



Growing with GOD™

Safe and Sacred

LESSON 5
Digital Discipleship

In This Lesson

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What the Church Says About

Internet Use and Globalization

Precisely as powerful tools of the globalization process, the new information technology and the Internet transmit and help instill a set of cultural values . . . whose novelty and glamour can challenge and overwhelm traditional cultures.

Pontifical Council on Social Communication, *Ethics in Internet*, 11 (February 22, 2002)

Guiding Your Child Online

Technology enables us to do so many good things, but it holds the power to do just as much harm when used without conscience or ethics. Convenient access to information on any subject and instant communication with people we know and with people



we don't know can be challenging for both children and adults. Setting expectations and rules for online behavior and the use of digital devices is important. Establish screen time limits and post a list of age-appropriate websites your child is able to access freely during that time. Make monitoring your child's online activity easy by designating only common areas in your home for that purpose. Warn children of the consequences of sharing personal information online, and teach them to ask permission before downloading images, apps, or games.

When children bring their relationship with God into their online activities, digital devices can become powerful tools for spreading the love of God far and wide.

Children need you to help them make good decisions about online behavior because bad choices in the digital world may have consequences a young person cannot see or predict. Stress the importance of telling you if something odd or bad happens during online time.



3minute
RETREAT

Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” He replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?”

Acts of the Apostles 8:30–31

Reflection

Philip was a deacon in the early Church. He was called by the Holy Spirit to meet a man reading the book of Isaiah. The man he met accepted Jesus as his Savior. Philip’s actions are an example of decisive obedience to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. We are called by the same Spirit to guide those in our care.

Questions

How is the Holy Spirit calling me to guide my child in regard to online activity? How can I best prepare myself to guide my child to make good online choices?



Prayer

Speak to the Holy Spirit, using this prayer or one of your own.

Spirit of God, thank you for calling me to help others. Help me to guide them through a safe online environment.

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

Spiritual Have an honest conversation with your child about the online flood of misinformation and the importance of visiting only reliable sources. In addition, stress the importance of avoiding material that is inappropriate. Talk about the necessity of guarding against that which separates us from God.

Social Help your child send occasional online messages to trusted friends and family members. Participate actively in sending the messages and express appreciation for the technology that makes communication with people far away so fast and convenient. Set family rules about social media use, such as “No technology in sight at meal time,” and have everyone in the family, including adults, adhere to the rules.

Physical Each day, require children to put technology away and do a physical activity of some kind. Take a walk or ride bikes with your child, or build a fort together out of blankets, boxes, and furniture. Express happiness in the feeling of satisfaction that comes with physical exertion, even if it is mild exertion.



Safe and Sacred at Home



Walking with Jesus (Loyola Press)
by Pope Francis

In a world such as this one, media can help us feel closer to one another, creating a sense of unity of the human family, which can in turn inspire solidarity and serious efforts to ensure a more dignified life for all. Good communication helps us grow closer, to know one another better and, ultimately, to grow in unity. The walls that divide us can be broken down only if we are prepared to listen and learn from one another. We need to resolve our differences through forms of dialogue that help us grow in understanding and mutual respect. A culture of encounter demands that we be ready not only to give but also to receive.

Big Ideas

In Lesson 5, your child will:

- develop habits that will help him or her reflect God's love to others online.
- identify potentially unsafe online situations and adopt strategies to avoid these situations.
- identify rules that keep him or her safe in online environments.
- define *netiquette*.

Word to Know

netiquette · *The correct or acceptable way of communicating on the internet*

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.

Name _____

LESSON 5 Digital Discipleship

Keep It Friendly and Safe
We are called to be disciples of Jesus in all we do. That includes our actions in the digital world. We should be just as mindful about our behavior online as we are in all other areas of our lives. Netiquette is online behavior that is considerate of others and safe.

For each area of online activity, write one example of good netiquette and one way to protect your privacy.

Gaming
I can practice netiquette by _____
I can protect my privacy by _____

Social Media
I can practice netiquette by _____
I can protect my privacy by _____

Texting and phone calls
I can practice netiquette by _____
I can protect my privacy by _____

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STEP 1 ENGAGE & EXPLORE

Assess your child's knowledge of netiquette by asking him or her to explain its meaning to you. Then talk together about the work completed on Side A of the worksheet.

SAY: You cannot use netiquette if you are not good at using etiquette. Remember that there is a human with feelings just like you behind every online persona.

ASK: What are some behaviors you have learned that you can apply to your online activity? Allow time for your child to respond. Listen to him or her carefully, and stress the importance of coming to you if someone ever sends hurtful or harassing messages or images.

SAY: Remember to practice digital discipleship whenever you use the internet. Reflect the love of God online, just as you do in all your personal interactions.



Bringing the Lesson Home *(continued)*

STEP 2 REFLECT & RESPOND

Use this opportunity to talk to your child about making wise choices about online activity.

SAY: Please use good judgment when it comes to digital devices and online activity. Read or complete Side B of the worksheet with your child. Use the responses your child wrote on the worksheet as a springboard to discuss how to handle different situations about digital interaction. Add ideas about what you might have done in the different scenarios.

ASK: What can you do if you see someone sharing bad or inappropriate information online?

Allow time for your child to respond, and help him or her brainstorm ideas if necessary.

SAY: Let's pray together. Pray aloud 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 Father, thank you for the guidance of the Holy Spirit that helps us make good choices. Please help us use technology wisely for the good of all people and to share your great love.

