

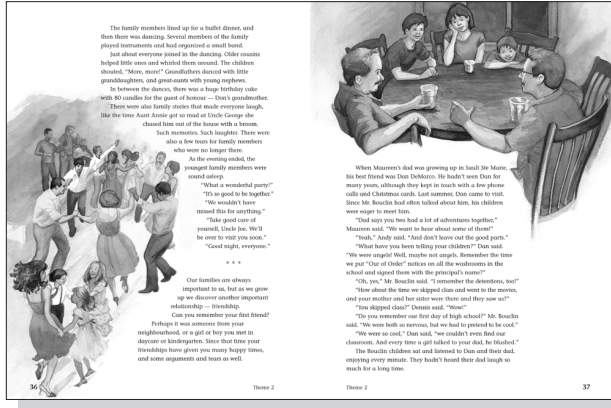
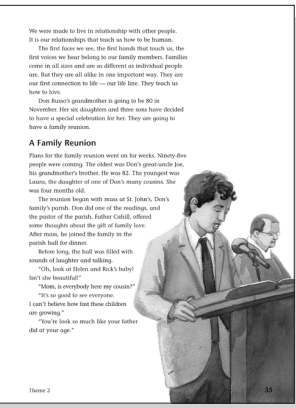
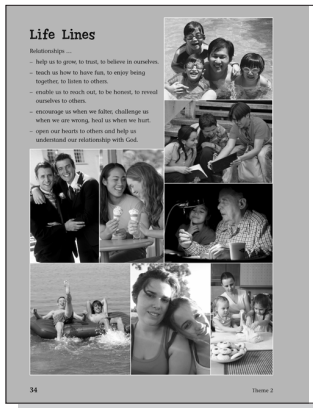
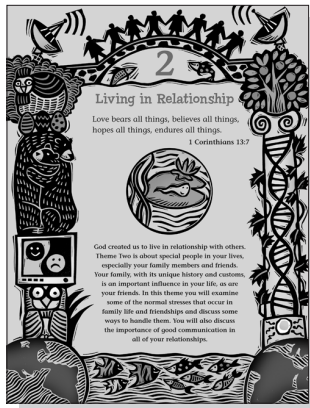
# Living in Relationship

## Topic 1

### Life Lines

*No one can develop freely in this world and find a full life without feeling understood by at least one person.*

Paul Tournier



## Expectations

The students will:

- explain the importance of relationships in the lives of each person.
- recognize and appreciate the value of their relationships with family members and friends.
- understand the connections between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours and how they can interact and influence each other.
- identify people and resources to support mental health and addiction issues.

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## Note to the Teacher

We need relationships with other people. This central human characteristic of seeking contact with others is evident at birth and remains a powerful influence throughout our lives. Topic 1 highlights the value of relationships and the pleasure of acceptance and belonging. Two stories are included in the topic: one is about a family reunion, the other about a friendship of many years.

This topic serves as a bridge from Theme One. You may want to remind the students of the story of the orphanage children from Topic 1 in Theme One. It was because of their contact with the women who lived in the institution that the children developed and thrived. Relationship was the key to their progress.

As the students are well aware, relationships are also sources of stress in our lives. Some students may have experienced difficult disruptions in their home life or ongoing problems with friendship. These aspects of relationship are addressed in later topics. But it is always important to offer a message of hope, especially to those who have experienced pain and loss. Relationships with family members and friends can be, and are for many people, a source of great joy.

In grade 5, students learned to recognize the signs of mental health problems and limits to their role in helping others. To further appreciate the complexities of relationships, in this lesson, students will also learn to understand how thoughts, feelings, and behaviours influence mental health and to identify resources to support mental health and addiction issues.

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## Important Words

- *relationship*

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## Materials/Preparation

- Send the Theme Two family letter home with the students.
- Several days before you present this topic, send home BLM #4, Friendship Interview, with the students, and ask them to bring it back so that they can share what they learned as a class. Be sure to tell them that they can interview a parent, another older relative, or an adult friend of the family.
- Compile a list of local professional resources for students to use for mental health needs (this might include school-based personnel such as social workers, psychologists, youth workers; community-based groups such as local Catholic Family Services; parish resources including priests, youth minister, etc.)

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## Program Resources

- Living in Relationship (Picture Chart, p. 9, student book, p. 33)
- Relationships (Picture Chart, p. 10, student book, p. 34)
- Student Book, pp. 33 – 37
- Family Connections (Life-Lines)
- BLM #4 — Friendship Interview
- BLM #4.1 — Finding Help

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## Curriculum Connections

This topic offers a connection to Theme 1, “Love is from God,” and Theme 2, “You are the light of the world,” of *You Shall Be My Witnesses* from the *Born of the Spirit* catechetical program.

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## Assessment

- For assessment suggestions for Theme Two, see Appendix A, pp. 226, 228, 234 – 235

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## Introducing Theme Two

Display the Picture Chart, “Living in Relationship,” and invite the students to respond to the scripture passage and text that introduce Theme Two. You might ask them:

- What does the title of this theme mean? (our lives are connected to the lives of others; we are social creatures; God created us to share life and love with others)
- Who is St. Paul? (You might explain that St. Paul was one of the earliest Christian missionaries. He was Jewish and in his earlier life had persecuted the Christians. After his conversion, he became an apostle and spent the rest of his life spreading the good news about Jesus.)
- Who are the Corinthians? (You might explain that Corinth is a city in Greece that St. Paul first visited around 51 A.D. He founded a Christian community in Corinth and wrote several letters to the Corinthians in later years. In his first letter to them, he was worried about the difficulties they were having in their relationships among each other and gave them advice on how to live together as a Christian community.)
- What do these words from St. Paul tell you about love? (real love is strong; real love lasts even when there are difficulties; real love is always hopeful and faithful)
- Why is this kind of strong, faithful love so difficult sometimes? (at times we get angry and frustrated with people we love; we forget how important forgiveness is; sometimes we think too much about ourselves and not enough about others)

- How can we strengthen our love for our family members and for our friends? (ask God to help us; admit when we have been unloving and apologize; try to find an opportunity each day to do something loving for the people we care about)
- What do you think we will be learning about in this part of *Fully Alive*?

If you haven't already done so, make sure you send home with the students, BLM #4, "Friendship Interview," before beginning We Experience.

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## *We Experience*

Display the Picture Chart, "Relationships," and invite the students' response. Read the text together and encourage them to identify some of the relationship qualities shown in the photographs. You might ask them:

- Can you think of examples that illustrate the statements we read about relationships? Something a friend or family member did for you? Something you did for a friend or family member?
- Why do we all need other people in our lives? (we need to share our thoughts and feelings with others; without relationships, we would become self-centred and dissatisfied with our lives; without relationships, we would not learn to love others; we would be lonely)
- Why is this topic called "Life Lines"? (our lives are connected to those of other people; we can not become fully human without others; we couldn't get along without the presence of other people)

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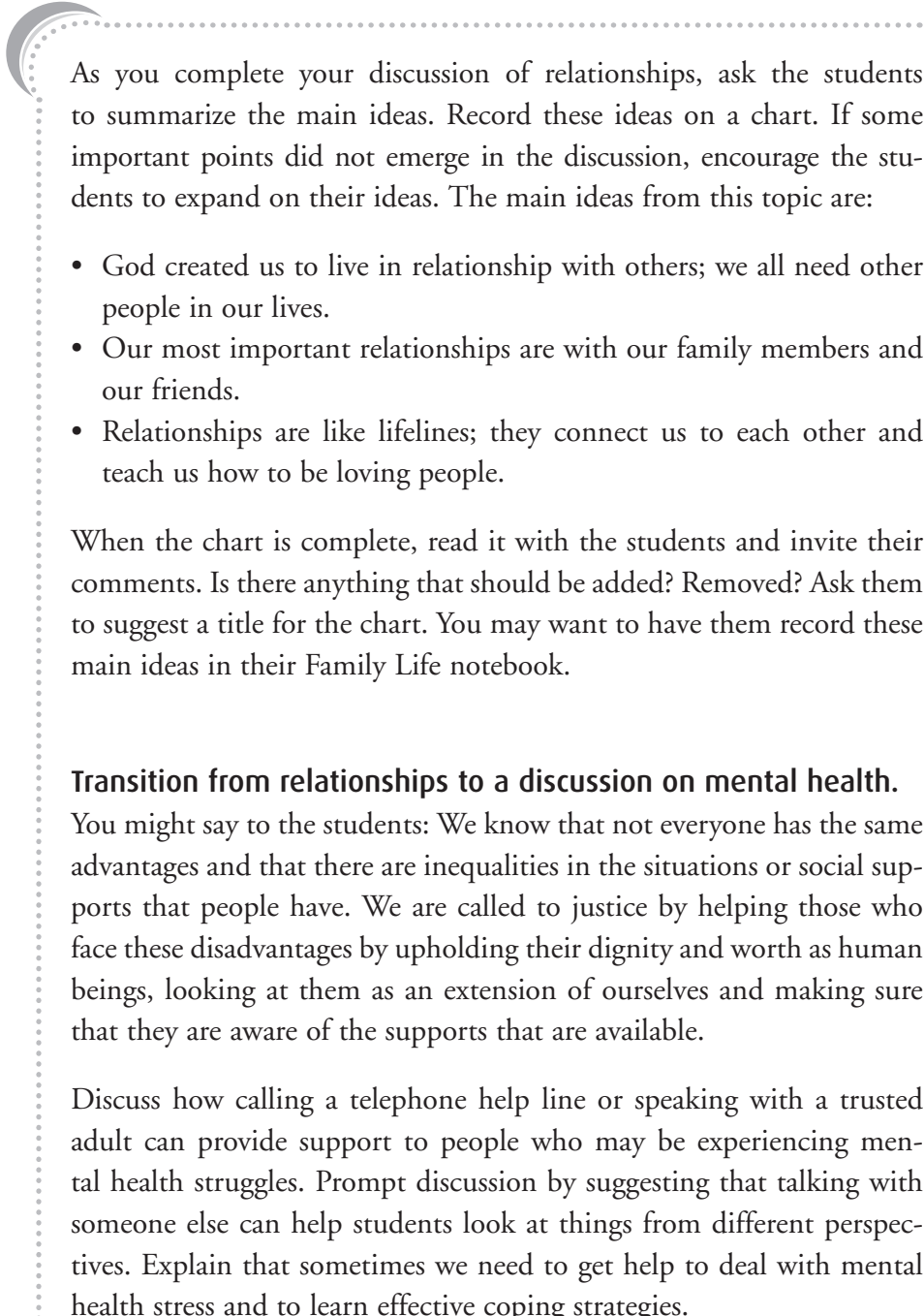
## *We Discover*

Read together the story, "A Family Reunion," (pages 35 – 36), and invite the students' response.

- In what ways did these family members show their pleasure at being together? (e.g., talking, laughing, sharing memories, making plans to visit, showing an interest in each other)
- Why is it important for family members to gather, not just for special occasions, but for regular activities, like eating together, talking about the events of the day, going to mass together on Sunday? (family members need to spend time together and share experiences; important relationships need time and attention from each member of the family; praying together strengthens family love)
- Have you ever been part of a family reunion? What was it like?

Continue by reading together the story about friendship (bottom of page 36 – 37) and invite the students' response. You might ask them:

- How can you tell that Mr. Bouclin and Dan DeMarco were good friends when they were young? (they spent a lot of time together; they had fun together; they like to tease each other)
- Can you imagine a reunion with your friends ten years from now? What memories would you share? (You could also tell the students something about your own friendship memories.)



As you complete your discussion of relationships, ask the students to summarize the main ideas. Record these ideas on a chart. If some important points did not emerge in the discussion, encourage the students to expand on their ideas. The main ideas from this topic are:

- God created us to live in relationship with others; we all need other people in our lives.
- Our most important relationships are with our family members and our friends.
- Relationships are like lifelines; they connect us to each other and teach us how to be loving people.

When the chart is complete, read it with the students and invite their comments. Is there anything that should be added? Removed? Ask them to suggest a title for the chart. You may want to have them record these main ideas in their Family Life notebook.

### **Transition from relationships to a discussion on mental health.**

You might say to the students: We know that not everyone has the same advantages and that there are inequalities in the situations or social supports that people have. We are called to justice by helping those who face these disadvantages by upholding their dignity and worth as human beings, looking at them as an extension of ourselves and making sure that they are aware of the supports that are available.

Discuss how calling a telephone help line or speaking with a trusted adult can provide support to people who may be experiencing mental health struggles. Prompt discussion by suggesting that talking with someone else can help students look at things from different perspectives. Explain that sometimes we need to get help to deal with mental health stress and to learn effective coping strategies.

Continue by saying “We’ve talked about people, resources and places to go for help when someone is struggling with different issues such as substance use and addictions. Sometimes people experience overwhelming feelings that they are not able to manage on their own. When this happens, they may need to get help from a professional who is trained to provide specific types of support to those who are experiencing mental health issues or who have a diagnosed mental illness. What are some examples of professional supports in our school and community? Responses will vary according to local resources.

Reflect with the students: We have discussed how life is a gift and positive mental health is part of that gift. We have a responsibility to care for this gift. Learning to take care for your mental health involves learning skills that are honed through practice and that develop over time. It is important to understand the connections between our thoughts, our feelings, and our behaviours and how they can interact and influence each other. In any given situation, our thoughts and feelings can impact our behaviour. Let’s say, for example, that you overhear some friends talking about going to the park together. You haven’t been invited to join. What response could you have? (walk away; get angry and call your friends names; go and hang out with other friends; go to the park anyway; cry; pray; take a deep breath). What strategies can you use to counter negative thoughts so that you can better manage your feelings and actions? Student responses may vary. If they don’t mention prayer (such as the Serenity Prayer), or Christian meditation, discuss these as possibilities with them.

Discuss with students how countering negative thoughts with positive action often leads to more positive outcomes. Using the park example above, if the student mentions to one of the friends that they felt left out, they may discover that the friend thought they were already invited. It was simply an oversight.

When the above conversation is completed, have students complete BLM # 4.1 – Finding Help. Make sure to coordinate any organizations you suggest with your board’s mental health lead.

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## *We Respond*

Invite the students to share their interviews with family members about old friends. What did they learn about friendship from these interviews? How many family members have kept in touch with their friends from school days? Are there any funny stories in the interviews to share with the class? What are the happiest friendship memories?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Finding Help

In groups, research one organization that supports people who experience mental illness. Fill in the chart below with your answers.

Possible organizations to research:

- Kids Help Phone
- Supports available at your school
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Another organization suggested by your teacher

Who do they support?	
What do they do?	
How can you contact them? (website/ email/text/phone)	
When would/could you access them?	
Why might a person need this resource?	