

A LESSON ON WELCOMING OTHERS

GRADES 7-9 -- Immigration - Lesson I (Year I, Day 1)

Goal: Students will learn that people are meant for community, which means loving others and treating them with respect both in theory and in reality. What does this look like in our culture? We explore the topic of immigration through the lens of building a Christian community.

Materials: Items that represent each student's heritage

Lesson: Immigrants and refugees are front-page news every day. There are good people on all sides of the debate attempting to find a fix for our broken immigration system in the US, and to provide refuge and aid for displaced persons world-wide. This topic gets to the heart of who we are not only as Christians, but as members of the human community.

The Church's teaching on the dignity of each human person should inform how we see and treat others in every circumstance. There are many people whose lives and dignity are not always understood or respected in our world today. There are also particular threats to human dignity that require our special attention. Throughout this Gospel of Life Week, we will be exploring several of these issues from the beginning of life to the end. Today, we will learn more about the Church's teaching on upholding the dignity of immigrants.

Watch: [CST 101 - Life and Dignity of the Human Person](#) from Catholic Relief Services

Discussion:

- Do you believe that you reflect the image of your mother and your father?
- Do you believe that you reflect the image of God?
- How do we reflect the image of God, our Heavenly Father? (*created to give and receive love!*)
- How do I treat people who are different from me?
- Isn't life more interesting because we are all different? Unique and unrepeatable.
- Why is it important that every person be treated with love and reverence?
- How can we uphold the dignity of every human person? As a society? Personally?

Watch: [Catholic Teaching on Welcoming Refugees](#) from Catholic Relief Services

Discussion:

- How is the Church's teaching on welcoming refugees...?
 - a) ancient
 - b) comprehensive
 - c) clear
 - d) beautiful
- Why should we not be afraid of welcoming immigrants and refugees?

Activity: Have students bring in an item that represents their heritage (i.e. an article of clothing, a piece of art) and share with the class. Talk about how beautiful it is that we each come from unique backgrounds and how this enriches our daily life. Ask the students: "What can we learn from different cultures? How can we learn to welcome those who are different from us?"

Watch: [El Deportado](#) (Optional)

This longer video (20 min) explores the dangers and experiences of people trying to cross the border illegally in Arizona and efforts of the Catholic Church to minister to them as human beings.

Activity:

[Refugee Role Play](#) - Students play that New York is being invaded by a neighboring state and must escape and reach a refugee camp.

[Applying for Asylum-hay](#) - Students learn about the burdens of applying for asylum in US by filling out an application in Pig Latin

These activities are taken from "[Energy of a Nation: Immigrants in America](#)" produced by the Advocates for Human Rights.

Prayer:

*Loving God, we thank you for creating all the people of the world
and for allowing us to learn from their cultures and beliefs.
Remind us to see your face when we meet new people for the first time.
Give us courage to welcome them and show them love and courtesy.
Grant safety to all immigrants and refugees who
leave their homes for a new land, looking for safety, peace, and opportunity for their families.*