

## LESSON 7 Trust and Secrets



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### What the Church Says About

## *Child Sexual Abuse*

**In abuse, we see the hand of evil that does not spare even the innocence of children. No explanations suffice for these abuses involving children.**

Pope Francis, *Meeting “The Protection of Minors in the Church,”*  
Sunday, February 24, 2019

## Keeping Children Safe



As a parent, you want to protect your child from harm and prepare him or her to respond to situations that may present danger. Gentle, age-appropriate conversations about sexual abuse are an important way for you to keep your child safe.

**Because sexual abuse is most often perpetrated by someone a child knows, it is important to have ongoing conversations with your child about his or her safety.**

Child sexual abuse is any interaction in which a child is used for the gratification of an abuser or observer of abuse. It may include physical contact but can also include non-touching behaviors such as showing pornography to a child or taking photos or videos of a child.

Children should be made aware that certain body parts are private and should not be touched by anyone other than a parent or doctor when it's absolutely necessary for the health of the child. In these cases, it is never a secret. Teach your child the correct names for body parts. This way he or she will have the words to communicate about health issues or abuse interactions should they ever take place. Tell your child that he or she should not keep secrets from you, especially secrets about touching. Explain that it's OK to tell an unsafe secret even if it means breaking a promise made not to tell. Offer reassurance that telling is always the right thing to do.



3minute  
RETREAT

*“I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world.”*

John 16:33

### Reflection

God does not promise that our lives will be without hardship. During challenging times, God calls us to be courageous and resolute in our faith and to know that through him, we can find the peace we seek. God’s love for us is eternal and unchanging, and everything that may feel broken or wounded will be made to feel whole again in his time.

### Questions

How can I demonstrate the courage that my faith in God brings me during times of difficulty?

How can I share Christ’s peace with my child to provide comfort when he or she is troubled or afraid?



### Prayer

Pray to Jesus, using the words of this prayer or your own.

*Lord Jesus, help me grow in faith and courage as I follow your way of peace.*

## Lead Your Child to Grow with God: Spiritually, Socially, and Physically

**Spiritual** Parents want their children

to feel free to tell them everything, but at times, children may fear the consequences and opt to hide the truth. Listening to our loved ones talk about their ideas encourages open communication

and fosters trust and respect. Write one

or two open-ended questions that have no single answer. (Example: What is an activity that you have always wanted to try?) Gather your family together. Invite each family member to answer each question and encourage everyone to listen to the responses. After each family member has shared, pray together to express gratitude for your family and the time you share together.



**Social** Talk with your child about any emotions he or she might experience while playing with other children. Discuss respectful ways of expressing or regulating those emotions.

**Physical** People vary in how they experience and express their emotions. For example, one person experiencing fear may have low energy and want to be alone and still, while others might feel more agitated and want to talk to someone or go for a walk. Help your child notice how he or she experiences and responds to emotions.

### Safe and Sacred at Home



*The Virtue Series* (Loyola Press)

By Alex Cabrera and Vinyet Montaner

Each book in *The Virtue Series* contains 15 illustrated short stories that will help your child understand the importance of effort, listening, patience, and prudence. These books provide opportunities for your child to learn and practice healthy, productive, and cooperative ways to respond to life’s challenges.

## Big Ideas

### In Lesson 7, your child will

- recall that emotions can signal an unsafe situation.
- tell the difference between safe secrets and unsafe secrets.
- identify the behaviors of a trustworthy adult.
- define *emotion*, *safe secret*, *unsafe secret*, and *trustworthy*.

### Words to Know

**emotion** • A strong feeling or reaction to people, things, or events

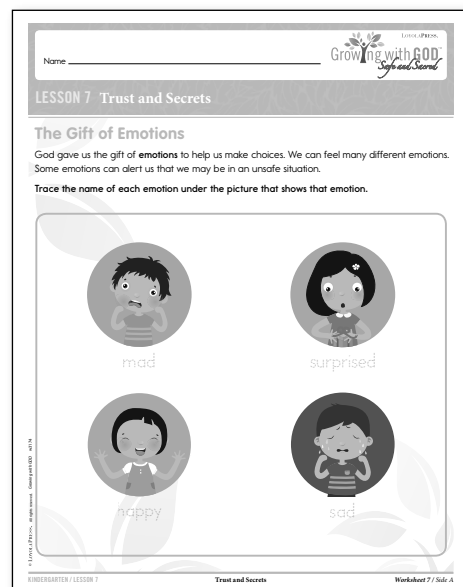
**safe secret** • Something that is kept confidential for a short time, such as a surprise party or a gift

**unsafe secret** • Something that is kept hidden to conceal a serious misdeed or crime

**trustworthy** • The quality of being deserving of trust. Honest and reliable

## Bringing the Lesson Home

Determine ahead of time when and where you and your child will engage with the lesson content. Invite your child to share his or her work on the Lesson 7 worksheet or have the child complete the worksheet with you.



## STEP 1 ENGAGE & EXPLORE

Talk about each emotion from Side A of the worksheet and make facial expressions together to explore what each emotion looks and feels like. Share what you notice about each emotion and invite your child to do the same. Invite your child to share other emotions he or she has felt that day. You might name some emotions you felt during the day and share how you responded to them.



**SAY:** God has given us the wonderful gift of emotions. It's important to pay attention to our emotions because they can give us important information. They can help us notice if a situation is safe or unsafe. What emotions may tell us that a situation might be safe? What emotions might tell us a situation may be unsafe? Listen to your child's responses and add your own ideas. Discuss ways your child might respond if he or she senses a situation is unsafe, such as saying no or walking away and asking a trustworthy adult for help. Encourage your child to tell you right away about any situation that ever makes him or her feel sad, afraid, or confused.

# Bringing the Lesson Home *(continued)*

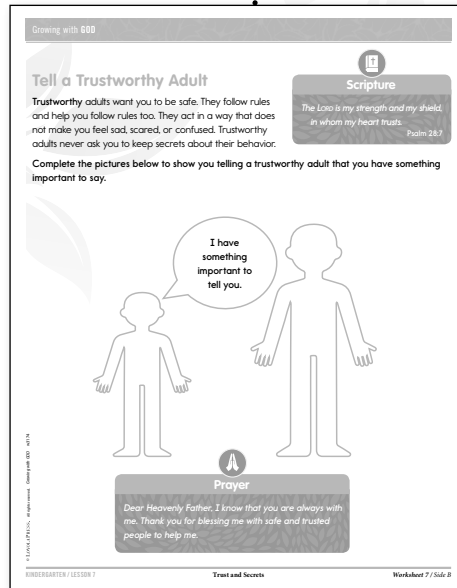
## STEP 2 REFLECT & RESPOND

Review the “Tell a Trustworthy Adult” worksheet with your child. Discuss ways to tell that an adult may or may not be trustworthy.

**SAY:** Trustworthy adults want children to be safe. They don’t act in ways that make a child feel sad, afraid, or confused. A trustworthy adult would never ask you to keep a secret about touching, including touching private parts. Please tell me or another trustworthy adult right away if that ever happens.

Invite your child to name some adults he or she trusts. Discuss the reasons why your child named those adults. Explain that the job someone has, the position he or she holds, or a familial relationship does not automatically make that person safe or trustworthy. Tell your child that you can always help if he or she is unsure whether an adult in his or her life is trustworthy.

**SAY:** Let’s pray together now. Pray the prayer from the Pray Together feature or one of your own. Begin and end the prayer with the Sign of the Cross.



### Pray Together

Heavenly Father, thank you for being with us always. Please continue to put trustworthy people in our lives who will care for us and treat us with love and respect.

