

Growing in Love Update: Grade 2

Lesson 1: A New Creation

Theme: Boys and girls

Essential: In this section differences between girls and boys are discussed. Please specify that one way in which they are different is that girls have vaginas/vulvas and breasts, and that boys have penises. It is important to name the body parts, because by doing so we can help the children feel more comfortable talking about these parts in a matter-of-fact way. If we choose to not name them, we reinforce the idea that these parts are dirty and are not to be talked about. We can also add that these parts are private and should only be talked about in certain times in situations, such as in family life class or at home with parents.

Lesson:

Use of Supplemental Lesson 1 on PR p. 56 (T p.38) is encouraged. At minimum discuss the physical differences between girls and boys.

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Lesson 3: Learning from Jesus

Theme: Body safety

Essential: Unfortunately, in approximately 95% of cases of sexual abuse, the offender is someone the child knows and trusts – not a stranger. For this and other reasons, traditional prevention strategies which suggest that children yell “no” and run away are not always helpful. Experts in child development believe that children are developmentally incapable – physically, emotionally, and psychologically – of asserting themselves against an older child or adult who might try to abuse them¹. From a young age children are taught to “obey” those who are in charge of their care. In addition, many offenders are very skilled at leading children to believe that they were voluntary participants in the abuse. Many victims of abuse feel shame or guilt that they were somehow responsible for their suffering because they did not say “no.” For these reasons, we should be careful to balance the lesson that children have the **right** to say no to ANY kind of touch (versus that they *should* or *must* say no), with the message that this can be very hard to do, and is sometimes not safe to do. Perhaps the most helpful rule for children to learn is that adults and older children should never ask a child to keep a secret about touching or looking at body parts. We must also teach students the importance of and how to ask for help.

Vocabulary: private special confused

Lesson: (This may take two class periods.)

1. After reading the story, “Russell Cares” on T p. 53, ask students to share with the class any safety rules they may have in their families. If the students do not mention any rules about the body on their own, be sure to include these, and write them in a place where students can see:
 - Private parts are kept special (which means that adults and older children should not “play with” their private parts, and that older children and adults do not need help with their private parts). Mention that at this age most children should be able to care for their private parts themselves, including toileting and bathing, without adult assistance.
 - It is okay to say “no” to ANY kind of touch.
 - We shouldn’t touch others who say “no touching.”
 - Adults and older children should not ask children to keep secrets about touching or looking at body parts.

- When feeling mixed-up or confused about something, the best thing to do is to ask for help.
2. Tell the children that you are going to read a story about a little girl who has a tough problem. Read My Body is Private by Linda Girard. Begin discussion with the following questions:
 - How do you suppose Julie felt when she told Uncle Ted that she didn't want to sit on his lap? (*scared, nervous, worried, relieved when it was over, mixed-up and confused*).
 - What could Julie do if Uncle Ted did not listen to her? (*Ask for help. Note that some children may say "run away and scream" – while this is an acceptable answer, note that in some situations this could put children at risk of harm. It is prudent to point out that yes, if Julie felt safe running away and could get away quickly this would be a good idea, and that she should also ask for help as soon as possible*).
 - Ask the children what they could do if they ever felt confused or mixed up about a secret, especially a touching secret (*Ask for help.*)
 - Would this be hard to do? (*Maybe, especially if the person is a friend or someone they love. Help children understand the difference between "tattling" and telling so that someone can get help for a problem.*) Is it ever too late to ask for help? (*NO.*)
 3. State that it can be very hard to say no, especially if the person is someone we really like. Summarize by saying that most touches are loving touches, but that some grownups and even other children have touching problems.
 4. Ask the children who they could turn to for help if someone asked them to keep a touching secret. Have children complete a "Who do you ask activity?" This could be a "web" or "tree" of supports, or a telephone with big buttons to write or draw pictures of people. Each child should list the names of AT LEAST 3 or 4 people that they can turn to for help. Encourage them to think of people both inside and outside of the family. Include 911 and tell the children that they should always call 911 and ask for help if they are feeling scared or if someone, including themselves, has been hurt or abused.
 5. (*Optional*) Reinforce the lessons learned in this section by asking the following "what if" questions:
 - What if your sister pinches you when she is angry?
 - What if you get a phone call or an email from someone saying you have won a prize, and they just need your name, age, address, and what school you go to before they can send you the prize?
 - What if your neighbor invites you to their home for milk and cookies?
 - What if someone in a car stops you on the street and asks for directions?

- What if a stranger tells you to come with them because your mother or father was just in an accident and they want to take you to see them in the hospital?
- What if you are shopping at the mall with your family, become distracted, and become separated from them?
- What if your babysitter suggests that you play a secret touching game?
- What if a friend of your mother hugs you too tight, in a way that makes you feel mixed-up or confused?

Growing in Love Update: Grade 2

Lesson 5: Learning to Love

Theme(s): Mixed-up 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 “Build” activities on page T63, ask if it is possible to have two feelings at once. Ask students if they can think of examples of times when they may have felt mixed-up or confused. Emphasize that these that can be tough feelings to have. Ask the children what they would do if they had such feelings (*the best answer is always to ask for help*).
2. Acknowledge that **it can be hard** to ask for help with feelings, especially when our parents/guardians are so busy. It can also be hard to ask for help if what has us feeling confused is something that we consider very personal, or if someone has asked us to keep a secret that we suspect we shouldn’t keep. Discuss and role-play with the children how to ask for help. For example:
 - If dad is reading the paper or watching television, a child might say, “Dad, I need to talk to you, is this a good time?”
 - If mom has had a bad day, the child might say, “Mom, I need to talk to you – can we set up a time for later when you’ve rested a little bit?”
3. Remind students of the “Who do you ask?” activity” they completed in Lesson 3.

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Lesson 7: Following Jesus

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 crisis². 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:

1. During the T p. 75 **Build** discussion, mention that forgiveness is very important part of our Catholic faith. 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. 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.

² 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 2

Lesson 1 – Boys and Girls

This update is a continuation of the textbook discussion regarding similarities and differences between boys and girls, including physical differences. 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 are learned or 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 2

Lesson 3 – Body Safety

Unfortunately, in over 90% of cases of sexual abuse, the offender is someone the child knows and trusts – not a stranger. For this and other reasons, traditional prevention strategies which suggest that children yell “no” and run away are not always helpful. Experts in child development believe that children are developmentally incapable – physically, emotionally, and psychologically – of asserting themselves against an older child or adult who might try to abuse them³. From a young age children are taught to “obey” those who are in charge of their care. In addition, many offenders are very skilled at leading children to believe that they were voluntary participants in the abuse. Many victims of abuse feel shame or guilt that they were somehow responsible for their suffering because they did not say “no.” For these reasons, we should be careful to balance the lesson that children have the **right** to say no to ANY kind of touch (versus that they *should* or *must* say no), with the message that this can be very hard to do, and is sometimes not safe to do. Perhaps the most helpful rule for children to learn is that touching should NEVER be a secret. We must also teach the importance of asking for help.

Lesson Summary

- Private parts are kept special (which means that adults and older children should not “play with” a child’s private parts, and that older children and adults do not need help with their private parts). At this age most children should be able to care for their private parts themselves, including toileting and bathing, without adult assistance.
- It is okay to say no to ANY kind of touch.
- We shouldn’t touch others who say “no touching.”
- Touching is never a secret.
- When feeling mixed-up or uncertain about something, the best thing to do is to ask for help.

Home Activity

Help your child understand that while most grownups mean well and can be trusted, grownups can make mistakes and have problems, just like kids (such as touching problems). Create a “plan” with your child for what to do if an authority figure asks them to do something that is wrong. Be sure to let them know that it is okay to say no, but that this can be hard to do.

Family Resource

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Lesson 5 – 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

- It is possible to have two different feelings at once.
- It can be hard to ask for help.

Home Activity

Get in the habit of talking to your child about feelings. Sometimes we show our feelings through moods and expressions more than we express them through words. The next time you feel confused or uncertain, verbalize your mixed feelings in front of your child. Example: “I’m happy you have a good friend who wants to invite you to a sleepover, but I’m also worried that I’ve never met her parents, and she lives so far away.” Children learn how to communicate from their parents. A child who expresses thoughts and feelings through words rather than through actions is more likely to let you know – with words - when something is wrong. Also, 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 list at least 3 or 4 grownups they feel they can trust to speak with about personal problems.

Family Resource

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Lesson 7 - 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 crisis⁴. 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 thoughts on what forgiveness means.
- Through examples children begin to understand 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.

⁴ Bringing God's Presence to Trauma Victims (2005). Church World Service Emergency Response Program. <http://www.cwserp.org/training/Chaplain.pdf>.

