

WHAT A GOOD FRIEND DOES

GRADES 4-6 - Lesson I (Year III, Day 4)

Goal: Students will learn the difference between treating others with respect and using others as a means to an end. This lesson also covers some basics of online safety and good online practices.

Lesson: Today's lesson is about friendship. Jesus was a friend to everyone: the sick, the healthy, men, women, the young, the old, the poor, and the rich. We should try to be like Jesus by being kind to all. We can all be good friends to each other! Remember that each and every person is created in the image of God.

Remind students that they should always treat each other with respect. Bring up social media, the internet, and other technology to explain how students should still treat others with respect and expect to be treated with respect on the internet.

Discussion:

- What does it mean to be a good friend?
- What are some of the qualities you like in friends?
- What are some of the qualities you try to have in yourself, in order to be a good friend?
- There are many factors that can make it difficult to be a good friend. We should follow the example of God in friendship; being a good friend means always doing what is best for the other person, even if it is not the very best thing for ourselves. Kids and teens spend so much of their time on instant electronic communication. Sometimes, it can be easier to disrespect each other online than it is in person. How often do they stop to think about what they are texting/posting/tweeting/snap-chatting and who they are doing it with? Remind them that even when we think we know another person's story, we don't really know everything that is going on. Even if we are really angry or sad, we shouldn't send rude messages to people. We don't know the full story or situation. This is why we shouldn't say or message anything when we are feeling frustrated or tired. We should wait until we are calm again to think about what we will say. That way, we will avoid saying things that we will later regret, and we won't hurt other people with our words. We have a responsibility to be kind to each other!

- Talk about how people can use their rights to do bad things. There are some people online who use their right to interact with other people in a dangerous or harmful way (this leads into the following conversation on internet safety).

Watch: [Online Privacy for Kids](#)

Activity: Ask students to think about:

- The last 5 texts on their phones
- The last post/tweet they read
- The last photo they instagrammed
- The first thing they said to their best friend when they got to school today

Much of the content we share through conversation or social media is positive and harmless, even fun. But, some of the content can be very hurtful. We all know of instances in which people have been hurt by gossip. Sometimes it can even go so far as to cause someone to change schools, be depressed, or even cause physical harm. What can we do to stop this cycle?

Watch: ["Video on Gossip"](#)

Discussion:

- Knowing that we are meant to reflect the great love and friendship of the Trinity, how might we not only stop gossiping ourselves, but also commit to making our classes, families and schools gossip free? How can we ask someone to stop gossiping? We can say that it makes us uncomfortable, or we can simply change the subject.
- Explain to students that doing something like this can help us grow in virtue. What is virtue? A virtue is a good habit.

Activity: Have students make a list of the five qualities of a friend they value as most important. After they have their list of five qualities, ask them to give themselves a rating on those same five qualities {1-10}. Ask God to make you a better friend! Tell students, "God wants to help you grow in virtue and be a better friend. We just have to ask Him!"

As an example, a student might not feel that he is not great at listening. However, by paying attention to his friend's words, and listening quietly, the student can practice being a great listener!

Activity: Students are asked to be investigative reporters. Instead of finding out gossip about people, they will be investigating their very best qualities. Break the class into pairs, preferably students who do not know each

other very well. Give them a list of questions and ask them to make up some of their own: What is your greatest accomplishment? If you could make a movie, what would it be about? What is your dream vacation location? What is your favorite sport? What country is your favorite meal from? What was your favorite children's book when you were a toddler?

Once students have completed their interviews, ask them to share what they have learned with the class. Remind them that it is always best to get to know people before making judgments about them. When we first see or meet new people, it is easy to recognize our differences. But, once we get to know someone personally—learn about them and where they come from—we begin to notice similarities that can build friendships. Remember that God made each and every person in His image. That means that showing love to others is a way to show love to God.

Watch: [Net Smartz](#)

Discussion:

- Why should we only share information online with those we have met in person?
- How can you stay safe online?
- What should you do if someone who you don't know is trying to get information from you online?

Prayer:

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy. Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy. Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.

Teachers' Note: *This day's activities correspond with the study of Human Trafficking for the older grades. Part of this discussion focused on keeping kids safe, particularly on the internet. Here are resources for internet safety for kids of all ages. Please review these and share them with your class parents as appropriate:*

Website with [teaching materials for all grade levels on internet safety](#) and keeping kids safe from traffickers. Includes handouts, exercise suggestions and online resources. From the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

[Questions to Ask to Prevent Gossip.](#)

[Project iGuardian](#) offers practical solutions for teens, parents, and educators for keeping kids safe from online sexual predators. Online resources as well as information on booking school presentations and a local tip line. Created by Department of Homeland Security.

Lesson adapted from the plans on the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Office of Life, Justice and Peace and the Nashville Dominicans "Virtues in Practice" Program