

## AGENTS OF MERCY LESSON: LIFE IS A GIFT

### GRADES 7-8

---

#### **Goal:**

Students will learn that it takes far more to build a culture that welcomes and respects every human life than just talking about it or creating laws. To truly create a world where every person is loved, each individual has to do his or her share to spread kindness, mercy and an authentic understanding of being part of the human family. We have to recognize each person's dignity from the moment of creation, where they were created unique and are loved unconditionally by God. Only then will abortion and other attacks on human life end.

#### **Lesson:**

St Mother Teresa called abortion “the greatest destroyer of love and peace” because it teaches people to “use violence to get what they want”. A world that promotes abortion as an acceptable solution to unexpected pregnancy has lost the understanding that every human life is a gift from God, whether intended by the parents or not. This was not always the case. Just a few generations ago, the overwhelming response when a woman realized she was pregnant was one of joy. People rushed in to support the woman and help her to care for this new life. But today, more and more, women facing unexpected pregnancies feel alone and unsupported. She may feel like abortion is her only option. She often fears that this life will be a burden or a threat to her own well-being. But the truth is: new life is always a gift and brings new hope, joy and beauty to the world even in the most challenging circumstances. If we want to build a world without abortion, we must celebrate every human life as a gift of infinite value from the moment of conception through the very last breath.

#### **Watch:**

- Chris Stefanick helps students understand why building a culture of life is so important: [Watch his 4 minute video.](#)
- [Aquarelle Shares Her Story](#)
- [Alencia Shares Her Story](#)
- [The Lott Family](#) – a story of adoption
- Watch [this video](#) feature on the Sisters of Life and the work they do.
- Sr. Bethany Madonna from the Sisters of Life shares how every person can build a culture of life: [Watch her video here.](#)

#### **Discussion:**

- How can we build a *culture of life*? How can we build a world without abortion? Discuss what that would look like. How can you begin building that culture in your life, starting today?
- Why is it important that we surround women in unexpected pregnancies with love and support?
- What helped Aquarelle and Alencia feel ready to welcome a child? What would it be like

for them if they didn't have that support available? Was it just material help or did they need more than that (relationships, encouragement etc.)?

- How is the Lott family building a culture of life in their family? How are they spreading love?
- How do the Sisters of Life build a culture of life?
- What did the story that Sr. Bethany Madonna shared teach you about how to build a culture of life?
- Sr. Bethany Madonna shared that every human person has a unique love to offer the world. What unique gifts have you been given? How can you use them to spread a culture of life and love?

### **Activity:**

- Have students research ways to help pregnant and parenting families and present their findings to the class.
- Good sites for them to research:
  - <http://getyourcare.org/>
  - <http://kidsonashoestring.com/>
  - <http://pregnantoncampus.com/>
  - <http://reecesrainbow.org/>
  - <https://lifeofficenyc.org/support>
  - <https://sistersoflife.org>
  - <https://www.benotafraid.net/>

### **Homework:**

- Assign different scenarios to each student. Using what they learned through their research of the websites above, and others they found, students can outline what help and resources are available in New York for each of the following:
  - Teenage mom who wants to stay in school
  - Mom already has several kids and is pregnant again. What should she do?
  - Mom and Dad whose baby is prenatally diagnosed with a terminal illness. Where can they turn?
  - Mom who is struggling with her mental health
  - Pregnant woman who is homeless

### **Prayer:**

Heavenly Father,  
I ask your blessing upon each woman facing an unexpected pregnancy.  
Pour out your love into her heart  
and help her to see the beauty of her child.  
Surround with people who will support and encourage her in her motherhood.  
Give her the courage and strength she needs.  
I ask you for the grace to support the mothers and fathers in my community with mercy and compassion.

Please use me as an instrument of love to build up a culture of life.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

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