

AGENTS OF MERCY LESSON: CELEBRATING SPECIAL NEEDS

GRADES 1-3

Goal:

Students will learn about the importance of respecting those who are different from us. Students will learn about recognizing that every person is unique and created by God, loved for who they are, and their physical appearance or abilities cannot change that.

Lesson:

God makes each person special—a unique creation whom He planned from the beginning of time. God does not make mistakes. He made everyone perfect! In our world, it is so important that we learn to respect the dignity of every human person, no matter our differences. Unfortunately, people with disabilities experience a great amount of discrimination, including bullying. When we cannot recognize their dignity as children of God, we need to change our perspective and recognize the incredible lives of those around us. People with disabilities deserve the same love and support as everyone else. God has a special plan for every single person, no matter what our abilities are.

Watch or Read:

[You are Special](#) tells the story of a little boy made of wood who is treated like an outcast until someone tells him to go visit the man who made him, who loves him just the way he is!

Discussion:

- What did all the Wemmicks have in common?
- Who is Punchinello?
- Why was he given gray dots?
- Who were given gold stars?
- How did Punchinello feel once he received all of the gray dots?
- What did the Wemmick who had no stickers, Lucia, tell him to do?
- Who is Eli the Wood-carver? What did Eli tell Punchinello?
- Why are we special? (because we're created and loved by God)

Reinforce the message that, because God makes each one of us and creates us for a reason, he gives us all of the gifts that we will need to fulfill our purpose in this life. God does not make mistakes! If someone is born with a disability or a special need, or, is different like Punchinello, God's plan for that person will still create something wonderful!

Ask students if they know anyone with any special needs (in a wheelchair, Down syndrome, autism, blind, uses a cane). How does that person use their gifts? What do you have in common with them? Ask them to think of a time someone different from them made them smile or feel loved. Reinforce the gifts of love, joy, and friendship that everyone can share, each in their own special way! Tell the students about how they, and everyone, were created by God and are one-of-a-kind.

Watch:

- Meet Griffin and Turner in this [Special Books by Special Kids](#) Video

Discussion:

- How can you help someone with special needs know that he or she was made special by God?
- What makes Turner special? Do Griffin and Turner have fun together?
- How do Turner and Griffin love each other? Are they good brothers?

Activity:

- God made each of us special! Have the students form a circle and take turns coming up with a fun and unique action. Have the rest of the group join in for each action while saying the person's name who created it. Repeat the actions and names until everyone has gone. Explain that this is one way we can see how special each person is and the beauty of our differences!
- Sing and Dance:
 - Sing and dance along with [I Am A Child of God](#)

Prayer:

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for creating each of us unique and special. Help me to be kind to people who are different from me.

Help me to welcome new friends and never leave anyone out.

Amen.

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