

RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

GRADES 4-6 - Lesson II (Year III, Day 4)

Goal: Students will learn the difference between treating others with respect and using others as a means to an end. Activities will reinforce what each of our responsibilities is toward others. Topics will also include slavery and child labor.

Lesson: Today's lesson is about respecting human rights. Each and every person is created in the image of God. The Trinity means that in God there are three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This means that God is always living in perfect friendship within Himself. This is a wonderful mystery! Invite students to feel comfortable with the mysteries of our faith, while encouraging them to ask questions. Recall that God created us to be in friendship with others. When we use other people for our own gain, instead of treating them with love, we are choosing to distance ourselves from God.

Explain that slaves in early America were people who were considered by law as property. This means that slave owners were allowed to treat their slaves as objects, rather than as people. Their slaves were not given the rights that the slave owners, or other free people, had. In 1865, Congress passed the 13th Amendment which stated that slavery was illegal in the United States.

Unfortunately, even today, there are forms of slavery that go on in the country. Child labor and human trafficking are examples of modern day slavery.

Child labor is often defined as work that prevents children from living out a healthy childhood. It keeps them away from their potential and their dignity, and is harmful to their physical and mental development. Child labor refers to work that:

- is dangerous and harmful to children; and/or
- interferes with their schooling (International Labour Organization).

This is currently happening around the world, even in the United States. It is estimated that in 2021, approximately 27.6 million people were in forced labor (source: [Global Estimates of Modern Slavery](#)) . Explain to students that often, slaves either don't earn money for their work or are forced to remain against their will.

Talk about age appropriate rights such as the right to clean water and the right to an education.

Ask your students:

- What are some of the rights that we have? In our families? In school? In our country? Think about how some children are not able to receive an education and discuss why children have a right to be educated.
- How would you feel if your rights weren't protected?
- What are some ways that we can practice respecting each other's rights, right now?

Watch: [Modern slavery on Ghana's Lake Volta](#)

Discussion:

There are many factors that can make it difficult to treat each other equally and respect each other's rights. We should do what is best for the other person and love them the same way we love ourselves.

Knowing that we are meant to reflect the great love and friendship of the Trinity, how might we commit to standing up for each other's rights?

Activity: Have students make a list of five rights they value. Ask them to share with a classmate and discuss. Remind them that it's important that they be people who protect other people's rights too.

Prayer: Before praying, ask students for prayer intentions. If it hasn't been said, add that the class will also pray for those people who have been in slavery and who continue to be in slavery today. The students should also pray for themselves and their classmates to make good decisions when using the internet and social media.

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy. Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy. Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.

Lesson adapted from the plans on the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Office of Life, Justice and Peace and the Nashville Dominicans "Virtues in Practice" Program