

A LESSON ON HUMAN DIGNITY

GRADES 7-9 – Life is a Gift - Lesson I (Year I, Day 2)

Goal: Human life is a gift from God. Even when a person is small and vulnerable in the womb, life is sacred and needs to be protected. Students will learn that all human life begins at conception and is made in the image of God.

Lesson: The foundation of Catholic teaching on respect for human life is our belief in human dignity. Dignity is the special value we have as human beings. It is universal, inherent, and irrevocable. Recognition of the dignity of each human person leads us to protect and care for all, especially those who are weakest and most vulnerable.

Watch: [Human Dignity in Catholic Tradition](#) from Duquesne University

Discussion:

- What is human dignity?
- How is human dignity universal and irrevocable?
- What are some violations of human dignity?
- How can we respect the dignity of others?
- Who are we particularly called to help in society?

Human beings possess dignity from the first moment of life. Since human dignity informs our actions and care for others, it is so important for us to know when human life begins. Human life begins at conception, and therefore, even from its earliest moments human life must be protected and respected. We should have particular concern for protecting the lives of the unborn because they are not able to protect themselves.

Watch: [When Does a Human Life Begin?](#) from Catholic Answers

Discussion:

- What are the stages of a human organism?
- When does human life begin, according to science?
- How does science affect the way we think about abortion?

- What does the “capacity to develop” teach us about when human life begins?
- Why do you think people are hesitant to say when life begins?
- Is it ever ok at any stage of development of a human organism to end the life of that human organism?

Watch: [INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything](#) by the Sisters of Life

We all need to be reminded that our life is a gift, that our life matters, and that God made us good. Ask the students to imagine that they know someone who is doubting these truths. Ask them to share some ways they can let that person know his/her life matters. *(You are loved. You are chosen. Your worth doesn't depend on what you can do or how you look).* Remind students that their lives matter and they are gifts from God.

Prayer:

*Heavenly Father, I thank you today for the gift of my life,
and for the lives of all of my friends and classmates.*

I ask your blessing on all women who are expecting babies.

*May they see the beauty and joy of the life of their
unborn son or daughter.*

Help them to know they are heroes to their sons and daughters.

And, give me commitment to be a fearless leader for life in my school, my family, and my community.

Amen.

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