

Safe Haven Surrender & Safe Haven Baby Boxes

45–50 Minute Lesson Plan for Teachers or Student Group Leaders

Lesson Goal

Students will understand:

1. The problem of infant abandonment.
 2. What Safe Haven laws are and why they exist.
 3. How Safe Haven Baby Boxes work.
 4. The importance of anonymous, life-saving options for parents in crisis.
 5. Their own state's Safe Haven law.
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Materials Needed

- Internet access or printed copy of your state Safe Haven statute
 - Whiteboard or projector
 - Optional:
 - Short Safe Haven Baby Box video
 - Handouts
 - State map showing Safe Haven laws
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Important Teacher Preparation

Before class, please:

- Look up your specific state Safe Haven law.
- Find:
 - Age limit for surrender
 - Who may surrender the infant

- Approved surrender locations
- Whether your state has a Safe Haven Baby Box
- Any legal protections or requirements

A great place to start:

- Safe Haven Baby Boxes: <https://shbb.org>
 - Safe Haven Education [Safe Haven Laws: Resources & Education for Schools & Volunteers | Safe Haven Education](#)
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LESSON OUTLINE (45–50 Minutes)

1. Opening Discussion (5 Minutes)

Ask Students:

- Why might a parent feel afraid or desperate after giving birth?
- What dangers exist when a baby is abandoned?
- What could society do to protect both babies and parents in crisis?

Transition Statement

“Today we are going to learn about a life-saving option that exists in all 50 states called Safe Haven surrender, and how Safe Haven Baby Boxes help protect newborns completely anonymously.”

2. The Problem of Infant Abandonment (8–10 Minutes)

Key Teaching Points

Explain:

- Infant abandonment has happened throughout history.
- Some parents experience:
 - Fear
 - Panic
 - Abuse
 - Shame
 - Isolation
 - Mental health struggles
 - Hidden pregnancies
- Some newborns have been abandoned in unsafe places:
 - Trash cans
 - Bathrooms
 - Fields
 - Dumpsters
 - Public parks

Important Clarification

Most parents in crisis are not evil or uncaring. Many feel trapped, terrified, and alone.

Emphasize

Safe Haven laws were created to:

- Prevent newborn deaths
- Give parents a safe alternative
- Protect infants immediately

Optional Discussion Question

“What emotions might someone experience that would lead them to hide a pregnancy or panic after birth?”

Optional Video

Show a short Safe Haven Baby Box PSA video from Safe Haven Baby Boxes Youtube Channel

[Surrendering your newborn offers No Shame, No Blame and No Names](#)

[Safe Haven Baby Boxes PSA \(2021\)](#)

3. What Is Safe Haven Surrender? (10 Minutes)

Teach the Basics

Safe Haven laws allow a parent to legally surrender a newborn safely without fear of prosecution for abandonment.

Explain:

- Every state has a Safe Haven law.
 - Laws vary by state.
 - The baby must usually be:
 - Unharmed
 - Within a certain age limit
 - Babies can often be surrendered at:
 - Hospitals
 - Fire stations
 - EMS stations
 - Police stations
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Teacher Activity: State Law Research (5 Minutes)

Share Your State's Specific Law

Tell students:

- Your state age limit
- Approved locations
- Any special requirements
- Whether anonymity is protected
- Whether your state has a Safe Haven Baby Box

Optional Student Activity

Have students quickly look up:

- Neighboring state laws
 - Differences between states
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4. What Is a Safe Haven Baby Box? (10 Minutes)

Explain the Purpose

A Safe Haven Baby Box is:

- Installed in a fire station or hospital wall
- Climate controlled
- Secure
- Monitored from inside the building

How It Works

1. Parent opens the exterior door.
 2. Parent places infant safely inside.
 3. Door locks automatically.
 4. Silent alarm alerts first responders.
 5. Baby is retrieved within minutes.
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Key Point

The Safe Haven Baby Box allows a completely anonymous surrender.

Explain Why Anonymity Matters

Some parents:

- Fear being recognized
- Fear judgment
- Fear family abuse
- Fear legal consequences
- Fear public exposure

Anonymous surrender may save a baby's life when a frightened parent would otherwise abandon the infant unsafely.

Optional Video

Show a short Safe Haven Baby Box demonstration video from:

<https://shbb.org>

5. Ethical & Community Discussion (7–8 Minutes)

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Safe Haven laws exist?
 - Should anonymous surrender be allowed? Why or why not?
 - How can communities support parents before a crisis happens?
 - What role should schools, churches, and families play?
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Important Teaching Emphasis

Safe Haven surrender:

- Is not encouraging abandonment.

- Is a last-resort emergency protection.
 - Exists to save lives.
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6. Conclusion & Takeaway (3–5 Minutes)

Final Teaching Points

Students should leave understanding:

- Every life has value.
 - Crisis situations happen.
 - Safe Haven laws save lives.
 - Safe Haven Baby Boxes provide a safe, anonymous option.
 - Knowing these laws could someday help save a baby.
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Closing Challenge

“Even if you never personally use a Safe Haven law, simply knowing about it could help you save someone else’s life one day.”

Optional Homework or Extension Activities

Students Can:

- Research their state statute in detail
 - Compare Safe Haven laws between states
 - Write a reflection:
 - “How can society better support parents in crisis?”
 - Create an awareness poster or social media campaign
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Suggested Sensitivity Reminder for Teachers

This topic may affect students personally. Some may have experiences involving:

- Adoption
- Pregnancy
- Abandonment
- Foster care
- Abuse

Encourage respectful discussion and compassion throughout the lesson.