

## LESSON 5 Digital Discipleship



### In This Lesson

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- 3-Minute Retreat
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### What the Church Says About

#### *God's Word and the Internet*

Like today's world itself, the world of media, including the Internet, has been brought by Christ, inchoately yet truly, within the boundaries of the kingdom of God and placed in service to the word of salvation.

Pontifical Council for  
Social Communications,  
Ethics in Internet  
(February 28, 2002)

## Technology: God's Gift

Like everything else in our world, the internet is brought by God and is meant to be used in service to him. Help your child safely use this wonderful tool by establishing rules that reflect the values of your family, promote authentic communication, and reflect the gospel message. These rules can focus on when and where devices are appropriate to use and for how long. Make clear what apps and websites are appropriate and which ones are off limits. Help your child understand how to distinguish between the two.

**Pope Francis writes, "It is not technology which determines whether or not communication is authentic, but rather the human heart and our capacity to use wisely the means at our disposal."**

Sharing joyful expressions of faith, such as posting on social media about family Baptisms and other sacraments, helps reinforce for your child that living a Christ-centered life is something important to your family and is the type of social media presence that enriches lives and glorifies God.





3minute  
RETREAT

*Jesus said to him, “I am the way  
and the truth and the life.”*

John 14:6

### Reflection

Jesus wants us to have abundant life that is transformed by God. We enjoy this life as we continue to express concern for our families and provide them with guidance to make positive choices in life. Following the path of Jesus to the Father is not simply following rules. It is being open to grace so we may instinctively follow Jesus’ path of peace and justice.

### Questions

What steps can I take today to make my online actions and choices more closely match how I act with those I meet in my community each day? How can I help my child recognize that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life?



### Prayer

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

*Jesus, you are the way to my finding  
the Father. Help me keep my focus  
on the path you have cleared for me.*

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

**Spiritual** Children at this age often enjoy rituals and are interested in liturgical seasons and feasts. Help your child learn more about the Church year and the Order of Mass using print and digital materials. Explore these resources together.



**Social** View online content and social media posts with your child. Remind your child that the person who writes each post has feelings, just like you and your child. Occasionally ask, “How do you think this person (or character) feels?” Validate your child’s response. The point is to develop empathy for others and encourage reflection. When you help your child learn to be aware of the feelings of others, you help him or her to develop a mindful and positive online presence.

**Physical** Many children at this age have developed fine and gross motor skills that allow them to do things that include writing more legibly, jumping rope, and dancing. You may wish to chronicle your child’s budding skills by recording short videos that can be shared with close family using social media. Be sure to model asking and receiving your child’s permission before posting online anything concerning him or her.

### Safe and Sacred at Home



*Go in Peace* (Loyola Press)  
by John Paul II

If we are to bring healing to a world so deeply loved by the Father, we cannot neglect to care for the family, the foundation of society.

## Big Ideas

### In Lesson 5, your child will:

- tell the difference between safe and unsafe online behaviors.
- identify possible consequences for making unsafe choices while using digital devices.
- show that he or she is able to follow Jesus' example by asking for help to guide decisions and make good choices.
- define *digital device*, *online*, and *personal information*.

### Words to Know

#### digital device ·

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

#### online ·

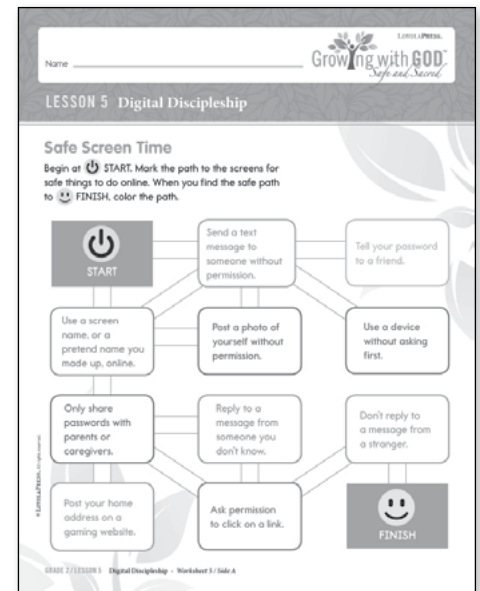
*Being connected to the internet by a digital device*

#### personal information ·

*The information that is specific and unique to an individual*

## Bringing the Lesson Home

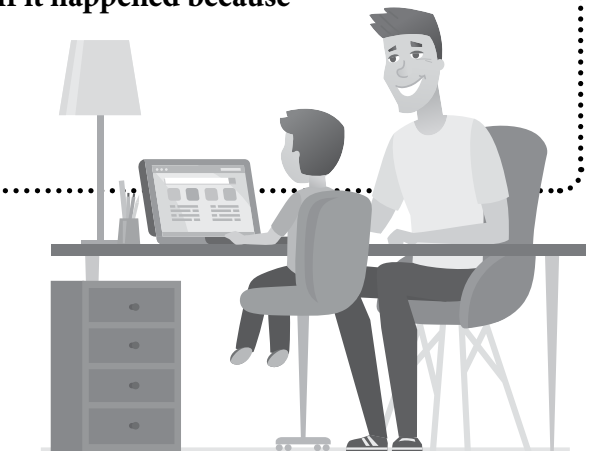
Determine ahead of time when and where you and your child will engage with the lesson content. Read or complete Side A of the worksheet with your child.



## STEP 1 ENGAGE & EXPLORE

**SAY:** Do you have any questions for me about how to stay safe when you are using the internet? (Give your child time to respond.) Answer any questions your child may have and try to determine whether or not he or she understands the reasons behind the rules. For example, does your child understand what can happen if he or she gives a password to a friend? Have an honest discussion with your child about the potential consequences of poor choices regarding online activity.

**SAY:** If someone that you don't know contacts you or if you see something that is scary or makes you uncomfortable, tell me right away, even if it happened because a rule was broken. Then I can help you and keep you safe.



# Bringing the Lesson Home *(continued)*

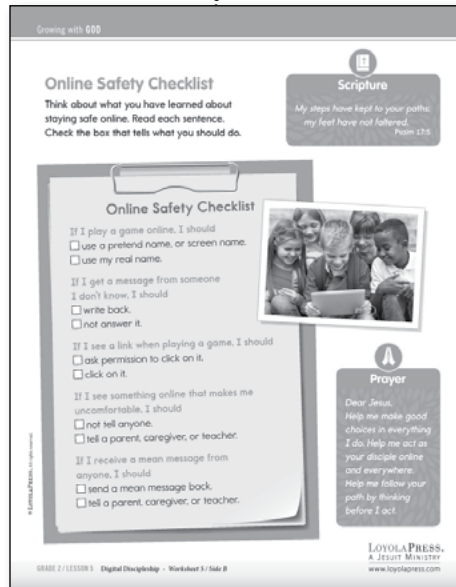
## STEP 2 REFLECT & RESPOND

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

**SAY:** As you grow older and show that you can follow the rules about online activity, we will entrust you with more freedom. Review with your child the checklist on the worksheet and discuss the reason behind each rule.

**SAY:** The internet is a wonderful tool that we can all enjoy, but it serves us best when we use it exactly as we live our lives offline, within loving boundaries and focused on God and doing his will.

Pray the prayer from the Pray Together feature or a prayer of your own. Begin and end the prayer by praying the Sign of the Cross.



### Pray Together

Dear God, help us act in the light of your love and keep us free from harm as we use the internet for your greater glory.

