

LESSON 1 God Creates Us



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What the Church Says About

Parents as Teachers

If it is true that by giving life parents share in God's creative work, it is also true that by raising their children they become sharers in his paternal and at the same time maternal way of teaching.

Pope John Paul II,
Gratissimam Sane, 16 (1994)

Changes Are Gifts from God



About the time children reach the fifth grade, the changes they notice and experience in their lives provide a glimpse of the people they will become. It's an opportunity to teach them how to cope with changes in a loving and supportive way. As their bodies and minds begin to mature, children often have feelings of confusion and self-consciousness. They

are developing a new awareness of their bodies and feelings, and they are becoming increasingly cognizant of the changes they see in their peers. Children need their parents now more than ever because parents teach them that every change they experience is a purposeful part of God's plan for them.

Each change of mind, body, and spirit children experience brings them closer to becoming the people God calls them to be.

Pay close attention to the changes in your child, and welcome questions and honest discussions about those changes. Let your child hear you express your thankfulness to God for the changes in mind, body, and spirit you see in him or her.



Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

Romans 12:2

Reflection

You have watched your child grow and change in many ways so far. Many of the changes may have been anticipated and welcomed. Now, you may feel some trepidation as your child begins to mature in new ways. Questions become more difficult to answer, and problems are more complex. Take comfort in knowing that God gives us what we need during each part of life. Through prayer we can draw closer to him so that we can be models of what it means to live according to God's will, for that is the route to true contentment.

Questions

What unwanted or unexpected change in my life turned out to be a blessing? How can I show with my actions that I embrace change as a gift from God?



Prayer

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

Jesus, help me be attentive to your voice so that I may discern your will for me and for those in my care.

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

Spiritual Speak about God's will often and with reverence.

Encourage your child to draw near to God by actively seeking his guidance each day. Celebrate the contentment that comes with knowing one has served and pleased the Lord.

Social As children enter adolescence, they begin to place a great deal of importance on fitting in with their peers. Do your best to help your child develop the self-assurance needed to navigate the changes that lie ahead. Talk with your child about the importance of building relationships with those who will always help him or her keep his or her heart fixed on the tenets of the Catholic faith.

Physical Encourage your child to follow

a thorough daily hygiene routine for his or her health and well-being.

Discuss how good personal hygiene is essential to looking and feeling our best and how this can boost self-confidence. Explain that the way we dress matters too. Help your child

go through his or her clothing and shoes to donate or pass along to a sibling what no longer fits. Use the time to talk about recent physical changes and your child's feelings regarding them.



Safe and Sacred at Home



Go In Peace (Loyola Press)

by John Paul II

The well-being of individuals and communities depends on the healthy state of the family. . . . Children need not only material support from their parents, but more importantly a secure, affectionate, and morally correct family environment.

Big Ideas

In Lesson 1, your child will:

- demonstrate understanding that he or she can embrace changes as opportunities in his or her life to grow closer to God.
- identify individual changes to his or her mind, body, and spirit.
- define *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*.

Word to Know

Gifts of the Holy Spirit • *The abilities or capacities given by the Holy Spirit that make it possible to do what God asks*

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

As a parent, you are often the first one to notice changes your child goes through. You might notice your child is more sensitive than usual or perhaps seems a bit withdrawn. As changes in mind, body, and spirit happen, acknowledge them in a positive way so that your child has an easier time embracing the changes. For example, you might tell your child that it's a grown-up thing to take time to oneself to think but that you are always there to talk.

SAY: I have been noticing lately how much you are growing up. Each day, you become more of the person God has intended you to be. I'm proud of you, and I thank God for the work he is doing in your life. I'm always here to answer questions about changes you're noticing.

Use this time as an opportunity to discuss milestones in your child's life and reflect on his or her growth. Use the blackline master to spark a discussion about what your child believes to be God's plan for him or her.

SAY: God has a purpose for you, and he will reveal it in his own time. Know that God loves you just as you are, and so do I.



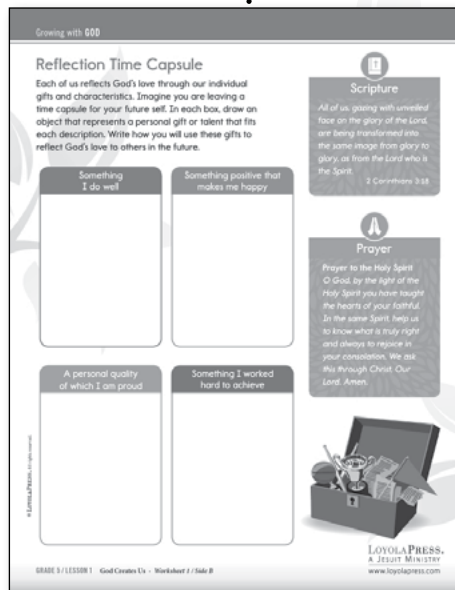
Bringing the Lesson Home *(continued)*

STEP 2 REFLECT & RESPOND

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

SAY: The gifts God has given you are unique, and he calls you to use your gifts to reflect his love toward others. Invite your child to reflect on God's love. Validate those observations, and express gratitude for specific strengths your child has been given. Discuss ways that other people have reflected God's love toward your child or your whole family.

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 "Reflection Time Capsule" and is part of the "Growing with GOD" series. It contains four boxes for reflection: "Something I do well", "Something positive that makes me happy", "A personal quality of which I am proud", and "Something I worked hard to achieve". It also includes a "Scripture" section with a quote from 2 Corinthians 3:18 and a "Prayer" section with a prayer to the Holy Spirit. At the bottom right, there is an illustration of a treasure chest and the text "LOYOLAPRESS, A JESUIT MINISTRY" and "www.loyolapress.com".



Pray Together

Heavenly Father, help us to embrace the changes in our lives as they happen so that we may become the people you have created us to be.

