and we can figure out what to do next."

- ▶ To the class: What do you think happened after Aiden gave Ms. Reyes the bad secret? Why?

Ava had allowed a friend to talk her into doing something she knew she should not do. She knew that her parents would be worried and angry if they found out. But she didn't like carrying around such a dark, bad secret. She decided to tell her family counselor. She said, "Since you're my counselor, I know I can tell you anything. I know a bad secret that I can't tell my parents. I know I need to give it

to an adult because it is a bad secret to keep.” Ava’s counselor said, “Ava, you can tell me anything. You know that. But you should know something else, too. If you tell me a bad secret that your parents need to know, I will help you tell them, too. We won’t keep bad secrets from them that could hurt you or someone else. But I’ll help you tell your parents so they can do what is right.

- ▶ To the class: What do you think happened after Ava gave the bad secret to her counselor? Why?

On Sunday at a party at Uncle John’s house, Nathan’s cousin Marcus asked Nathan to play the “Touching Game.” During the game, Marcus touched Nathan’s private parts. When Nathan told him to stop, Marcus stopped, but he told Nathan he’d better not tell anyone. Because Marcus was older and bigger, Nathan was worried about doing something Marcus told him not to. Also, he knew that his parents really loved Marcus.

Nathan wasn’t sure how to tell his parents about this bad secret. So he approached his older brother saying, “Marcus broke the touching rule with me. He told me not to tell.” Nathan was relieved when his brother replied, “Hey, you know what Mom always says. She says no one can break touching rules with us. He should never have done that to you. By telling Mom, you’ll be doing the right thing. I’ll go with you.”

- ▶ To the class: What do you think happened after Nathan and his brother told the bad secret to their mother? Why?

Benjamin loved baseball, but he was not the best player on the team. The coach began calling him names whenever he made a mistake. He would say things like, “Benjamin, you couldn’t hit a basketball with that bat.” Or “Bench Benjamin, I guess you can play now since we’re already losing.” Sometimes when Benjamin would pass the coach, he could hear the coach whisper, “What a dork.” Benjamin was embarrassed, but all of the parents seemed to like the coach. One Saturday, Benjamin’s uncle was pitching the ball with him in the back yard. Benjamin said, “Uncle Stan, I love baseball, but I don’t want to go to baseball practice any more.

My parents think Coach Anderson is great. But he's not so great." Uncle Stan said, "Well, let's talk about that. Tell me about the last time you and the coach were together. Did he say or do anything to make you feel uncomfortable?"

- ▶ To the class: What do you think happened after Benjamin talked to his uncle about his baseball coach? Why?

Olivia was the teacher's pet. All of the kids said so. At first, Olivia enjoyed being the favorite. She was the teacher's "assistant" and was allowed to stay in the room with the teacher if she didn't want to go to PE. After a time, though, the teacher began to want more and more of Olivia's time. He would ask Olivia to stay in from recess to be with him and to eat lunch in the room with him. Olivia started feeling that if she didn't do what he wanted, she would hurt his feelings. He had been so nice to her that she didn't want to do that, but she also wanted to be more like the other kids instead of being the teacher's pet. When she told the teacher she wanted him to pick another assistant, he said that he was disappointed in her. He then showed her a gold necklace and said he'd bought it just for her. He said she didn't have to spend time with him if she didn't want to, but he wanted her to keep the necklace, and he wanted her to keep it a secret just between them. Olivia was confused. She liked the teacher, but he was beginning to make her feel funny. She knew that if she felt funny inside, the secret her teacher asked her to keep was a bad secret. She liked the necklace, but she wasn't sure she could keep it. After school one day, Olivia approached her mother. "Mom, I have something to tell you. I think it is a bad secret, and my teacher will be mad at me for telling you." Olivia's mom put her hands on Olivia's shoulders and said, "Well, you may tell me anything you need to. We have a rule that you must not keep bad secrets from me even if someone else tells you to."

- ▶ To the class: What do you think happened after Olivia told her mother about the necklace? Why?

Lily had been worried for a long time. She lived with her grandparents and loved them very much. But lately an older boy down the street had been trying to get her to play with him. Lily had played a couple of games with him, but she didn't

like being with him. He made her uncomfortable. She always made excuses to get away from him. One day when she told him she would not play with him, he told her that her grandfather was an old man and that he could hurt her grandfather if he wanted to. He told her to remember that next time he asked her to play with him. For the last week or so, Lily had been able to avoid the older boy, but she knew she couldn't avoid him forever. Her intuition told her that this threat to her grandfather was a bad secret, and she had to share it with him or another adult.

Finally, she went to her grandfather as he was reading. She said, "Granddad, I'm afraid to tell you something, but it is a bad secret. I've been told that if I share it with you, you'll get hurt." Granddad put down his book, removed his glasses, and chuckled. He said, "Honey, you don't have to be afraid. Tell me what you need to tell me. That will help me know who's threatening me and why. Plus, it will help me help you with this bad secret and you will never have to be with this person again. What's going on?"

- ▶ To the class: What do you think happened after Lily told her grandfather the bad secret? Why?

Student Assessments/Reflections

Teacher:

"Did you learn why you should tell trusted adults bad secrets, and how you can tell bad secrets? Always remember that someone will listen to you when you need to tell a bad secret. If the first person doesn't listen, tell someone else you trust.

There are lots of ways to tell bad secrets or to tell things that are hard to say. I'll bet there's someone in your life you can depend on. If you need to share a bad secret or talk about something that's bothering you, you'll feel much better once you tell.

How many feel that you now know why you should give a bad secret to a trusted adult in your life and how to do so?"