

## ***VIRTUS: Safe Environment Children's Program***

### **Lesson 3 for Grades 3, 4 and 5:**

#### **Safety, Communication and Unconditional Love**

- Principle:** To identify risky behavior in adults. Specifically:
- Know the difference between unconditional love and love that has strings attached.
  - Reinforce safety rules and set rules for what gifts from adults are appropriate for a child to accept.

**Catechism:** *Man is obliged to follow the moral law, which urges him "to do what is good and avoid what is evil"(cf. GS 16). This law makes itself heard in his conscience.*  
**#1713**

*"To love is to will the good of another."(cf. Mk 7:21) All other affections have their source in this first movement of the human heart toward the good. Only the good can be loved. Passions "are evil if love is evil and good if it is good."*  
**#1766**

**Goal:** To assist educators, catechists, youth ministers, and other caring adults in teaching children how to prevent or reduce the risk of sexual abuse.

**Objectives:** To give children an understanding of unconditional love and to know and learn that if someone puts conditions on their love, that is not the kind of love God intended for us. Upon completion of this lesson, children should be better able to understand that:

- love requires respecting others and ourselves.
- we are called to love others as God and Jesus loves us.
- if we are being hurt or treated disrespectfully we should tell a trusted adult.
- the keeping secrets rule is that only good surprises should be kept secret.
- there is a distinction between a gift given from love and generosity and one that is given in secrecy, in which the rules for keeping secrets have been broken.

#### **Activity #1: Review and discuss the vocabulary words:**

- **Secrets** – something that is hidden from others or that is known only to one or to a few.
- **Surprise** – something that leaves a person feeling wonder, astonishment, or amazement, as at something unanticipated.
- **Confusing** – to cause to be unable to think clearly, to make unclear or incomprehensible.

- **Unconditional Love** – love that is given without any strings attached, being loved for just being one’s self.
- **Rule** – a principle or regulation governing conduct, action or procedure.
- **“Golden Rule”** – Jesus asked us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

**Activity #2: Love your neighbor BINGO:**

**Directions:** Ask the children to explain who our neighbor is by starting with their own backyard and working towards the example of the whole world as our neighbor.

When Jesus told us to “love God with all your heart” and to “love your neighbor as yourself,” he meant for us to show love unconditionally. That means that our neighbor does not have to do anything special – they don’t have to be deserving of our love:

- They don’t have to look or dress a certain way
- They don’t have to do everything we say
- They don’t have to be famous or popular or talented

**We are deserving of unconditional love.** Jesus meant the same unconditional love for us too. If someone tells you:

- “I won’t love you if you don’t do what I want.”
- “I only love you because you are (pretty, smart, strong etc.)”

If you have to prove that you deserve someone’s love... that is not unconditional and that is not what Jesus had in mind for us.

**How can I show love?** We can show love in many ways. In our church community, we show love when we offer each other the sign of peace. We show love when we help others, when we use kind words, when we follow the rules, when we pray for one another, and when we pray together. We show love to our friends in many of the same ways, and by sharing and playing together. In our families, we might show love by giving hugs, or being close. We also show love to our parents and those we trust by sharing our thoughts and feelings with them.

**Make copies of the BINGO cards and bring in enough M&Ms to cover the cards.**

Introduce the activity by reminding the students that a neighbor can be anyone – a friend, a family member, a teacher, someone we don’t even know. We are asked to love and care for all human beings, but the way we show love to each other may be different depending on the kind of relationship we have with them. Have the class identify ways to show love that would be appropriate in their family, with their friends, in the classroom, etc. Give each child a bingo card and some markers (M&Ms). Play a game of BINGO from each category, calling out ways that are appropriate to show love in each. Use Classroom BINGO, Family BINGO, Neighbor BINGO and Friends BINGO. Make sure the students understand that certain behaviors would not be appropriate in all categories with the exception of Family.

### **Activity # 3: Secrets and Surprises:**

**Directions:** Ask the children to shout out **YES** or **NO** to your statements. Explain each correct response.

#### **Are these Good Secrets or Surprises?**

- Planning a surprise birthday party
- Buying a special gift
- Not telling your parents that you broke a window
- Losing a tooth
- Lying to your parents
- Cleaning your room without being asked
- Breaking the rules, because someone told you to keep it a secret
- Hiding a gift until Christmas, birthday etc.
- Hiding a gift given to you with the condition that you do not tell your parents
- Not telling your parents where you are or who you are with
- Accepting money from a friend or neighbor without your parents' knowledge
- Praying for someone you know needs God's extra love

#### **Suggested prayer to end the lesson:**

My holy Angel Guardian,  
Ask the Lord to bless the journey that I undertake,  
That it may benefit the health of my soul and body;  
That I may reach its end,  
And that returning safe and sound,  
I may find my family in good health.  
Guard, guide, and preserve us throughout the day and night.  
Amen