

## 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

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 an 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 is necessary for a child’s health. This kind of touching is never a secret. Teach your child the correct names for body parts so that



he or she can 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.

*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: Who is your favorite character from a movie or book and why?) 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 emotions like excitement, sadness, and frustration that he or she might feel when interacting with peers. Discuss ways to regulate or respectfully express those emotions.

**Physical** People vary in how they experience and express their emotions. For example, some people who feel worried 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



*Leo’s Gift* (Loyola Press)

By Susan Blackaby and Joellyn Cicciarelli

Creative and shy, Leo is searching for a special talent he can share with the world. With the help of his sister, he discovers music. Leo may seem quiet, but the piano gives him a big voice, helps his confidence soar, and propels him to embrace the treasure inside him and share it with the world.


## Big Ideas

## In Lesson 7, your child will:

- tell the difference between safe secrets and unsafe secrets.
- identify some behaviors of trustworthy adults.
- define *unsafe secret*, *trustworthy*, and *emotion*.


# 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.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 7 Trust and Secrets



### Worthy of My Trust

No one should ever ask you to keep a secret about touching. A secret about touching is an **unsafe secret**. Unsafe secrets should not be kept even if someone you know or love asks you to keep them.

Tell a **trustworthy** adult as soon as you can about unwanted touching or other unsafe secrets. You can determine if adults are trustworthy by how they act more than by the job they have or whether they are trusted by others.

**Write the name of an adult you could tell if you were being harmed or made to feel confused or unsafe. Under the name, list behaviors that make this person trustworthy.**

\_\_\_\_\_

(name of a trustworthy adult)

\_\_\_\_\_

is trustworthy because he or she

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE 3 / LESSON 7

Trust and Secrets

Worksheet 7 / Side A

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For more resources, visit <http://www.growingwithgod.com>

## STEP 1 ENGAGE & EXPLORE

Talk with your child about unsafe secrets, including secrets about touching, and answer your child's questions.

Make sure to use proper terminology for body parts, including genitals. Explain that



children should never be asked to keep secrets from their parents and that touching is never a secret. **SAY: Please tell me right away if anyone touches you on private parts or does anything else to make you feel sad, afraid, or confused. If you need help right away, tell another trustworthy adult.**

Read the worksheet with your child and discuss behaviors that would tend to indicate someone is trustworthy. 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.

**SAY:** You are precious to me and to God, and I want to keep you safe. Please tell me if anyone ever makes you feel sad, afraid, or confused. It is never too late to tell.

## Words to Know

**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.*

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

# Bringing the Lesson Home *(continued)*

## STEP 2 REFLECT & RESPOND

Review the “What Am I Feeling?” worksheet with your child and discuss the emotion he or she felt and described. Discuss any similarities and differences in how you experience and express that emotion.

**SAY:** God gives us the gift of emotions. They have good information for us. They can help us respond to what is happening. Invite your child to share which emotions might signal that a situation or person is unsafe. You might share with your child a time that your emotions signaled to you that a situation was possibly unsafe. Talk about how you

responded and how your child might respond if he or she encounters a potentially unsafe situation. Remind your child that he or she can always say no to touching and ask for help from a trustworthy adult.

**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.

The worksheet is titled "What Am I Feeling?" and is part of the "Growing with GOD" series. It includes a "Scripture" section with the text: "The Lord is my strength and my shield, in whom my heart trusts." (Psalm 28:7). Below this is a large empty box for drawing. At the bottom, there is a "Prayer" section with the text: "Heavenly Father, I know you love me always and your love for me is unchanging. Thank you for the people in this world who can be trusted."

## Pray Together

Heavenly Father, thank you for the people in our lives who are caring and trustworthy. Please help us respond to life's challenges with courage and faith.

