

# GABRIEL'S QUEST

## Keep Out

**Lesson Link:** There are consequences to sins in our lives. God wants us to be in friendship with Him, even when we sin.

Something was happening at the edge of the school grounds. A wooden fence had been put up in the shape of a large square. Signs said to *Keep Out*. Workers moved in and out of the view.

The students began to spread rumors. Someone said they were adding a tennis court. Or maybe it was a wading pool. Gabriel hoped they were digging for buried treasure. Sister Teresa said they were fixing the pipes. Gabriel and his friends thought that was boring. Sister Teresa told them to stay away from the fence.

Gabriel, Sean, Max, and Philip were kicking a soccer ball around at recess.

"It's too small to be a tennis court or a pool," Gabriel's friend Max said.

Gabriel noticed that the course of the soccer ball seemed to take them closer to the fence. There had been a lot of noise coming from behind the fence earlier. Now it seemed quiet.

A whistle blew from the playground. Sister Wendy waved and shouted, "Come away from there!"

"Okay!" the boys called back. Gabriel gave the ball a wild kick. The ball shot in the wrong direction. It flew over the fence. The boys froze where they were.

"Oh no!" Gabriel cried out. He looked over at Sister Wendy. She was talking to some other students.

"Did it go inside or fly over to the other side?" asked Max.

The boys circled around the edge of the fence. They were now on the side of the fence that faced away from the school. The ball was not there. A gate stood before them. A padlock hung loose from a latch. Someone had forgotten to lock it.



Sean said, "Let's go in, grab the ball, and get out fast." A sneaky look crossed his face. "Then we can see what they're doing in there."

The boys looked at one another.

"Go get the ball, Gabriel," Max said.

"Why me?" Gabriel asked.

"Because you're the one who kicked it in there," Philip said.

Gabriel started to argue, but the three boys glared at him.

"Hurry!" Sean said.

Gabriel took off the padlock and opened the gate just a little. No one was there. He saw the soccer ball sitting in a corner, just on the other side of a large cement slab. Something that looked like a round pipe with bolts and handles sat on top of the cement. Next to that was a big hole with a lot of pipes inside.

The other boys squeezed in behind Gabriel to look.

"Sister Teresa was right," groaned Philip. "Nothing but pipes."

Max gave Gabriel a push. "Go on."

Gabriel dashed in. He picked up the ball and turned back around. A man's voice came from the other side of the fence. "Who's in there?" the man asked.

Gabriel was scared. He started to run for the gate. Then he stumbled and fell onto the slab. His right hand sank into wet cement. The ball sprang from his left hand. It rolled to the hole and disappeared over the side. Gabriel scrambled to his feet and went around to the hole. The ball was at the bottom, in between the pipes.

"Forget it!" Sean whispered. Gabriel hurried out. Sean closed the gate and put the padlock back.

Just then, Mr. Norm, the school handyman, came around the corner. "What are you boys doing? You know you're not supposed to be here."

"Our soccer ball went over the fence," Max said to him.

"You should have told me," said Mr. Norm. He went to the gate and lifted the padlock. "The foreman was supposed to lock this," he said. Then he eyed the boys. "Did you go in there?" Before they could answer, he saw Gabriel's hands. There was cement on Gabriel's palm and fingers.

Gabriel let out a small gasp.

Mr. Norm pointed and asked, "What's that?"

Gabriel confessed.

In the school office, Sister Stephanie, the principal of the school, gave the boys a stern lecture. She warned them about disobeying. "It was dangerous. And the cement has to be redone to get rid of your handprint," she said. As a punishment, the boys would miss recess for a week.

Gabriel was the last to leave her office. "It's good that you told the truth," Sister Stephanie said. "We would have seen your handprint in the cement. That's a good thing to remember: sin *always* leaves a mark somewhere."

### Questions:

1. **When Mr. Norm saw Gabriel's hands, how did Gabriel respond?** (*He confessed.*)
2. **How is this different from or the same as Adam and Eve's response to God?** (*Adam and Eve blamed others.*)
3. **Sister Stephanie said that sin always leaves a mark. *Can you think of other stories where someone felt the consequence of their sin? What kind of mark did it leave?*** (*Answers may include Adam and Eve or other stories the students have heard or read.*)