

A LESSON ON PUTTING OTHERS FIRST

GRADES 4-6 – Life is a Gift - Lesson I (Year I, Day 2)

Goal: It is natural to want the very best things for ourselves. The Gospel, however, asks each of us to put the needs of others before our own. Students will explore the gift of life learning that generosity and selflessness are integral to living a Christian life.

Materials: Bible, flashcards, paper

Lesson: This lesson teaches the importance of selflessness and how the students can exercise this virtue in their lives. The greatest example of self-sacrificing love and selflessness in the history of the world is the death of Jesus on the cross in reparation for the sins of each person in the entire world.

Watch: [Selfishness vs. Selflessness](#) from catalyst (spark)

Discussion:

- What did the man in the video learn?
- How did he learn to be more selfless?
- Have you ever had an experience that encouraged you to put others before yourself?
- The man learned that his hands could be used to help others – what are some ways you can use your hands to serve others?

Read: Story of the Crucifixion (John 19:17-37)

Take a few minutes to talk about the crucifixion story. Point to the crucifix in your classroom and read the story, from the Gospel of John, aloud. Ask students to reflect for a few minutes on what it must have been like for the creator of the entire universe to allow Himself to be killed in such a barbaric way by people He could have so easily stopped.

Discussion:

- Why did Jesus choose to die as He did?
- Why didn't He stop His aggressors or show His might rather than succumb in humility?
- What did Jesus gain for us through His death?

- How grateful are we that Jesus died for us? How do we show it?
- What does it mean in our daily lives?
- What does self-sacrificing love mean? Have you ever seen any other examples of it?
- Must it always include giving your life? Or can it include giving parts of yourself?

Watch: [Kids decide between helping the Homeless or Ice Cream](#) from Meir Kay

Discussion:

- What sacrifice did these kids make?
- Did this act of generosity seem to bring them joy or make them sad? Why do you think that is?

Watch: [I'll Love You Forever](#) from CF Filmmaker or read the original "I'll love you forever" by Robert Munsch

Discussion:

- Is being a parent hard? What kind of sacrifices do parents make for their children?
- Why is a mother's love so inspiring?
- At the end of our lives, what do you think are the things that will matter most to us?
- Why is it worth making sacrifices for the sake of love?

Activity: "What's On Top"

In teams or table groups, have the students play the game: "What's On Top". For this game, each team will have two pieces of paper, one with Very Important written on it and the other with Less Important on it. Each group will have flashcards with different activities on them, such as 'invite someone to church' or 'play video games' (more ideas below). The teams will have to decide if each flashcard goes in Very Important or Less Important, but they do not have to rank from most important to least important. After all the cards are placed, check the cards. If they made a mistake, tell them how many are wrong and encourage them to find the mistakes themselves. The purpose of this activity is to introduce the students to the idea of putting others before yourself.

Flashcard ideas:

Very Important: Invite someone to church, Help Mom and Dad clean up after dinner, Help brother with homework, Collect food for charity, Sing a song for Grandma, Get an assist in basketball, Read a book to my sister, Pick up trash, Share with my friend

Less Important: Play video games, Buy myself a toy, Score a goal by myself, Go shopping for myself, Sing a solo in the school concert; Get the highest grade in the class.

Prayer:

*Bless my soul, O God, and grace it with kindness.
Deliver me from harsh judgment and careless speech.
Fill my heart with love for you and for my neighbor,
that all my words and actions shine with joy and comfort,
care, and understanding.
Make kindness the backdrop of my life.
Amen.*

Lesson adapted from the plans on the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Office of Life, Justice and Peace website