

LESSON 3
Friendship
and Bullying



In This Lesson

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What the Church Says About

Education

The task of education is to make us sense that the world and society are also our home; it trains us how to live together in this greater home.

Pope Francis,
Amoris Laetitia, 276 (2016)

The Spirit of Generosity

Parents of third-graders often begin to hear stories of bullying or of groups of children intentionally excluding others from activities. No parent wants to believe his or her child is capable of this type of behavior. However, for some children, the desire to be accepted by peers or the fear of social isolation may lead to clouded judgment and bad decisions. And while empathy comes easily to some children, others may need additional, more structured support in learning how to consider the feelings of others. It is important to remember that third-graders are still developing important emotional and social skills and that lapses in judgment are not uncommon at this age.

We can teach our children that when we show empathy and hospitality toward all people, we make our world a more welcoming home for everyone.

The good news is that third-graders tend to be observant and eager to learn. Children benefit from seeing living examples of friendship, hospitality, and empathy in their lives. As a parent, you can't control the behavior of others (or their children), but you can continue to model consistent Christian love, care, and respect for all people. You can give your child opportunities to join you in service of others so he or she learns the value of connection, generosity, and kindness. You can also talk openly with your child about how to address difficult social situations that may arise at school, and you can build empathy skills by asking your child to imagine how another children might be feeling. Limiting your child's access to social media will help ensure that your child does not experience or become influenced by negative online activity.



3 minute
RETREAT

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.

Acts of the Apostles 2:42

Reflection

Our loving God has created us and given us to one another because we thrive when we are in healthy relationships. As Christians, we are called to shine the light of God's love on all people in the church family and in the larger community, always treating one another with care and dignity. We give thanks to God for his abiding grace as we celebrate the Eucharist and offer daily prayer and acts of faithfulness.

Questions

What steps can I take to be more devoted to the Church, to prayer, and to the celebration of the Eucharist? How do I help my child feel a sense of love and belonging at home and in the church community?



Prayer

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

Loving God, help me be open to your grace so I may shine the light of love in all that I say and do.

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

Spiritual Send your child off to school each day with a blessing. Express your sincere prayer that he or she may look for ways to share God's love with others throughout the day, and pray that others do the same.

Social Help your child become mindful of how empathy, kindness, and generosity bring about a peaceful frame of mind and deeper connection to God. At breakfast, ask your child to think of someone at school who might need kindness. Invite your child to think of a small way to help that person or bring him or her joy.

Physical A full stomach, warmth, clean and dry clothes, and a neat and tidy appearance all make people feel good physically. Teach your child an attitude of gratitude for



these small things in life that we may take for granted at times. Encourage your child to care for his or her own physical needs by making a healthy snack, bathing regularly, and dressing appropriately for the weather.

Safe and Sacred at Home



The Joy of Discipleship (Loyola Press)
by Pope Francis

This is the great mission of the family: to make room for Jesus who is coming, to welcome Jesus in the family, in each member: children, husband, wife, grandparents. . . . Jesus is there. Welcome him there, in order that he grow spiritually in the family.

Big Ideas

In Lesson 3, your child will:

- demonstrate understanding that God loves us and values each person.
- determine how to show a welcoming spirit.
- define *mercy*, *hospitality*, and *empathy*.

Words to Know

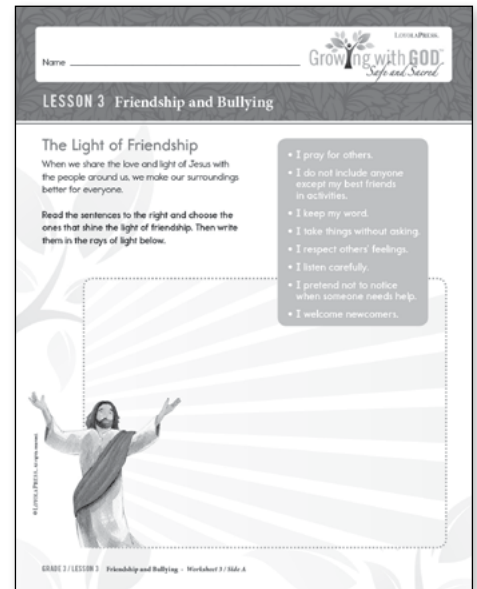
mercy · *An attitude of kindness and forgiveness*

hospitality · *The friendly and generous welcome and reception of others*

empathy · *The ability to understand and share the feelings of another person*

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



You are a living example to your child in valuing every person and showing friendship to others. Talk to your child about what it means to shine the light of God's love into the lives of others.

SAY: Any kindness you do for someone, no matter how small, reveals God's love to that person. Even something as small as paying a sincere compliment or giving up your seat for someone else is a way that you can shine God's light and brighten someone's day.

Use the blackline master to start a discussion about random acts of kindness and the effect they may have on people. Share a time when someone did you an unexpected kindness and what it meant to you.

SAY: Pay attention to the feelings of others. When you are moved to do something kind for someone, do not hesitate to do it.

Bringing the Lesson Home *(continued)*

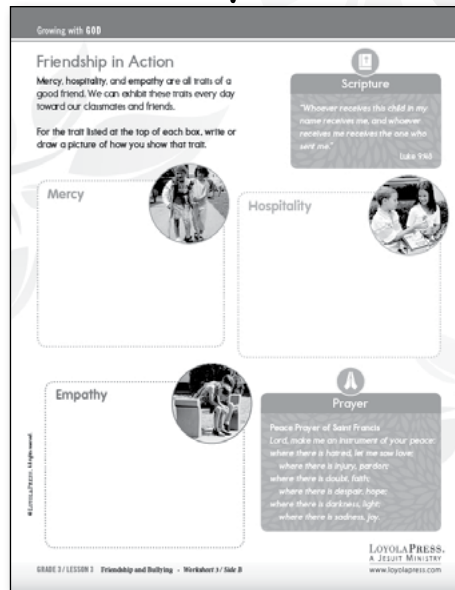
STEP 2 REFLECT & RESPOND

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

SAY: Showing a welcoming spirit to others makes our world a better home for all people living in it.

Use this as an opportunity to talk about how your child or other members of your family have been shown mercy, shown hospitality, or given empathy. Discuss the impact of those actions.

SAY: Let us pray together. Pray the prayer from the Pray Together feature or a prayer of your own. Begin and end the prayer with the Sign of the Cross.



Pray Together

Heavenly Father, help us remember that all people have dignity because they are your creations. May we treat them with the same welcoming spirit of love, hospitality, mercy, and empathy that you have shown the world through your Son, Jesus Christ.

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

