



Respect Life | Lesson Plan Suggestions

These lesson plan suggestions are meant to help educators give the appropriate context and introduce the Respect Life Essay and Video contest.

Middle School

Central Message

Life is a gift. We are meant to care for life as a gift that God has given to us.

Opening Activity

- Begin by having the students write a list of everything and everyone that they value. Give them one minute to write what is most important to them.
- Give the students a few minutes to share with the class some of these values.
- Have the class participate and write what they think God values. (If they have not come up with number one, suggest: "each human person.")

Explanation

- God created each individual person with dignity.
- Dignity is defined as, "the quality of being worthy of honor or respect."
- God values each human life because each of us is created out of love by God and for God. This is why God sent Jesus Christ to save each of us.
- "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2258)

Optional Activity

Provide wrapping paper and gift boxes to each student. Have them carefully wrap the box to the best of their ability. When finished, have them place their gifts in the front of the room. At the end, ask some individual students which gift he or she would be most excited to open and why.

The goal here is to suggest that a well-wrapped gift means that the gift-giver deeply cares about how the gift is received.

Conversation

Facilitate a conversation around these questions:

- 1) What can you do to show that you respect the gift of life?
- 2) What do you think happens when people don't respect the gift of life?
- 3) How do you think would your life be different if more people respected life the way God intends?

Assignment

Introduce the Respect Life Video Contest and Theme: "Humanae Vitae: 50 Years Later"

The videos should be an original work submitted to the Diocese to by January 15, 2018 and should be less than 3 minutes in length or less. Videos may be submitted by individuals or groups online at:

<http://bit.ly/RLvideocontest2018>



High School

Central Message

Life is a gift. We are meant to care for life as a gift that God has given to us.

Opening Activity

Choose one of the following quotes and have the class discuss what stands out to them:

Mother Teresa

- "That special power of loving that belongs to a woman is seen most clearly when she becomes a mother. Motherhood is the gift of God to women. How grateful we must be to God for this wonderful gift that brings such joy to the whole world, women and men alike! Yet we can destroy this gift of motherhood, especially by the evil of abortion, but also by thinking that other things like jobs or positions are more important than loving, than giving oneself to others. No job, no plans, no possessions, no idea of "freedom" can take the place of love. So anything that destroys God's gift of motherhood destroys His most precious gift to women-- the ability to love as a woman."
- "It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish."
- "America needs no words from me to see how your decision in Roe v. Wade has deformed a great nation. The so-called right to abortion has pitted mothers against their children and women against men. It has shown violence and discord at the heart of the most intimate human relationships. It has aggravated the derogation of the father's role in an increasingly fatherless society. It has portrayed the greatest of gifts ~ a child ~ as a competitor, an intrusion, and an inconvenience. It has nominally accorded mothers unfettered dominion over the independent lives of their physically dependent sons and daughters. And in granting this unconscionable power, it has exposed many women to unjust and selfish demands from their husbands or other sexual partners. Human rights are not a privilege conferred by government. They are every human being's entitlement by virtue of his humanity. The right to life does not depend, and must not be declared to be contingent, on the pleasure of anyone else, not even a parent or a sovereign."
- "The greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion, which is war against the child. The mother doesn't learn to love, but kills to solve her own problems. Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want."

Pope Francis

- "All too often, as we know from experience, people do not choose life, they do not accept the 'Gospel of Life' but let themselves be led by ideologies and ways of thinking that block life, that do not respect life, because they are dictated by selfishness, self-interest, profit, power and pleasure, and not by love, by concern for the good of others....As a result, the living God is replaced by fleeting human idols which offer the intoxication of a flash of freedom, but in the end bring new forms of slavery and death."
- "The victims of this [throwaway] culture are precisely the weakest and most fragile human beings — the unborn, the poorest, the sick and elderly, the seriously handicapped, etc. — who are in danger of being 'thrown away,' expelled from a system that must be efficient at all costs....It is necessary to raise awareness and form the lay faithful, in whatever state,



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especially those engaged in the field of politics, so that they may think in accord with the Gospel and the social doctrine of the church and act consistently by dialoguing and collaborating with those who, in sincerity and intellectual honesty, share — if not the faith — at least a similar vision of mankind and society and its ethical consequences.

- “The right to life is the first human right. Abortion is killing someone that cannot defend him or herself.”
- “All of us must care for life, cherish life, with tenderness, warmth...to give life is to open (our) heart, and to care for life is to (give oneself) in tenderness and warmth for others, to have concern in my heart for others. Caring for life from the beginning to the end. What a simple thing, what a beautiful thing. So, go forth and don't be discouraged. Care for life. It's worth it.”

John Paul II

- “America you are beautiful...and blessed...The ultimate test of your greatness is the way you treat every human being, but especially the weakest and most defenseless. If you want equal justice for all and true freedom and lasting peace, then America, defend life.”
- “The new evangelization calls for followers of Christ who are unconditionally pro-life: who will acclaim, celebrate and serve the Gospel of life in every situation. A sign of hope is the increasing recognition that the dignity of human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil.”

Explanation

- God created each person with dignity.
- Ask the students to explain what free will means.
 - Does this mean that we can do anything we want?
 - What are the boundaries to our freedom? Who sets these boundaries?
- Explain the nature of laws.
 - We live in a free society and have a free will, but there are still restrictions as to what we can do. No law can change the fact that we have free will. Rather, laws place restrictions on behavior, which in turn should help to maintain civility and protect our rights as individuals and as a nation.
 - Christians. standards must go beyond the secular laws of the land. None of us have the right to do immoral acts. Though we are all sinners, committing murder in the name of freedom is unconscionable.
 - Just because something is legal does not mean that it is fair, just, and morally acceptable. When laws are unjust, we have the obligation and responsibility to speak out and try to bring about change, especially when those affected are defenseless.
- Relate free will to abortion and euthanasia.
 - Free will guarantees us the ability to act as we want but this doesn't make it right.
 - Our freedom exists so that we can flourish as children of God, not so that we can do whatever we want.
 - Our freedom exists so that we can choose the good and lay down our life.
- We have the responsibility as Christians to protect and defend the defenseless.



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- Explore what a hero is: one who freely chooses to give oneself for a greater purpose and sacrifice one's own desire for the greater good.

Conversation

Facilitate a conversation around these questions:

- 1) Have you been in a situation where people were arguing in support of abortion or the death penalty? How did you handle it?
- 2) What kind of message have you seen in the media: pro-life or pro-abortion?
- 3) What do you think are the best arguments in favor of abortion, the death penalty, or euthanasia?
- 4) What do you think are the best arguments for being pro-life?
- 5) How has society been changed by allowing abortion, the death penalty, and euthanasia?
- 6) What would be different about our society if more people respected life as God intended?

Assignment

Introduce the Respect Life Video/Essay Contest and Theme: "If life were more respected..."

The essays and videos should be an original piece submitted to the Diocese by January 15, 2017. Essays should be 500 words or less. Videos should be under 3 minutes in length. Videos may be submitted by individuals or groups online at: <http://bit.ly/RLvideocontest>. Essays may be submitted online at <http://bit.ly/RLessaycontest2018>.