

Growing in Love Update: Grade 5

Chapter 1: Respect for Life

Theme: Taking care of your emotional being

Essential: As the text suggests, recognizing and expressing feelings is critical to emotional health. Due to the secretive nature of abuse, however, many victims never express their feelings and, in turn, may suffer numerous short- and long-term emotional, physical, and behavioral symptoms. Children need encouragement and direction when it comes to talking about feelings. Sometimes children may feel that they are alone with their feelings, that no one can help, or that no one will believe them. It can help to normalize their feelings by letting them know that they are not alone.

Lesson:

1. During T p. 8 ask students to remember the last time they asked for help with something. Was the person they asked helpful to them? What are some qualities in people that make them good listeners (*non-judgmental, take time to talk to me, stop what they're doing, look me in the eye*)? Ask each child to try to think to themselves of at least two adults they know who they consider to be good listeners.
2. Next ask students, “What if you had a really big question or problem, something that you felt was very personal? Perhaps it could be a problem about your body or sexuality, or a secret you don’t feel comfortable keeping. Would you still feel comfortable asking those people you have identified?” Children do not need to answer out loud.
3. Ask students to list reasons we may be hesitant to ask for help (*pride, fear, laziness, embarrassment*). Share that one strategy they can use to decide whether or not to ask for help about something is to ask yourself, “What is the worst thing that could happen?” along with “What is the best thing that could happen?”
4. Ask each student to write the names of at least two helpful adults on an index card. Also write on the card the qualities that make each person a good listener. They should take the index card home and keep in a special place to refer to if they should ever need to talk to someone. Let students know that if they have difficulty coming up with one or two names, they should feel welcome to speak with you, a school counselor, or someone else at school who is helpful and available. If your school has a counselor or other mental health support available, you may wish to invite them to introduce themselves during this class. You may also wish to provide phone numbers for local hotlines and other resources.

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Chapter 3: Life in Christ

Theme: Defining healthy sexuality and boundaries

Essential: “Sexuality” is a high-level word for children this age; in fact many children reduce its meaning to body parts and sexual acts. A deeper, more holistic understanding of healthy sexuality can lead to healthier future relationships for children.

Vocabulary: Sexuality

Lesson: (This lesson may take two class sessions.)

1. Before the lesson on T pp. 22-23 write the following terms on the board. Let students know that each term is an important part of healthy sexuality and healthy relationships. Be sure to point out that sexuality is not simply our private body parts and what we do with them.

- Privacy/modesty
- Understanding and respect for boundaries(an understanding that each person’s body is their own, and that they have the right to say who touches and how)
- Equality
- Safety
- Empathy
- Nurturing
- Open communication
- Expressed feelings

Next ask the students to try to think of a term or phrase that would be the opposite of each term listed. When complete, note that the new list describes *unhealthy* sexuality and/or unhealthy relationships. Ask students what they think might happen if someone were to have more of the qualities on the second list than the first list (*they might have a problem such as being abused or being abusive, or they may be prone to violence*). The second list might look something like this:

- Lack of privacy (Showing body parts in ways that are exploitive)
- No understanding of boundaries
- Inequality (One person has power or control over another)
- Fear, uncertainty
- Lack of empathy
- Hurtful to others
- Poor communication
- Bottled-up feelings

2. Supplementary Lesson 2 (PR pp. 37-38), “Expressing Affection,” is strongly recommended. When discussing inappropriate touch, be sure to point out that inappropriate touching doesn’t always feel bad, at first. In fact, we can easily be

tricked into thinking that it is okay because it does feel nice – either the touch feels good, or maybe because you like the person you are with. There are some basic guidelines to follow that can help you understand when touch may not be okay, or wrong:

- No adult or older child should “play with” your private parts. If a doctor needs to examine those parts, your parent should know about it and/or be in the examination room with you.
- You have the right to say “no” to any kind of touching (But this can be hard to do, and at some times, unsafe to do).
- Don’t touch a person who says “no touching.”
- Touching should never be a secret. (This is not the same as privacy, as discussed above. Privacy occurs between two consenting adults).
- Our feelings can give us clues to situations that may not be appropriate: pay attention to confused or mixed-up feelings
- It is never too late to tell someone about abuse
- Abuse is never the child’s fault
- God wants each child to be safe from abuse

3. If you are able to conduct a joint parent/child session, show the video, “It Happened to Me” from the Boy Scouts of America. *Show this video to children only if parents are present.*

4. Remind students of their list of supportive adults, created in Lesson 1.

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Chapter 4: Loving One Another

Theme: Commitment, Sexual abuse

Essential: Sexual abuse is a prevalent form of violence in our society. The only way to truly end abuse is to raise a generation of children who themselves will not grow up to be abusive. Children who act out sexually can be helped to understand that they have a problem for which help is available.

Vocabulary: Abuse

Lesson:

When discussing/defining abuse, simply be sure to mention that abuse can also mean the sexual mistreatment of another person. Emphasize that people who sexually abuse or assault others need professional help, also.

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Chapter 5: Led by Virtue

Theme: Support system

Essential: Children today are asked to make very complex moral decisions at a very young age, before they are developmentally ready. With so many strong influences (church, parents, peers, media) pulling them in different directions, children must know to whom they can turn for assistance with tough choices. These same adults may be helpful to children if they should find themselves in trouble, or if they need to tell someone about something important, like abuse. Children need to know the names of at least 3 or 4 adults they can ask for help.

Lesson:

Share that adults have a lot of experience dealing with tough problems. Remind students of the index cards they created in Lesson 1, containing the names of supportive adults. Help students understand that these adults are an important part of their “support system.” Every person, adult and child, needs a strong support system to help them navigate through all the struggles they’ll face in life. Struggles are much easier to overcome if we have someone helping us.

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Chapter 7: Living in Love

Theme: Misuse of sexual attraction

Essential: Children can understand that sexual abuse is a misuse of sexual desire.
Acting on sexual feelings towards a child is morally and legally wrong.

Lesson:

On TE pp. 54, 55 when discussing attraction and sexual desire, ask the students for some examples of how sexual attraction/desire can be misused (*adolescents having sexual intercourse, when an adult has a sexual attraction toward a child and acts on it, etc.*). You may wish to discuss those actions which are considered morally vs. legally wrong, or both.

Family Resource

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Lesson 1 – Taking Care of Your Emotional Being

Recognizing and expressing feelings through words is an important part of being emotionally healthy. Due to the secretive nature of abuse, however, many victims never express their feelings and, in turn, may suffer many emotional, physical, and behavioral symptoms. Children need encouragement and direction when it comes to talking about feelings. Sometimes children may feel that they are alone with their feelings, that no one can help, or that no one will believe them. It can help them know that they are not alone.

Lesson Summary

- Looking at the best or worst case scenario can be a good strategy to decide if you need to get help from a trusted adult.
- Trusted adults should be good listeners and people with whom you feel comfortable discussing a personal problem or concern, including something about your body/sexuality.

Home Activity

When you suspect that your child feels uncertain about something, help them express those feelings with words. When the child shares, listen first and then ask what the child thinks he/she should do about the problem. Then you might ask if the child would like to hear what you think about the matter. Similarly, 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.

Family Resource

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Lesson 3 – Healthy Sexuality and Boundaries

“Sexuality” is a high-level word for children this age; in fact most children (and even adults) frequently reduce its meaning to body parts and sexual behavior. Nevertheless, it helps children to develop a deeper, more holistic understanding of healthy sexuality/healthy relationships which can, in turn, lead to healthier future relationships. Components of healthy sexuality/healthy relationships include, for example, the ability to express feelings, communication, empathy, equality, privacy, and an understanding and respect for boundaries around our bodies. In an abusive situation, whether aggressive in nature or not, an adult or older child exerts power and control over a child. This relationship is not between two equal partners.

Lesson Summary

- Characteristics/components of healthy relationships (see above).
- No adult or older child should “play with” your private parts. If a doctor needs to examine those parts, your parent should know about it and/or be in the examination room with you.
- You have the right to say no to any kind of touching (But this can be hard to do, and at some times, unsafe to do).
- Don’t touch a person who says “no touching.”
- Touching should never be a secret. (This is not the same as privacy, as discussed above. Privacy occurs between two consenting adults).
- Our feelings can give us clues to situations that may not be appropriate: pay attention to confused or mixed-up feelings.
- It is never too late to tell someone about abuse.
- Abuse is never the child’s fault.
- God wants each child to be safe from abuse.

Home Activity

Ask your child to share with you what they learn in class. Think carefully about your own relationships, whether sexual or not. Are you demonstrating characteristics of healthy relationships, as described above? If your child happens to see examples of relationships that are not healthy (whether in real life or in the media), talk about those aspects of the relationship which are unhealthy. Also, play “What if?” games with your child in the car, at the dinner table, or whenever you have a spare moment. For example, ask ‘What if someone showed you their private parts in a public bathroom?’ or ‘What if while at a friend’s house the friend’s parent insists that you leave the bathroom door open?’ or ‘What if a relative hugged you in a way that made you feel uneasy?’ Remind your child that it is always okay to say no to someone if they want to touch or show you their private parts, or if they ask you to show them yours, 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

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Lesson 4 – Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is a widespread form of violence in our society. The only way to truly end abuse is to raise a generation of children who themselves will not grow up to be abusive. Children who act out sexually can be helped to understand that they do have a problem for which help is available.

Lesson Summary

- Abuse can also mean the sexual maltreatment of another person.
- People who abuse others need professional help.

Home Activity

Help your child understand that lots of people have problems, and that people are available who can help. Having a problem, whether an anger problem, a touching problem, or a drug or alcohol problem, for example, does not make one a bad person. In fact, none of us are perfect and we all need help at times. People with all types of problems can do better and feel better about themselves if they receive some help. If possible, provide some examples of people you know who had a problem, received help, and are now feeling better and leading a better life.

Family Resource

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Lesson 5 – Support System

Children today are asked to make very complex moral decisions at a very young age, before they are socially, emotionally, and intellectually ready. With so many strong influences (church, parents, peers, media) pulling them in different directions, children must know to whom they can turn for help with tough choices. These same adults may be helpful to children if they should find themselves in trouble, or if they need to tell someone about something important, like abuse. Children need to know the names of at least 3 or 4 adults they can ask for help.

Lesson Summary

- People need a strong support system to help them navigate through life.
- Struggles are much easier to overcome if we have someone helping us.

Home Activity

Make sure that your child knows three or four trusted adults that he/she can go to for help. Many children do not feel comfortable asking their parents or primary caregivers questions about very personal issues such as sexuality. Some children worry that they will be judged or that they'll get in trouble. Others find the topic too embarrassing. Help create a home where kids feel more comfortable talking about personal issues. Set aside some time each day, even if only a few minutes, to spend with each child individually. Share something about your day, and encourage them to share with you about theirs. Don't push them to talk about "serious" stuff; talk about anything. Listen for opportunities to talk about feelings, but never assume that you know how they feel. If this is something new you are trying, stick with it even if your child responds negatively at first. Time spent listening and showing interest in your child is the best preventive medicine.