

Growing in Love Update: Grade 4

Chapter 1: The Gift of Life

Theme: Our bodies are good and special

Essential: When talking about body parts, be sure to include the names of private parts. The purpose of including these parts is both to normalize the use of these words, and to help the children recognize that these parts are as special as all other body parts and can be talked about respectfully - and that they are not dirty and shameful. Some children may giggle and this is perfectly normal. Let children know that it is okay to giggle because we don't use these words often – but that 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.

Vocabulary: Penis Vagina/Vulva Breasts Buttocks

Lesson:

1. Use of the Supplemental Lesson on PR pp. 35-36 (T p. 5) is recommended. If this is not possible, at minimum discuss the physical differences that make boys and girls unique, including the proper names of body parts. Emphasize that using correct terms for these parts shows respect for God's gifts.
2. Remind students that although these parts of the body are private, we can talk about them respectfully. Ask students of times they can think of when they should talk to someone about their private parts (if they are concerned about a health problem, if they have questions about changes related to growing up, if someone has asked them to keep a secret about touching/showing their private parts).
3. Proceed with the remainder of the lesson.

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Chapter 5: Rules for Living

Theme(s): Appropriate expressions of love; Whom can I ask for help?

Essential: The text states, “Signs of love and affection should never make you or another person feel uncomfortable.” Children must be helped to understand exactly what we mean by this. Children also need to understand that victims of sexual abuse have not done anything wrong themselves, that *they* have not sinned. Children should never be placed in a situation where they are asked to make choices regarding sexual activity.

When children are abused sexually, physically, or emotionally, they often feel two things at once. They may wonder, “Why is this person who loves me and who I love doing something that I know is wrong?” Teaching children to ask for help when they feel uncomfortable or mixed up feelings is an important step in identifying and stopping abuse. We must also assist children in creating their own personal “safety net” of people to whom they can turn with questions about feelings. When problem-solving with children about how to manage uncomfortable feelings, asking for help should always be one of the best responses.

Lesson:

1. During T pp. 30-31 ask students, “What are some ways that we show love to one another?” (Words, actions – hugs, kisses, helping with chores, being honest, listening, etc.). Point out that some expressions of love are physical, involving touch. Note also that sometimes we like touch and sometimes we don’t. We all experience touch in different ways.
2. Ask students, “How many of you like to be tickled?” “To wrestle?” Most likely not all students will raise their hands. Emphasize that not all people like the same kinds of touch and that **we have the right to say NO to ANY kind of touch.**
3. Tell the students that there are also kinds of touch that may seem okay, or even feel good at first, but that are really **not** okay. For example, it is never okay for an adult or older child to play with a child’s private body parts. Write the following rules in a place where the students can see:
 - Private parts are kept special (This means that adults and older children should not “play with” children’s 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.”
 - Touch is never a secret.
 - When feeling uncomfortable or mixed-up about something, especially touch, the best thing to do is to ask for help

4. Watch the video, “Yes, You Can Say No” from the Committee for Children. Use the accompanying discussion guide to ask questions. Be sure to note that while we can trust most adults and older children, some do have touching problems. Be sure to reinforce the following ideas:
 - Abuse is NEVER the child’s fault, even if the child didn’t say “no”.
 - Trust your feelings and ask for help if a situation feels uncomfortable.
 - Your family, your friends, and your church want to help you.

5. Ask the children to list the names of supportive adults they could ask for help. Each student should list at least 3 or 4 trusted adults. If you wish, make this into an art or craft activity. Ask children to take the list/activity home and see how many “autographs” they can get from the adults they have listed. This presents a wonderful opportunity for children to build and strengthen their support networks!

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Chapter 7: Friendships

Theme: Helping our friends

Essential: Evidence suggests that 40% of sexual offenders are themselves older children and adolescents. Children are particularly vulnerable to being abused by other children whom they admire or whom they think of as their friend.

Lesson:

Under “Stepping Stones” on T p. 43 the question, “When might you need an adult’s help with a friend’s problem?” is asked. If not mentioned by the students, also include if a friend has a touching problem, as well as if a friend told you about something hurtful or dangerous that has happened to them.

Family Resource

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Lesson 1 – Our Bodies are Good and Special

When talking about body parts, be sure to include the names of private parts. The purpose of including these parts is both to normalize the use of these words, and to help the children recognize that these parts are not dirty or shameful; they are as special as all other body parts and can be talked about respectfully. Upon first hearing the proper names of private parts some children may giggle and squirm, and this is perfectly normal. Let children know that it is okay to giggle because we don't use these words often – but that 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 are physically different.
- Using the correct terms for these parts shows respect for God's gifts.
- We don't joke about or talk about private parts in public.

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

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Lesson 5 - Appropriate Expressions of Love

Signs of love and affection should never make you or another person feel uncomfortable. Children must be helped to understand exactly what we mean by this. Children also need to understand that victims of sexual abuse have not done anything wrong themselves, that they have not sinned. Children lack the social, emotional, and intellectual maturity to make decisions about sexual activity.

When children are abused sexually, physically, or emotionally, they often feel two things at once. They may wonder, “Why is this person who loves me and who I love doing something that I know is wrong?” Teaching children to ask for help when they feel uncomfortable or mixed up feelings is an important step in identifying and stopping abuse. We must also assist children in creating their own personal “safety net” of people to whom they can turn with questions about feelings. When problem-solving with children about how to manage uncomfortable feelings, asking for help should always be one of the best responses.

Lesson Summary

- Sometimes we like touch, and sometimes we don't.
- Private parts are kept special (This means that adults and older children should not “play with” children’s private parts, and that older children and adults do not need help with their private parts).
- 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 uncomfortable or mixed-up about something, especially touch, the best thing to do is to ask for help.
- Abuse is NEVER the child's fault, even if the child didn't say “no”.
- Trust your feelings and ask for help if a situation feels uncomfortable.
- Your family, your friends, and your church want to help you.

Home Activity

Ask your child to share with you the lessons they learned in class. Use the list above as a reminder of the review. If you like, select a book from the list of *Recommended Resources* to read with your child. If your child hears or sees a news story about abuse or assault, use the event a natural teaching moment to reinforce these ideas.

Whenever your child shares a concern with you, try to listen to him/her without distractions. As you listen, try not to judge your child. Share how proud you are that he/she came to you to talk about the concern. Ask what the child feels/thinks about this situation to better understand his/her thoughts. Then ask if the child would like to hear your thoughts. Encourage your child to consider more than one solution to any problem, and then narrow down the choices by looking at the “pros” and “cons” of each.

Family Resource

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Lesson 7– Helping Our Friends

Evidence suggests that about 40% of sexual offenders are themselves older children and adolescents. Children are particularly at risk to being abused by other children whom they admire or whom they think of as their friend.

Lesson Summary

- If a friend has a touching problem, seek help from a trusted adult.
- If a friend has shared that something hurtful or dangerous has happened to them, get help from a trusted adult.

Home Activity

Review the main ideas from Lesson 5. Discuss qualities of a “true friend.” These might include:

- Someone who listens to what I have to say
- Someone who plays fair
- Someone who respects me
- Someone who cares about what happens to me
- Someone who doesn’t try to talk me into doing something I don’t want to do

