

Right Relationship Concept: Communication (Upper Level)

Learning Objectives:

- To help students understand that God created people and wants them to have safe and loving relationships.
- To instill in students the realization that safe and loving relationships are fostered by good communication.
- To impress on the students that they should feel they can tell secrets to a trusted and caring adult, ideally but not always, a parent.
- To challenge the students to tell parents or other trusted adults if they are treated in a way that makes them feel unsafe, threatened, disrespected or pressured to do things they know they should not do or do not want to do.

Outline:

- I. Opening Prayer
- II. God Made People to Need Each Other
- III. God Gave Us Parents and Other Trusted Adults to Care for Us (Core)**
- IV. God Gave Humans Speech So We Can Communicate (Core)**
- V. Families: Places We Can Communicate (Core)**
- VI. Secrets and Surprises (Core)**
- VII. Closing Prayer

Materials Needed:

- Whiteboard, chalkboard and chalk or flip chart and markers
- Pens, pencils for class members
- Handouts:
 - Grades 4 – 5: “I-feel Statements”
 - Grades 6 – 12: “I-feel Statements”
 - Grades 4 – 6: “Find the Hidden Phrase”
- Activities:
 - “I-feel Statements”: pens or pencils
 - “Find the Hidden Phrase”: pens or pencils

I. Opening Prayer:

In the + Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

*“You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother’s womb.
I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works, O Lord.” Amen.*

In the + Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

II. God Made People to Need Each Other

Discussion

- **Say:** *“Give examples of our needs and how these needs are met by other people.”*
- **Ask:** *“Can a person survive alone in the world?”*
- **Ask:** *“How do other persons help us grow and flourish?”*
- From this discussion, lead the students to understand that we all have needs that must be met by others and we establish relationships to help meet our needs and for us to meet the needs of others.

III. God Gave Us Parents and Other Trusted Adults to Care for Us (Core)

Discussion

- **Say:** *“God gave us parents and other adults we trust to care for us and keep us safe. If they do not know where we are, who we are with, what we are doing and how we are feeling, they will not be able to do the job God gave them to do.”*
- **Say:** *Sometimes we tire of their protectiveness but we need to keep in mind that adults have lived through adolescence already, sometimes safely, but sometimes with great pain and sometimes experiencing difficult consequences due to their choices. Because of their wisdom, gained through experience, adults may be able to see danger signs that we cannot see.”*

IV. God Gave Humans Speech So We Can Communicate (Core)

Discussion

- **Say:** *“Most of God’s creatures communicate with each other in some way by the sounds they make or the way they act.*
- *Of all of God’s creatures, only human beings were given the gift of speech.*
- *We can talk to each other. We can tell each other if we are hurt and need help. We can communicate, not only with our family members, but with others as well.*
- *We communicate differently with our family members and with people we trust than we do with people outside our families and with people we don’t know.”*

- **Say:** *“God gave human beings the gift of speech which allows us to use words to share our needs and feelings. We also communicate with our behavior and our body language. When we want to show we are listening, we look at the person who is talking. We show that we hear them by nodding, repeating what they say, saying “uh huh”, or asking a question. We share our feelings through our facial expressions, our body posture, and how we move. The better we are at sharing our feelings, the easier it is for our parents and other adults we trust to care for us and keep us safe.”*

- **Say:** *“It is important to know how to express feelings while respecting the rights and feelings of others. Here are some suggestions to use when expressing feelings:*
 - *Try to calm down and reflect before communicating feelings.*
 - *Because there is a tendency to reciprocate the feelings that are expressed, yelling, screaming, or name calling usually heightens negative feelings rather than improving communication. Try to remain calm and focused on the issues that are contributing to your feeling uncomfortable, intimidated, or afraid and the behaviors that need to be changed to resolve these feelings.*
 - *Be aware of nonverbal communication as well as what is being said. Gestures and tone of voice may express as much, if not more, than the actual words that are used.”*

Activities

Grades 4 - 5: “I-feel Statements”

Grades 6 – 12: “I-feel Statements”

- **Say:** *“I-feel statements are one way to understand what is happening to us and to help us understand what our options are.”*

- Give each student a copy of the “I-feel Statement” handout and ask them to complete the statements. Discuss.
 - **Say:** *Take responsibility for your own feelings and actions. Although you are not responsible for what others say or do, you are responsible for how you react. Try using “I feel” statements as a way of sharing your feelings respectfully.”*

V. Families: Places We Can Communicate (Core)

Discussion

- **Ask:** “Why Talk to your Parents?”
- **Say:** *“All of the creatures God created mature at different rates. Some, at birth, are completely independent and can fend for themselves. Others are not fully mature for years. At birth, we humans are completely dependent upon our parents, families, and other adults for our care and protection. We do not reach physical, emotional, psychological, or mental maturity for many years. Because we are created to be social creatures, we benefit from relationships with others for all of our lives. God created us to be part of a family, a nuclear family, an extended family, a spiritual family. God gave us parents, families, and other trusted adults to protect us and be part of our lives.”*
- **Say:** *“As we get older, we may feel like we do not need our parents as much as we used to need them. That is true; we do not need them as we did when we were very young. But parents and other adults we trust, such as teachers, youth or scout leaders, coaches, or friend’s parents, continue to play important roles in our lives by helping to keep us safe and helping us grow. Parents and other trusted adults are vital in passing on to us our Catholic faith especially today when secularism is increasing its influence throughout our society.”*
- **Say:** *“Talk to your parents and other adults you trust. Keep them informed. Share your feelings and concerns with them, especially if you feel unsafe, threatened, disrespected or pressured to do things you know you should not do or do not want to do.”*

VI. Secrets and Surprises (Core)

Discussion

- **Ask:** “Who likes surprises?” Acceptable answers will vary. **Say:** *“Most everyone enjoys a surprise.”*

- **Ask:** “What is the difference between a surprise and a secret? After the students express their ideas, **say:** “A surprise is something good that we wait to share with someone later but a secret is something that we hide from others.”
- **Say:** “It’s good to share surprises with our families but we should never keep secrets from our parents or from other adults we trust about things that make us feel unsafe, threatened, disrespected or pressured to do things we know we should not do or do not want to do.”
- **Say:** “If someone does something to us or to someone else that makes us feel unsafe, threatened, disrespected or pressured to do things we know we should not do or do not want to do, we should continue telling trusted adults until one of them understands how we feel and does something to make us feel comfortable or safe.”
- **Say:** “God gave us adults we trust to love and care for us and to protect us from harm. We can share everything with them.”

Activity

Grades 4 – 6: “Find the Hidden Phrase”

- Hand out the “Find the Hidden Phrase” worksheet and have the students use the word bank to complete the sentences. Then, by copying the letters within the boxes, find the hidden message.

VII. Closing Prayer

Pray a litany of thanks for all God’s people using the response: “***Bless them, we are grateful.***”

In the + Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Father, your Spirit speaks to us through your Word to tell us how much you love us and want us to be happy. Please give us the courage to share our feelings with people we trust.

In the + Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.