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God's Gift of Self



Family Time

Help Along the Way

Puberty can be a very confusing time for preteens. God provides help, love and support through family and friends. As preteens continue to mature, friendships become increasingly important. Friends can share many of the same or similar experiences. They can help young people sort through emotions and encourage healthy habits in dealing with and managing the changes being experienced during puberty. Yet the family is the best source of help and information about growing up. Children should be able to count on the love and support of their family, especially their parents, through all the ups and downs of these years.

The Church, especially your parish, can be a wonderful support as well. Through God's love and forgiveness celebrated in the sacraments, those experiencing the turmoil and excitement of puberty can find comfort and support. Family life and youth ministries in the parish can also help young people grow stronger in their faith as Catholics.

Family Blessings

Lord, Giver of Life, we praise you for how wonderful you created us. Help us recognize and respect with both our words and actions the beautiful person we each are. Amen.



Healthy Habits in the Home

Keep a family entertainment log. List the movies, shows, videos, etc. that each family member watches. Set aside time to go through the list as a family. Discuss the messages communicated through the various media. Evaluate how well those messages respect the dignity of the person.



Taking the Lesson Home

Plan time to practice respectful communication skills by learning to listen.

As a family, talk about each statement:

1. Give full attention to the person talking.
2. Make eye contact when talking.
3. Avoid interrupting the person talking.
4. Show interest in what is being said.
5. Clarify by asking questions respectfully.



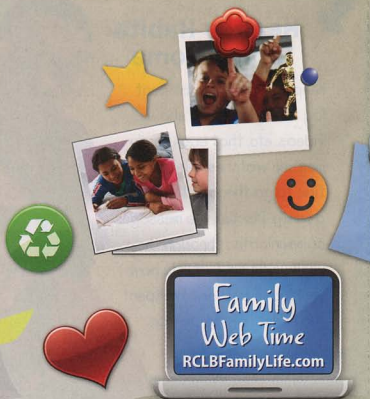
Making Connections

To help the family discuss the changes associated with puberty that preteens may begin to experience, have your child ask you, their parents, some questions about your experiences during puberty:

1. How did you handle difficulties experienced during puberty?
2. What was your biggest worry as you approached puberty?
3. What hopes and dreams do you have for me as I mature toward adulthood?

Faith on the Fridge

Do not harden your hearts when you quarrel, for you might miss hearing the voice of the Lord. Pass on to the next generation reverence and awe before God, who formed each of us by hand (based on Psalm 95).



Family
Web Time
RCLBFamilyLife.com

Communication

LESSON 3

Selling an Image

"Coming soon to a theater near you! Don't miss the wildest, funniest movie of the year: *The Howlers—Night of Revenge*."

Suddenly, the Howlers, three tough and wisecracking wolves, are everywhere. They've leaped from being Saturday morning cartoon characters to being movie stars. Their pictures appear on T-shirts, posters, web sites, magazine covers and the evening news. Their action figures are a sellout. The rap song "Lean and Mean—Howlers Rule" has just gone platinum.

The creators of the Howlers are delighted. The promoters and advertisers are thrilled. The Howlers are making them millions. But the Howlers are not just selling tickets and T-shirts, they are also selling an image. They are communicating specific value messages.

Messages Everywhere

What are the values communicated in the messages of some of the most popular characters or shows on television? What values do some of the most popular recording artists sing about? What values do you see or hear communicated through the news?

Part of growing up is learning to be able to separate messages about good values from the bad ones. Your family can help you learn and understand these messages. The Church also offers advice about movies, television shows and music based on her teachings. Sometimes the media communicate messages that degrade people by depicting the person as a thing or commodity, something to be used for profit or pleasure. When a person is used, they are abused. Messages that respect the dignity of the person, who is created in the image and likeness of God, communicate values worth living by.

This lesson will help you to:

- **examine** messages communicated by the media.
- **learn** the importance of honest communication.
- **practice** good listening skills.



What rules does your family have for watching television, listening to music or using the Internet?



Catholics Believe

Humans tend by nature to seek the truth. We are obligated to bear witness to the truth as revealed by God and known by reason. The Church helps us to know and live by the truth.

Honest Communication

Communication is an exchange of ideas, information or opinions between at least two people. You can communicate with words, images or actions. For example, you communicate every time you write a letter, send an e-mail, give a speech or shake someone's hand. Communication available to many people is called the mass media. It is communication intended for the general public. Mass media includes newspapers, magazines, television, the Internet, radio and audio and video discs. In each of these cases, words, images, sounds and/or actions are used to send a message.



Think about some of the messages you've heard recently from the mass media.

Communication Failure

"Be home in time for dinner!" Those were the last words that Jenny heard as she left the house. She knew that the movie was not over until 6 P.M., but if she told her mother that she was going to see a movie, she knew she would not be allowed to go. When she comes home late, she plans to make up an excuse. Maybe she could say that one of her friends got a bloody nose or something like that.

Jenny was not honest with her mother. She lied to her mother because she knew that she would not be allowed to see the movie if she told the truth. Lying is wrong and sinful. When people are not honest in their communication, they lose the trust of others and treat them disrespectfully.

Other examples of dishonest communication include bragging and gossip. Without some kind of trust, good communication is almost impossible. People who fail to tell the truth show disrespect for the truth. People who lie know that they are not trustworthy, and they begin to mistrust others too. Dishonesty hurts all relationships. This is why God gave us the Eighth Commandment. God created us to be truthful in all forms of communication.



Respect for both the listener and the speaker is an essential part of good and honest communication. Here are a few tips on how to be respectful in your communication:

1. **Listen**—When someone is talking to you, carefully pay attention to what they are telling you. Be able to repeat back to them what they say.
2. **Be open**—During the conversation be open to the ideas of others. Put your own strong opinions on hold in order to better understand what others are saying.
3. **Be honest**—Speak the truth. Say what you mean and mean what you say. But avoid expressions of hurtful words or actions.

When you speak, let the Holy Spirit guide your communication. Remember that Jesus was a great communicator. He always spoke the truth with love. When you are open in listening to others and honest when you talk, you too can speak the truth with love.

“Critique Your Conversation”

In the space provided, describe two conversations you had recently. Then rate them on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being respectful) and explain your rating.

Activity

Conversation	Rating	Explanation



Growing in Virtue

Honesty or truthfulness is the virtue that strengthens us to be true in our words and actions. Being honest with oneself, others and God can be difficult. But it can lead to respectful and truthful communication.

Catholic Family Album

Saint Bernadine of Siena was a Franciscan priest who lived in Italy during the late 14th century through early 15th century. Bernadine was known for his effective preaching about truthfulness. He preached against gossip, especially because of how it hurts relationships. Tradition holds that Bernadine often preached with a wooden board that had painted on it the name of Jesus in Latin. He did this to show honor for the truth of Jesus.



Practicing Good Listening Skills

Do you want to be an effective and truthful communicator? Then you need to be a good listener. Becoming a good listener takes practice. Here are five listening skills that can help you become a good listener:

1. Give full attention to the person who is talking.
2. Make eye contact with that person.
3. Avoid interrupting while the person is talking.
4. Show interest in what is being said.
5. Repeat the message back to the speaker to show that you clearly understand it.

Sometimes it is hard to know the real meaning of a person's words. Read each of the following situations and try to figure out the message behind the words or actions. Write a question for each situation that you will ask to help clarify the message. Discuss your answers with a partner.

1. When given the choice between a trip to the zoo or a swimming party at the city pool, everyone in the class except Brian voted to go swimming.

I will ask:

2. On TV, a beautiful woman with hair gently blowing in the breeze says, "Use my shampoo." In the background, a handsome man smiles at her.

I will ask:

3. When you get home from school, you find a note on the refrigerator door: "Hi! Gone to the dentist. Clothes in the dryer. See you at 4:30. Love, Mom."

I will ask:

Change

LESSON 4

Looking into the Future

"Look! Here's the stuff Amanda left for me," Ashley told her best friend, Nina. Ashley's older sister had moved away to go to college. She had left some things behind for Ashley. The ragged cardboard box held a stuffed pig wearing a funny hat, a couple of small posters, some music CDs and a notebook.

Ashley flipped open the notebook. "It's Amanda's ninth-grade diary!" she said. "Do you think it's okay to read it?" Nina asked. "Sure," Ashley answered. "Amanda told me this stuff might come in handy someday." The two girls began to read some of the entries:

October 25. It was awful. There was my best friend talking to me at the lockers, and I didn't hear a word she said. All I did was look at that ugly pimple on her chin. Now, I feel bad. A good friend would have ignored it. I will never let that happen again. Just the same, I know I'll just die if I ever get a pimple like that.

February 12. Jeremy is into weight lifting, which I suppose is all right. But he poses and acts like we're all supposed to faint when he walks by. I'd like him more if he'd just relax and stop trying to prove he's so tough and strong all the time. Mom calls it hormones. I call it childish. When are these guys going to grow up?

After reading a few more pages, Ashley and Nina were getting nervous. They could put the diary back in the box, but they could not put back what they had read. They talked about it for a long time.

"Growing up looks messy," said Ashley. "Maybe," sighed Nina. "But it sounds exciting, too. I can't wait to find out."

This lesson will help you to:

- **recognize** the changes that occur during puberty.
- **learn** the importance of dealing with the stress of maturing.
- **practice** ways to develop greater self-awareness.



What worries you most about growing up?



Growing in Virtue

Self-confidence, or **tenacity**, is believing in and valuing who you are, the unique individual who God created you to be. Developing healthy and holy habits is one way to build your self-confidence.

A Time of Change

Pimples, muscles, boyfriends and girlfriends—is that what growing up is all about? Puberty is a time of rapid growth and development that can begin in girls and in boys even before they reach their teen years. These changes happen gradually and include physical and emotional changes. The changes can cause stress. So learning what to expect can help you manage the changes when they begin to happen to you.

Physical Changes

Hormones have a big part to play in growing up. Testosterone, a male hormone, causes boys to grow hair on their faces and, sometimes, on their chests. Their voices begin to deepen. They develop broader shoulders and stronger muscles. Estrogen, a female hormone, helps girls develop wider hips and larger breasts. Both boys and girls develop hair on their underarms, on their legs and on the pubic area between the legs. Sweat and oil glands become more active and can cause perspiration odor and pimples.

Emotional Changes

The changes that come with puberty are also mental and emotional. You may find yourself being happy one moment and sad the next, or confident one moment and uncertain the next. Your changing emotions will affect the way you relate to your family, friends and even God. Friendships can get deeper and more serious during puberty. Even your interests may change, particularly your interest in the other sex. The timetable for these changes will be different for each person.



Think about some of the changes you have seen in older students at your school.

You will experience many changes during puberty. But some things will not change. You will still tend to be short or tall, athletic or quiet. During puberty you need to continue to eat healthy, exercise regularly and get plenty of rest. You will also need to take greater responsibility for your personal hygiene, for example, showering more frequently.

During puberty, self-confidence is especially important. One way to build confidence is to accept and honor who you are.

This means being persistent in being yourself, the way God created you. Honor yourself and God by taking good care of your mind, body and spirit. Good grooming and cleanliness can help too. But remember, the good in a person's heart and doing what is right, is what makes someone attractive. Do not be fooled by many of the images from the mass media that attempt to make you feel that you should look, feel and act in a certain way. Concentrate on becoming your best self and being healthy inside and out.

The Holy Spirit will help you make decisions to be the person God created you to be. Find a regular time to pray and develop your friendship with God. Remember that Jesus too experienced what it is like to grow up. Jesus is your model of how a person can mature with humility and confidence.

"Your Health Plan"

In the space provided, create your own health plan: a checklist of good habits to do on any given day. Work with a partner to brainstorm activity ideas.

Catholics Believe

Freedom is *not* doing whatever one pleases. True freedom happens when you seek friendship with God, by choosing what is true, good and beautiful with the aid of his grace.

Activity

Habit	Activity
<input type="checkbox"/> Study	
<input type="checkbox"/> Play	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hygiene	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rest	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exercise	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	

Catholic Family Album

Saint Clare of Assisi lived in Italy during the 12th century. At the age of eighteen, she heard St. Francis of Assisi preach. She decided God wanted her to give up her family wealth and live the Gospel as Francis and his followers were doing. With the help of Francis, Clare established a religious order known as the Order of Poor Ladies, or the Poor Clares. Clare said, "Go forth without fear, for he who created you has made you holy . . . Blessed be you, my God, for having created me."



Discovering Yourself

Many people write in a diary or in a journal. This helps them explore and reflect upon their world and their own lives. Keeping a journal is a good practice because it provides a record of one's thoughts and feelings at a particular moment. This can help you develop a sense of self-awareness. It can also help you track your changes and growth over a period of time. A journal can help you on your journey in faith. It is a good way to discover more about who you are and what God desires for you.

Practice keeping a journal by completing the thoughts below.

The thing I worry about the most is _____.

I will _____.

The best thing that happened to me this week was _____.

I will _____.

The thing I am most excited about is _____.

I will _____.

Dear God, today I feel _____.

Help me to _____.

REVIEWING UNIT 2

Name

Summary

Remember what you have learned in each of the lessons in God's Gift of Self.

LESSON 3: Communication

- Good and honest communication is a way to strengthen relationships.
- God created us to be truthful in all forms of communication.
- Being honest with oneself, others and God leads to respectful communication.

LESSON 4: Change

- Puberty is a time of rapid physical, emotional and spiritual growth.
- Friendships can get deeper and more serious during puberty.
- Having a clear image about who God created you to be is one sure way to build self-confidence.

Thinking It Through

1. What are some qualities of good and honest communication?

2. What do young people need to know most about puberty?

3. Why is prayer a good habit to develop as you are growing up and maturing?

Matching It Up

On each line, write the letter of the description in Column B that best goes with the term in Column A.

A

- Honesty
- Listening
- Mass media
- Puberty
- Self-confidence

B

- Giving full attention to the person who is talking
- Being persistent in honoring and respecting the way God created you
- Communication intended for the public
- Being truthful to oneself, others and God
- Period of rapid growth marked by the development of the reproductive system

REVIEWING UNIT 2

Name.....

Recalling Key Concepts

Circle the T if the statement is true. Circle the F if the statement is false.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. We communicate messages through a variety of media. | T | F |
| 2. Puberty occurs gradually and affects only a person's physical appearance. | T | F |
| 3. To communicate well, you should make eye contact. | T | F |
| 4. The mass media communicate both positive and negative messages. | T | F |
| 5. The changes during puberty happen exactly the same for everyone. | T | F |

Fill in the missing words in these sentences.

- is the female hormone that promotes physical changes in girls.
- The male hormone,, promotes the physical changes in boys.
- Jenny hurt her with her mother by lying about seeing a movie.
- The Commandment reveals to us that God created us to be truthful in all forms of communication.
- is being strong about being you, the way God created you.

Working Together

In a small group, select a popular advertisement directed toward young people. Identify its message. Then evaluate its effectiveness and how it promotes respect or disrespect for the dignity of the human person.