

# OVERCOMING DIFFERENCES

## GRADES 4-6- Lesson II

### **Goal:**

Students should be able to recognize that the Beatitudes show us how to treat one another based on our dignity as human persons. Utilize the Beatitudes to see how Jesus wants us to treat others, and how witnesses of faith lived out the Beatitudes, start to understand the concept of social sin as it relates to injustice in the world. See how the Church exists in all cultures and the mass reflects those cultures all around the world. God is the author of life and all the diversity within it, so we should learn to celebrate the beauty and creativity of His creations.

### **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.

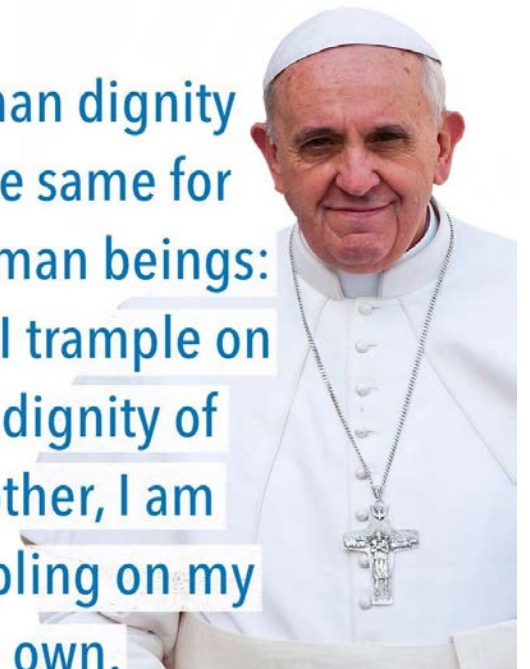
## **Bible Story:**

Popcorn read

[The Beatitudes](#)

(Matthew 5:3-12)

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



## **Explain/Discuss:**

List all the Beatitudes on the whiteboard or a large sheet of paper and talk with the students about each one and what it might mean.

- What do you think the Beatitudes tell us?
- Why is it important to live like the Beatitudes?

*For the teacher's background, here are the explanations of the Beatitudes provided by the Pontifical Biblical Commission.*

- The “poor in spirit” are those who “live in a precarious situation and, above all, acknowledge that they themselves have nothing, are wholly dependent on God.”
- Those who mourn or are afflicted “compassionately participate in the necessities and sufferings of others.”
- The “meek” are those who “do not use violence but respect their neighbors just as they are.”
- Those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” desire intensely to act according to God’s will in expectation of the kingdom.
- The “merciful” are those who “offer active help to the needy,” as in Mt. 25:31-46, and “are ready to grant pardon” (Mt. 18:33).
- “Peacemakers” are those who “do everything in their power to maintain and re-establish love-inspired fellowship among human beings.”
- “Those persecuted for righteousness’ sake” are faithful to God’s will “despite difficult consequences.”

## **Activity:**

Familiarize yourself with the following holy witnesses:

- [Fr. Augustus Tolten](#)
- [Julia Greely](#)
- [St. Kateri Tekakwitha](#)
- [César Chávez](#)
- [St. Junipero Serra](#)
- [St. Oscar Romero](#)

Assign small groups to read the stories of the saints listed above (one saint/holy person per group)

- Ask the groups to identify which of the Beatitudes their person lived out. The person might exemplify more than one.
- Ask students to report back about their saint (tell a little of their story, if necessary, and why they think the person exemplified any particular Beatitudes.)

In our country, we haven't always lived according to the Beatitudes. In fact, sometimes we have lived in a way that does not honor the dignity of other people. This still happens today. We haven't always been meek, or peacemakers, or poor in spirit, and actions before and after our country's founding led some people to disregard the humanity of people in the United States.

**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 those 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](#).

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