

## **Growing in Love Update: Grade 1**

### **Lesson 1: God Made Us**

**Theme:** Created male or female

**Essential:** Sadly, many children who are sexually abused tell no one because they are either embarrassed or don't have the words to use to communicate what has happened to them. Teaching children the names of private parts serves two purposes. First, by speaking matter-of-factly about the private parts of our bodies we normalize the use of these words and we help the children recognize that these parts are as special and wonderful as all other body parts and that they can be talked about respectfully. In other words, we teach them that private body parts are not dirty or embarrassing to talk about. Second, we provide children with a vocabulary to use to ask us questions, or to speak with us about concerns. Some children may giggle when they hear the words, and this is perfectly normal. Let children know that it is okay to giggle because we don't use these words often; however, they are important parts of our body that can and should be talked about respectfully. Handling discussions of body parts and other aspects of human sexuality with frankness, respect, and sensitivity fosters the same respect and open communication in children.

#### **Lesson:**

1. Use of Supplementary Lesson 1 (PR p. 56) on T p. 45 is encouraged. At minimum, review the basic physical differences between girls and boys (i.e., girls have breasts, buttocks and vaginas, and that boys have penises and buttocks).

## **Growing in Love Update: Grade 1**

### **Lesson 2: God Loves Us**

**Theme:** Growing up

**Essential:** This section presents an opportunity to help children understand the concept of boundaries concerning their bodies. Unfortunately, bed and bath times are times when many young children are molested, and by teaching children the “norms” of bed and bath routines, they may be able to identify behaviors that are not typical or that may be inappropriate.

**Lesson:**

1. On T p. 45, while discussing all of the things that they can do for themselves now that they are getting older, include in your discussion bath and bedtime routine behaviors that are appropriate for this age group, including bathing, getting dressed, and toileting.

## Growing in Love Update: Grade 1

### Lesson 3: God and Human

**Theme:** Touch

**Essential:** “Good” and “bad” are terms often used with children to label types of touches, but those labels may ultimately have negative consequences. Some children are aroused by the sexual nature of the relationship or perhaps from the special attention they received from the offender. These children may also be tricked into believing that they willingly participated in the sexual part of the relationship. As such, these young victims may experience intense feelings of shame and/or guilt when the touch is labeled as “bad.” Children are also less likely to disclose sexual abuse if they have been lead to believe that they participated willingly in “bad” touch. Finally, very young children who are all-or-nothing thinkers cannot reconcile that someone inherently “good” to them (remember that most offenders are people the children know and trust) could be capable of doing something that is “bad;” therefore, children sometimes convince themselves that they themselves are “bad” and somehow responsible for what happened to them. The following lesson provides alternatives for labeling touch as “good” or “bad.”

#### **Lesson:**

1. While Supplementary Lesson 4 on PR p. 60 (T p. 52) provides some important information about distinguishing different types of touch, please refrain from using the terms “good” and “bad” touch (see **Essential**, above). Acknowledge that “inappropriate” touch does not always feel bad or create fear in the recipient. Rather than labeling touch as “good/appropriate” or “bad/inappropriate,” it helps to provide children with a framework for understanding basic boundaries around their bodies. If you feel the need to provide distinct language or labels to the children, try referring to touches that are “okay” or that “may not be okay.” Write the following guidelines in a place the children can see. Discuss each bullet point and provide examples from a child’s level of understanding.
  - Your body belongs to you and only you.
  - Sometimes we like touch and sometimes we don’t.
  - It is okay to say “no” to ANY kind of touch.
  - We don’t touch people who say “no touching.”
  - No older person should “play with” your private parts (*name the private parts*).
  - “Playing with” is different than when a doctor examines you (*note that when the books refers to help in the bathroom or getting dressed, you should point out that kids in kindergarten can usually use the bathroom and get dressed by themselves*).
  - Touching is never a secret (*older children and adults should not ask children to keep secrets about touch*).

- If you feel mixed up or confused about touch, ask for help from a helpful adult. This may be a parent, relative, pastor, teacher, school counselor, family friend, coach, or pediatrician.
2. Add that while it is okay to say no to any kind of touch, this can be very hard to do. Read Uncle Willy's Tickles by Marcie Aboff. Use the following discussion questions as a guide:
    - How do you imagine Kyle felt when Uncle Willy tickled him (*scared, weird, like he had no control or power, worried, confused*).
    - What did Kyle decide to do about it? What other choices did he have (*he could have decided to keep it a secret*)? Is this a good kind of secret to keep?
    - Why do you think Kyle didn't want to tell his mom about Uncle Willy's tickles (*she wouldn't believe him, she wouldn't see anything wrong with being tickled, Uncle Willy is a member of the family, it was embarrassing*)? What do you think might have happened if he had decided not to tell his mom (*he would have continued to feel bad; Uncle Willy would have continued to tickle him*)?
    - How do you think Kyle felt after he told his mom (*happy, glad, relieved, a little worried*)?
    - Point out that "We've been talking a lot about Kyle's feelings. Feelings can give us helpful clues to know when a situation is okay or maybe not okay. It is a good idea to ask for help when you feel confused or mixed up about touch, or about any secret."
  3. Ask children to describe secrets that are fun to keep (*birthday presents, surprise parties*). What types of secrets do you not like keeping (*secrets that make us feel sad or mixed-up*)? To demonstrate, play this version of the game 20 questions. Tell the children that you have a secret surprise for them at the end of class, but that they have to guess what it is (or find it via scavenger hunt). The surprise can be something small like stickers or a treat. Once they have guessed or found the surprise, point out that the secret would not have been fun unless you got to tell about it. If someone asks you to keep a secret that no one will EVER know about, it's probably not a good secret to keep.
  4. Summarize by saying that most touches are loving touches, but that some grownups and even other children have touching problems. People with touching problems need to get help so that they don't hurt other people.

## **Growing in Love Update: Grade 1**

### **Lesson 4: God's Gifts**

**Theme:** God's gift of feelings; Asking for help

**Essential:** Children who are abused by people they know and trust experience very confusing feelings. They may wonder, "Why would someone who loves me do something that I know is wrong?" We often teach children how to identify and express basic feelings such as happy, sad, angry, etc., but very young children have great difficulty identifying and talking about confused or mixed-up feelings. Below we talk about confused feelings to validate that we can feel negative feelings towards people we love. This exercise also strengthens basic social and emotional problem solving skills.

#### **Lesson:**

1. Following the second bullet point on T p. 58 (*Build*), share with the students that God has also given each of us the very special gift of *feelings*, which can give us important clues as to whether situations or people are safe or unsafe. Ask students whether it is possible to feel two things at once. If students cannot provide examples, provide examples the children will understand (*ex., feeling excited but also scared to ride the roller coaster*). Feeling mixed up or confused about a person, a situation, or a touch, may be God's way of letting us know that we should question what is happening, and ask for help. If time permits, read aloud a book about feelings, emphasizing or asking students to share situations in which they might feel mixed-up or confused.

## **Growing in Love Update: Grade 1**

### **Lesson 5: Choosing God's Love**

**Theme:** Forgiveness

**Essential:** Some of the most sensitive issues of trauma recovery concern the concept of forgiveness, a concept which is also at the heart of Catholic tradition. For most trauma victims, however, forgiveness is one of the last issues with which they should deal. This includes children. Victims must have sufficient time and support from others so that their forgiveness is their forgiveness, and not the forced agenda of another. If pushed to forgive before they are truly ready, they may later find themselves in another faith crisis<sup>1</sup>. Children are helped by learning that forgiveness is a process, and that several steps may need to occur before they are ready to forgive.

**Lesson:**

Supplementary Lesson 5 of PR p. 61 (T p. 64), bullet point #6, addresses the theme of forgiveness. Ask students, "What can you do if someone hurts your feelings but doesn't apologize?" Some children may suggest that we should forgive them anyway. Mention that while forgiveness is very important part of our Catholic faith, no one should feel that they must forgive someone before they are ready. Then ask, "What does forgiveness look like?" The children may come up with a variety of answers that may help you develop a greater understanding of their understanding of this complex concept. There is no right or wrong answer. Guide them towards the conclusion that forgiveness is a process and that it may not happen right away. Again, no one should be forced to forgive before they are ready. If you are finding it hard to forgive, ask your parents, your teacher, or another trusted adult for help and guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> Bringing God's Presence to Trauma Victims (2005). Church World Service Emergency Response Program. <http://www.cwserp.org/training/Chaplain.pdf>.

## **Growing in Love Update: Grade 1**

### **Lesson 7: Growing in God’s Love**

**Theme:** Some promises are never good to keep.

**Essential:** Offenders use complicated tactics to assure that their victims remain silent about abuse. As is demonstrated in this chapter, the action of keeping a “promise” is depicted throughout childhood as a positive, life-promoting value. In our society, children are taught of the value and importance of not breaking promises and the ability to keep promises is an important part of healthy relationships. Unfortunately, however, some adults take advantage of young children’s rigid interpretations of the meaning of the words, “to promise.” Offenders commonly trick children into feeling guilty if they betray a “promise” to keep silent. This is particularly true when the offender is someone the child knows, trusts, and loves, as is the case in over 90% of sexual offenses. Children need to understand that there are some types of promises that are never good to keep.

#### **Lesson:**

1. As you discuss trust and loyalty on T p. 76, ask the children: “Is there ever a time when it is not a good idea to keep a promise?” Possible answers might be:
  - If it means someone will get hurt.
  - If someone asks to keep a promise about something that you know is wrong.
  - If keeping that promise leaves you feeling confused or uncertain.
2. Some promises, if kept, can be harmful to us. When in doubt, ask an adult for help. Grownups are here to help you think through tough choices. If you agree to keep a promise, but your feelings later tell you that it was not a good promise to keep, ask for help right away. If an adult or older child asks you to keep a promise about touching or looking at private body parts, that adult may have a problem and may need to get some help.

## **Family Resource**

### **Growing in Love: Grade 1**

#### **Lesson 1 – Created Male or Female**

Sadly, many children who are sexually abused tell no one either because they are embarrassed or ashamed or because they don't have the words to use to communicate what has happened to them. Teaching children the names of private parts serves two purposes. First, by speaking matter-of-factly about the private parts we normalize the use of these words and we help the children recognize that these parts are as special and wonderful as all other body parts and that they can be talked about respectfully. In other words, we teach them that private body parts are not dirty or embarrassing to talk about. Second, we provide children with a vocabulary to use to ask us questions, or to speak with us about concerns. Some children may giggle when they hear the words, and this is perfectly normal. Let children know that it is okay to giggle because we don't use these words often; however, they are important parts of our body that can and should be talked about respectfully. Handling discussions of body parts and other aspects of human sexuality with frankness, respect, and sensitivity fosters the same respect and open communication in children.

#### **Lesson Summary**

- Boys and girls have physical differences.
- Names of body parts reviewed

#### **Home Activity**

When teaching young children about body parts include the names of private parts, such as breasts, vulva, vagina, penis, and buttocks. If your family uses other names for private parts, when given an opportunity share with them the “names for the parts a doctor would use.” By showing your child that you can say these words without shame or embarrassment, you'll be teaching them that they, too, can talk openly about these words without shame or embarrassment. Note that some children, upon first learning the words, may joke, act silly, and use the words at inappropriate times. If this should happen, calmly remind your child that we only talk about private parts with respect, and in certain places and situations.

## **Family Resource**

### **Growing in Love: Grade 1**

#### **Lesson 2 – Growing Up**

In this section we help children understand that there are boundaries around their bodies. Unfortunately, bed and bath times are times when many young children are molested. By teaching children the “norms” of bed and bath routines, they may be able to identify behaviors that are not typical or that may be inappropriate.

#### **Lesson Summary**

- There are many things that we can do for ourselves at this age.
- Routine bathing, bedtime, and toileting behaviors are discussed.

#### **Home Activity**

Use bath time, bedtime, and toilet time to talk about the new skills they are learning as they are getting older. Point out that they no longer need help getting dressed, wiping after using the toilet, or washing their private parts in the tub. If your child is having difficulty with dressing, bathing, or wiping, be sure to point out that if someone helps them with these activities (at school, day care, etc.), the helper should be quick and should not “play with” their private parts. Whenever your child does something independently, share how proud you are that he/she can do these things on his/her own.

## **Family Resource**

### **Growing in Love: Grade 1**

#### **Lesson 3 - Touch**

“Good” and “bad” are terms that really should not be used to describe touch. Because children are sexual beings from birth, their bodies may respond to and be aroused by sexual touch. As such, these young victims may experience intense feelings of shame and/or guilt when the touch is labeled as “bad.” Some children are also tricked into believing that they willingly participated in the sexual part of the relationship. Children are less likely to disclose sexual abuse if they believe that they participated willingly in “bad” touch. Finally, very young children who are all-or-nothing thinkers cannot understand that someone inherently “good” to them (such as a relative, teacher, caretaker, or coach) could be capable of doing something that is “bad;” therefore, children are likely to see the offender as good, and themselves as somehow bad or dirty.

#### **Lesson Summary**

- Your body belongs to you and only you.
- Sometimes we like touch and sometimes we don’t.
- It is okay to say no to ANY kind of touch.
- We don’t touch people who say “no touching.”
- No older person should “play with” your private parts.
- Touching is NEVER a secret.
- If you ever feel mixed up or confused about touch, always ask for help from a trusted adult.

#### **Home Activity**

Play “What if?” games with your child in the car, at the dinner table, or when you have a spare moment. For example, ask ‘What if grandma wanted to give you a big hug?’ (This usually is okay with the child.) ‘What if someone showed you their private parts in a public bathroom?’ or ‘What if you went to spend the night with a friend and his father or mother gave you a bath and tried to wash your private parts?’ (These situations usually make the child uncomfortable.) Remind your child that it is always okay to say no to someone if they want to touch or show you their private parts, even if the person is an adult or someone who is in charge. If the person doesn’t listen and does it anyway, what happens is **never** the child’s fault. Talk about going to a trusted adult if something like this happens.

## **Family Resource**

### **Growing in Love: Grade 1**

#### **Lesson 4 – Mixed Up Feelings:**

Children who are abused by people they know and trust experience very confusing feelings. They may wonder, “Why would someone who loves me do something that I know is wrong?” We often teach children how to identify and express basic feelings such as happy, sad, angry, etc., but very young children have great difficulty identifying and talking about confused or mixed-up feelings. We can show children that it is possible and even okay to feel negative feelings towards people we like/love. The best thing to do when this happens is to talk about it with a grownup they trust.

#### **Lesson Summary**

- Our feelings can give us important clues as to whether situations or people are safe or unsafe.
- Ask for help from a trusted adult whenever you feel mixed-up or confused.

#### **Home Activity**

This is a great lesson to use every day. Whenever you find that your child is having difficulty doing something or understanding, remind him/her that he/she can ask for help. Mention that the child can come to you or to another trusted adult to get help with tough questions, confused feelings, or difficult activities. Make sure that your child can name at least 3 or 4 grownups that they can trust to help.

## **Family Resource**

### **Growing in Love: Grade 1**

#### **Lesson 5 - Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is a concept at the heart of Catholic tradition. For most victims of interpersonal trauma such as abuse, however, forgiveness is one of the last issues with which they should deal. This includes children. Victims must have sufficient time and support from others so that their forgiveness is their forgiveness, and not the forced agenda of another. As adults we must be careful to validate and not dismiss children's complicated feelings towards trusted adults who abuse them. If pushed to forgive before they are truly ready, they may later find themselves in another faith crisis<sup>2</sup>. Children are helped by learning that forgiveness is a process, and that several steps may need to occur before they are ready to forgive.

#### **Lesson Summary**

- The children discuss their thought on what forgiveness means
- Different examples help children see that forgiveness can be easy at times and very hard at times.
- If you are finding it hard to forgive, ask a trusted adult for help and guidance.

#### **Home Activity**

Whenever your child has an "I'm sorry" or an "I forgive you" moment, try to stop and talk about how easy or hard it was to apologize or to forgive. Explain that talking about the particular situation can help the healing process. If he/she can't talk directly to the person involved, remind your child that he/she can go to a trusted adult to discuss the situation.

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<sup>2</sup> Bringing God's Presence to Trauma Victims (2005). Church World Service Emergency Response Program. <http://www.cwserp.org/training/Chaplain.pdf>.

## **Family Resource**

### **Growing in Love: Grade 1**

#### **Lesson 7 – Keeping Promises**

Offenders use complicated tactics to assure that their victims remain silent about abuse. In our society, children are taught of the value and importance of not breaking promises and the ability to keep promises is an important part of healthy relationships. Unfortunately, however, some adults take advantage of young children’s rigid interpretations of the meaning of the words, “to promise.” Offenders commonly trick children into feeling guilty if they betray a “promise” to keep silent. This is particularly true when the offender is someone the child knows, trusts, and loves. Children need to understand that there are some types of promises that are never good to keep.

#### **Lesson Summary**

- There are times when it is not good to keep a promise.
- Never keep a promise about touching.

#### **Home Activity**

Brainstorm with your child promises that are good to keep (marriage, promises to do chores, promises to follow through with things you said you’d do). Next make up some promises that don’t make sense or are hurtful. For example, “Do you promise to eat the dog food?” “Do you promise to eat all of the dessert before the rest of the family can have any?” “Do you promise to take the toy from your best friend?” Help your child learn to think critically of what is being asked of them.