

Middle School: Violence (Multi-Grade Pilot Unit)



Attention Educator: The lessons in the Violence Unit are grade level pilot lessons for 7th and 8th grade students. We need your professional feedback to determine the appropriate grade-level for each lesson. Please send feedback and any suggestions you may have to kelly@thriveway.com. We appreciate your assistance, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Lesson 3 – Youth Crime & Gun Violence



Lesson Time:

30 Minutes

Materials Provided:

- Handout: “Gun Safety Pledge” (one per student)
- Video: “Do Not Pick The Gun Up Kids...” (2:50)

Materials Needed:

- Projector with Video/Audio Capability
- Pens, Pencils, Markers, Big Piece of Butcher Paper

Essential Question:
What can be done to promote gun safety?

Objectives:

Students will be able to...

- Define gun safety.
- Share tips for keeping guns safely stored.
- Recognize that gun violence is not the answer to solving real-life problems.
- Commit to practicing gun safety.

Did You Know:

- Students run the risk of having a friend who wants to show off weapons that are in their house.
- Arguments are the number one reason for shootings and account for half of the severe incidents we hear about in surrounding areas.
- Violence prevention advocates say teaching people to peacefully settle arguments is more important than ever, given the glorification of violence on social media.

Educator Tip:

As you teach this lesson, be sure to talk about the seriousness of this topic and to let each student know that they can speak to you or a counselor if they have been impacted by gun violence personally. Make sure to mention to students that there is a large disparate impact in illegal gun possession arrests. Much of the increase in illegal gun possession arrests have been of young people carrying firearms without a license.

Since this lesson addresses the severity of gun violence, you may notice that some students respond

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to this in various ways. Some may sit quietly, while others may be more vocal, perhaps even acting out. Be mindful of those students. Remember, these could be indicative of a need for speaking with a counselor after the lesson.

Lesson Introduction: (1 minute)

As we have been talking about the value of life, today's lesson continues to investigate different types of violence we may witness in our lifetime. Youth crime and gun violence have become so common in the U.S. that schools must teach students procedures for staying safe in schools. Today, we will look at statistics on gun violence and hear information on gun safety and gun violence. During today's lesson, think of appropriate ways to handle yourself and help others in situations that might arise in our school or community.

Activity 1: Responding to Gun Violence and Defining Gun Safety – Large Group Discussion (10 minutes)

Gun violence is something that we can do our part to stop, but only if we educate ourselves. We must keep the conversation going and have real-life talks about gun safety and its importance. People have to acknowledge how easily some people can access guns. The truth is that students can't learn if they feel unsafe at school, but they also can't learn if they're dealing with trauma outside of school. Some students have to deal with the fear of feeling unsafe at home or even have to worry about how to make it home safely.

Let's talk about how safe you feel. This discussion can be a difficult thing to hear, but it's important that you speak honestly and listen respectfully so that we can learn and grow. We will discuss safety for about 6 minutes.

First, do you feel as though our school does a good job in preparing students on how to handle gun violence or active shooters in the building? *(Allow for discussion, using this time to clarify any local procedures that the students did not know.)* Let's shift our thoughts to off-campus safety. Do you feel as though you are safe at home and in your community? *(Allow students to respond about their own situation without allowing any negative comments by others.)* To become part of a solution, let's brainstorm about the future. How can we as a community remain safe and keep others safe as well? *(Allow for discussion.)*

Communication is very important, and your safety matters to us. If you ever feel unsafe at school, talk to our administrators, and most importantly, always report something that you know is unlawful and could create a dangerous situation for your community and your school. I also want to encourage you to have honest conversations with the important people in your life and anyone who can control your safety wherever you go. When you get home tonight, talk to your parents about what they believe gun safety is. Do you know what gun safety is? Safety means taking precautions to prevent danger. If you know someone who has a gun, they should safely store it by doing the following:

- Keep the gun **unloaded and locked** in a cabinet, safe, gun vault, or storage case.
- Lock the bullets in a place separate from the gun.
- Consider using a gun lock (a lock that makes the gun unable to fire).
- Hide the keys (or passcode) to the locked storage.

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Remember that in the last lessons we talked about valuing life, and ignoring gun safety is risky and shows a lack of respect for human life.

Activity 2: “Do Not Pick The Gun Up Kids” Video (8 minutes)

Let’s watch a WBTV News video of a gun safety advocate who travels across the state of South Carolina to encourage children and teens to avoid the illegal use of firearms. He passes out gun locks and asks kids to sign pledge forms that feature a series of promises about gun safety. *Students will watch the WBTV video “Do Not Pick The Gun Up Kids” (2:50) <https://www.wbvtv.com/2022/05/31/i-just-want-tell-children-teens-not-pick-up-gun-sc-man-spends-memorial-day-educating-community-gun-safety/>*

Post Video Discussion- What do you think about what this advocate is trying to do to prevent gun violence in his community? (*Allow for discussion.*) I love that he recognizes that you are the future. When we say that you are the future, we mean it. Things don’t have to remain the way they are. You can learn these things and you can become a person who works to make a change too.

Activity 3: Gun Safe Pledge Card - Handout (7 minutes)

I am going to distribute, read, and discuss a Gun Safety Pledge for you to sign.

- *I will never handle a gun without permission from a trusted adult.* A trusted adult would be someone who values life and always has your best interest in mind.
- *I will never play around with guns.* I cannot stress this enough. Guns are not toys.
- *I will not look around my home or others’ homes for guns.* Keep yourself honest.
- *If I do find a gun, even if it looks like a toy, I will not touch it.* Again, gun safety means not using them for play.
- *I will never use a gun with malice to harm others.* The word malice means the intention to do harm. Remember that we talked about treating every person as though they have worth, so we never take our feelings out with violence, especially not with a gun.
- *I pledge to protect other students by informing them of gun safety.* Sharing is caring, and that means telling other people just like Mr. Jack Logan in our video takes time to tell others about safety.
- *I will obey all of the rules of safe gun handling.* Not only will you sign this, but you need to honor what it says.

Gun Safety Pledge

Closing Activity: “Big Paper Discussion” (4 minutes)

I want to hear from you individually about your reactions to today’s lesson and what you have learned. On this large paper or on the back of your pledge card, write down any thoughts you have about what should be done to address gun violence. (*Before tomorrow’s class, the facilitator can connect to other students’ comments and questions*)



Big Paper Discussion

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by circling all common points.)

Thank you for signing and honoring your pledge and for sharing your thoughts on our group paper. As we go throughout the day, remember that, other than our discussion, you should not be talking about guns at school. Just a discussion with other students can get you into big trouble. If you have a real concern, talk to an adult; otherwise, take this seriously and remember your commitment.

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I Pledge To Be Gun Safe!

- I will never handle a gun without permission from a trusted adult.
- I will never play around with guns.
- I will not look around my home or others' homes for guns.
- If I do find a gun, even if it looks like a toy, I will not touch it.
- I will never use a gun with malice to harm others.
- I pledge to protect other students by informing them of gun safety.
- I will obey all of the rules of safe gun handling.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____