

## ***A Note to Parents for Lesson 1***

This week we discussed the Safe Environment concept of safety and truth within the context of our religious education lessons. Our theme was the eighth commandment; **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.** We do not lie or gossip about others; we always tell the truth. We also discussed how God gave us parents to care for us and to keep us safe. We stressed that one of the blessings of family is sharing with one another and that honesty and truth are rules that God expects all of us to follow.

In all grades we urged the students to be honest in sharing their feelings with you. We discussed reasons why parents need to know how their children are feeling as well as where they are, who they are with, and what they are doing in order to keep them safe. Your child was instructed to tell you if he or she is feeling uncomfortable, threatened, unsafe or pressured to break any family rules.

Here are some tips on how to respond:

- Give your child your undivided attention.
- Use basic listening skills to show you are listening: making eye contact as he/she speaks, nodding, repeating what he said, asking questions to clarify, etc.
- Acknowledge your child's feelings. Empathize with your child's feelings even if you do not agree with her point of view. Start by naming the feeling, for example: "It sounds like you are feeling left out." "I can see you are frustrated." "You felt uncomfortable."
- Assure your child that you are glad he shared his feelings with you and that you will do what you can to help.
- Respond by taking action. If your child needs help looking at the situation from a different point of view, gently suggest alternative perspectives. For example, "Perhaps they didn't realize you wanted to join in." "Why do you suppose that makes you so sad?" "Are you feeling anything else besides anger?"
- If your child is in a bad situation that is out of her control, take action to change the situation. Help your child to talk to the person she is having trouble with. If that individual is an adult, intervene; express your concerns and set any necessary limits. If your child is feeling unsafe in a relationship with an adult, don't hesitate to make use of the resources in your community or through the Diocese of Scranton website at [www.dioceseofscranton.org](http://www.dioceseofscranton.org) and click on the Safe Environment page.
- Remind and convince your child that both you and Jesus love him no matter what.

*"Love rejoices in the truth..." 1 Corinthians 13:6*