



Monday of Respect Life Week
Immigration/Welcoming the Stranger
Grades 7-8

Theme: We Are One Family Under God/Building a Christian Community

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: *Catholic Social Teaching 101: Life and Dignity of the Human Person* ([video link](#))
Immigration and the Catholic Church ([video link](#))

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 worldwide. This topic gets to the heart of who we are not only as Christians but as members of the human community.

What is our responsibility to our brothers and sisters in need? Where do our borders and national interests end and our vocation to practice justice and peace begin?

Watch: *Catholic Social Teaching 101: Life and Dignity of the Human Person* ([video link](#))

Questions for 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?

Immigration and the Catholic Church ([video link](#))

Questions for Discussion

What are some of the reasons people leave their country of origin?

What role does the Church have in welcoming immigrants?

What does it mean to say "we help them not because they are Catholics but because we are Catholics"?

How can recognizing our common human dignity change how we see others?
How is helping immigrants an experience of meeting Christ?

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?”

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.

Amen.

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