

## LESSON 5 Digital Discipleship

# Growing with GOD™ *Safe and Sacred*

### In This Lesson

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### What the Church Says About

## *The Potential of the Internet*

The Internet can make an enormously valuable contribution to human life. It can foster prosperity and peace, intellectual and aesthetic growth, mutual understanding among peoples and nations on a global scale.

Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Ethics in Internet: Recommendations and Conclusion*, 18 (February 22, 2002)

### God in Our Lives



First-graders may be too young to understand the repercussions of bad online choices, but they are not too young to understand that you set rules they need to follow to stay safe. Setting screen-time limits and providing close supervision when your

child is online will help him or her develop good habits regarding the use of technology. When you teach your child to be mindful of the feeling inside that an action is right or wrong, you help foster the development of a positive online presence and encourage making choices that reflect God's will and his love for us.

**Giving children a foundation rooted in faith fosters their ability to make good choices in all aspects of their lives, including online activities.**

There is no better influence in a child's life than a concerned and loving parent. You do much to guide your child in the way of the Lord and to shield your child from what is inappropriate. Technology can be a wonderful and useful tool to connect with others, to share God's love, and to do his will. However, children need clear guidance and boundaries regarding internet use in order to keep God central in their lives. When children fix their hearts on God, they look for ways to serve his kingdom and learn to protect their eyes and ears from harmful ideas online as well as offline.



3minute  
RETREAT

*God in the beginning created  
human beings  
and made them subject to their  
own free choice.*

Sirach 15:14

### Reflection

We have freedom of choice. It is one of God's greatest gifts to us. Still, he calls us to act in such a way that glorifies his love for us, even when it is difficult to do so. When we respond out of love, our children learn to do the same.

### Questions

How can I better use my freedom of choice as a parent? How can I teach my child to respond out of love even when it is difficult to do so?



### Prayer

Speak to God, using this prayer or one of your own.

*Help me, Father, accept  
responsibility for the choices  
I make.*

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

**Spiritual** Encourage your child to become mindful of the presence of God in his or her life and the life of your family. For example, frequently change the way your family says grace—sing the blessing, let each family member add to a prayer, read a verse from Scripture, or just have each person contribute a silent prayer. Your child will benefit from the knowledge that God is always listening and that there are many different ways we can communicate with him.

**Social** Set up some dominoes in a pattern, and show children how when one domino falls, the others fall in turn. Or you may show your child an online video of the domino effect. Relate it to how our actions affect other people. For example, when we show God's love to a person, that person may be more likely to do the same for someone else.



**Physical** Talk with your child about how God gave us bodies that are capable of so many things, such as climbing, running, and jumping. When playing outdoors is not possible, whatever your child chooses to do instead, encourage him or her to thank God for the ability to do it!

### Safe and Sacred at Home



*The Prayer List* (Loyola Press)

by Jane Knuth

Mercy in the family is a sign that relationships matter more than being right, more than money or possessions, and more than hanging on to our hurts. . . . Mercy and forgiveness require lots of prayer. We are not capable of forgiving big hurts by ourselves because our love is too small. But God's love is invincible. He can forgive the gravest of harm when we cannot. Some say that praying to God to forgive our loved one is the path to being able to forgive that person ourselves.

## Big Ideas

In Lesson 5, your child will:

- identify specific actions he or she will do and will not do online.
- tell that God's guidance helps people make good choices.
- write a digital message to share God's love.
- define *digital device* and *online*.

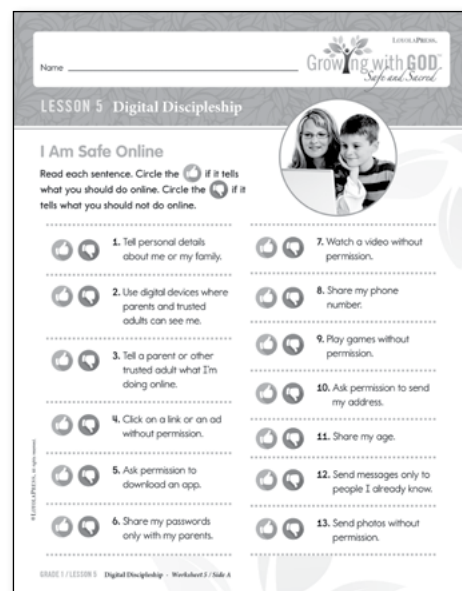
### Words to Know

**digital device** • A smartphone, tablet, computer, or other electronic tool that connects to the internet

**online** • Being connected to the internet by a digital device

## Bringing the Lesson Home

Determine ahead of time when and where you and your child will engage with the lesson content. Read or complete Side A of the worksheet with your child.



## STEP 1 ENGAGE & EXPLORE

Teaching young children about making good choices online can happen much the same way in which parents teach them about making good choices anywhere else. You make rules, supervise, and offer guidance when it is needed. Above all else, however, parents stress that we use God's guidance in all of our actions, including online activity.

**SAY:** Making good choices online is very important. Why do you think it's important? Allow time for your child to respond.

**ASK:** What happens if someone makes a bad choice or breaks a rule at home? Allow time for your child to respond. He or she might talk about consequences, making amends, and asking forgiveness. **SAY:** Poor online choices are different because the problems caused cannot be easily fixed. That is why you always need to follow online safety rules.



# Bringing the Lesson Home *(continued)*

## STEP 2 REFLECT & RESPOND

Read or complete Side B of the worksheet with your child.

Take a moment to read your child's message and validate the sentiment that went into it. You may wish to send a copy of the message to whom it is addressed so that he or she may respond.

**SAY:** When we share God's love with people, we lift them up. That means our words and actions can help others feel happy and important.

Spend some time with your child thinking of messages of God's love others may like to hear. Help your child text a few of the messages to friends and family if you feel compelled, and enjoy reading the responses you receive.

**SAY:** Let's pray together.

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

Almighty God, thank you for your ever-present guidance in our lives. Please help us lift people up with our words and our actions so they can feel your love for them.

LOYOLAPRESS.



Scan this code and guide your child through a simple review of the lesson.

