

**LESSON 3**  
**Friendship**  
**and Bullying**



**In This Lesson**

**For You**                      **Pages 1–2**

- Practicing Empathy
- 3-Minute Retreat
- Lead Your Child to Grow with God
- Safe and Sacred at Home

**For You and Your Child**                      **Pages 3–4**

- With Your Child: Bringing the Lesson Home
- Pray Together



**What the Church Says About**

*Living in Community*

**Love of neighbor is inseparable from love for God.**

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1878*

**Practicing Empathy**

Navigating relationships can be difficult for adolescents. Friendships become more complicated as young people grow and change. Your child’s desire for independence may cause conflicts where none existed before. As a parent, you naturally want to solve your child’s problems and protect him or her from pain and hurt.

**Help your child recognize the qualities of healthy relationships and practice strategies for achieving them instead of focusing on the specific details of a conflict he or she is experiencing.**

When your child is struggling with a friendship, ask open-ended questions to discover his or her perspective on the situation. Encourage empathy by guiding your child to reflect on how the other child may be feeling. Invite your child to consider ways he or she could show compassion in the situation. Gaining perspective can be useful for diffusing the emotion of a situation and will allow your child to see that often there is more going on that we know. By focusing on ways to exercise patience and self-control in difficult circumstances, you can help your child make better choices when interacting with others. Guide your child to see that words spoken in anger can have a lasting impact on relationships. Discuss strategies for creating pauses, such as taking a few deep breaths or walking away from highly charged situations. Remember that you are your child’s first and best teacher. When you demonstrate the love and compassion you want your child to show others, you model the best possible way in which to live.



3 minute  
RETREAT

***In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.***

Galatians 5:22–23

### **Reflection**

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit are among the characteristics we hope to instill in our children. It is humbling to recognize that these graces are open to us when we accept God’s love into our lives and live according to his will. Through our words and actions, we can model for our children what it means to listen to and obey the Holy Spirit. Our example demonstrates the power and grace of the Holy Spirit at work.

### **Questions**

How are the Fruits of the Holy Spirit alive in my life? What can I do to foster the Fruits of the Spirit in my child?



### **Prayer**

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

*Holy Spirit, help me follow and obey you so that everything I say and do is loving and kind.*

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

**Spiritual** Choose one of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit to highlight in your home each week. Guide family members to recognize that the Fruits of the Holy Spirit are the qualities we exhibit when we listen to and obey the Holy Spirit, who guides us to all that is holy. As a family, watch for and acknowledge times when you see these qualities in one another.

**Social** Have a regular family game night. Use the time as a way to focus on lessons of fairness, kindness, and respect. Encourage all family members to be supportive whether they win or lose.



**Physical** Encourage family members to attend one another’s activities and events. Model how to be a supportive and encouraging audience member and a “good sport” for all those who are participating.

### **Safe and Sacred at Home**



*Love Will Steer Me True* (Loyola Press)  
by Jane Knuth, Ellen Knuth

[The Rosary] is what Catholics use to meditate on the events of Jesus’ life through the eyes of his mother, Mary. It is a symbol of what I really want to give my daughter—except God isn’t gift-able. God is not an object, nor is God an idea. God is a being. I can introduce these two to each other, but I can’t start their conversation.

## Big Ideas

### In Lesson 3, your child will:

- demonstrate understanding that words can hurt others.
- discuss how strong, healthy relationships are built on respect.
- use empathy.
- define *empathy*, *compassion*, *respect*, and *self-esteem*.

### Words to Know

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

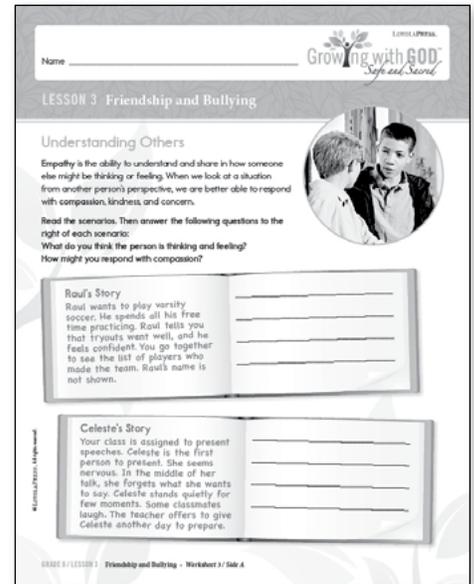
**compassion** · *Kindness and concern for the feelings of others*

**respect** · *An attitude and understanding that everyone is loved and created by God and should be treated well*

**self-esteem** · *A positive belief about one's own worth and abilities*

## 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

When talking with your child about friendships, take a moment to think back to your days in sixth grade. It can be easy to forget how much peer relationships factor into a young person's sense of self. As you work through this lesson, try to balance your broader understanding of relationships with your child's more intensely focused perspective.



**SAY:** Now that you are in sixth grade, you are interacting with many more people. Some are friends and some are people you may not know very well. We don't always understand why people behave the way they do. What's most important is that we remember we are called to treat others with kindness and respect, even when it is not easy.

Use Side A of the worksheet to talk with your child about empathy. Invite your child to share his or her responses to each story and offer ideas of your own.

# Bringing the Lesson Home *(continued)*

## STEP 2 REFLECT & RESPOND

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

**SAY:** Sometimes we act in mean or hurtful ways toward our friends and family and cause them pain. We need to consider how our behavior affects others and practice self-control.

Invite your child to share the profile of his or her future self. Point out some ways you already see your child practicing empathy and compassion for others and encourage him or her to continue to do so. Use the blackline master to spark a discussion about how words have the power to build up relationships or break them apart.

**SAY:** Let us pray together. 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.

**Scripture**  
For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control. — 2 Timothy 1:7

**Share God's Grace**  
We are called to share God's grace with others. We can do this through acts of kindness and love in our everyday lives.  
Imagine it is five years in the future. You have become known for your empathy and compassion. Complete the following profile that describes your future self.

**Prayer**  
Hail Mary  
Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee,  
Blessed art thou among women  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

**Profile Form:**  
Nickname: \_\_\_\_\_  
Catchphrase/Motto: \_\_\_\_\_  
About Me: \_\_\_\_\_  
Examples of how I build up others with my words and actions:  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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### Pray Together

Jesus, thank you for showing us how to be loving and caring towards one another. Give us strength to be considerate of others and respond to them with compassion.

