

OVERCOMING DIFFERENCES

GRADES 1-3- Lesson II

Goal:

Students should be able to identify as central to the Gospel Jesus' teaching to love others, recognize the inherent dignity of each person, celebrate the wonderful diversity of God's family, and know that racist ideas and prejudice are harmful to the Body of Christ.

Lesson:

God is present with each human being and because He is so good and so creative He made the human experience diverse and beautiful. God created the whole world and it contains mountains, deserts, beaches, tundras, etc. God has also raised up within all the areas of the world human cultures that look and act differently. Even though people all around the world may look, act, and talk differently that doesn't mean God is any less present to them or their lives are less sacred. We are called to love each other as God loves us which means honoring all people different from us as God would.

Bible Story:

[Jesus and the Samaritan
Woman](#)

Human dignity
is the same for
all human beings:
when I trample on
the dignity of
another, I am
trampling on my
own.



Discuss:

- The woman was surprised when Jesus spoke to her at the well, why? Jesus is a Jew and the woman is a Samaritan, these two groups do not talk to one another and often get in fights, but Jesus overlooked their differences and helped the woman because He loves her. He tells of times coming when people will worship God in all places and there will be no more division between the two groups. The Messiah is coming to bring all of God's children back together.
- Begin by listing on a piece of butcher block paper or the whiteboard some of the student's "favorite" people.
- Ask them each to draw a picture of their favorite person. You could also show pictures of famous people.
- Ask the students, "What makes a person, a person?"

"Every racist act. . . is a failure to acknowledge another person as a brother or sister, created in the image of God." – U.S. bishops, Open Wide Our Hearts

After some discussion about what makes a person, teach the students that we believe God creates every person in the image of God.

- This makes people very special. Every person has value and dignity because they are made in God's image and loved by God.
- This makes every one of us and every person in the world very special.
- Ask the students if they can imagine that God loves every person in the world.

Now, talk about how it feels when someone doesn't treat you with dignity or respect.

- Have you ever felt like someone wasn't listening to you?
- Or someone made you feel like you weren't very important?
- What does that feel like?

Some people do not recognize the dignity of others whose culture or color of skin is different from their own. When someone doesn't recognize our dignity because of our skin color, or because our family celebrates events or holidays differently, or comes from a different place in the country or the world, that person is wrong.

Watch: The story of [Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton](#), who is on the path to sainthood.

Today we are going to watch the story of one very holy man who was treated differently because of his skin color. But he knew he was loved by God and continued to listen to God's call in his life, even when others didn't listen to him and did not want to be near him

- How was Fr. Augustus treated by the people around him?
- Why did people treat Fr. Augustus differently?
- How did Fr. Augustus respond when he was treated badly by others?
- Did you know that sometimes people still treat others differently based on their skin color? Have you ever had that experience?
- What would you say to someone who was treating someone else poorly because of their skin color?

Prayer: *In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*

Loving Father,

Thank you for creating all the children of the world, who live in many lands,
have many traditions, and speak many languages.

Help me know that you made each of your children unique and that you love each of them.

Help me to be a friend to children who are different from me,
for we are all part of your family!

Amen.



open wide our hearts

the enduring call to love *a pastoral letter against racism*

This lesson was constructed with parts from the [USCCB's racism curriculum](#). Jesus and the Samaritan Woman was not included in their lessons.

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