**Respect Life Office**

***Faithful Citizenship***

As the election approaches, cultivating informed consciences among parishioners is important. In their document [*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*](https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship.pdf)*,* the US Bishops acknowledge that many Catholics “may feel politically disenfranchised, sensing that no party and few candidates fully share our comprehensive commitment to human life and dignity.” However, while there are many political issues that are important to us as Catholics, the bishops state that “the threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself.” To help pastors and parishes navigate this election season, the following resources on faithful citizenship from the USCCB will be a great asset. Ed Mechmann, Director of the Public Policy Office, has also written an excellent article answering the question: [“Could voting for a particular candidate be a sin?”](https://archny.org/questions-sin-voting/)

1.       Summary of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship:* [Part 1](https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/The-Challenge-of-Forming-Consciences-for-Faithful-Citizenship-Part-1.pdf) and [Part 2](https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/The-Challenge-of-Forming-Consciences-for-Faithful-Citizenship-Part-2.pdf) . [Full document.](https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship.pdf)

2.       [Do's and Don'ts Guidelines for Parishes During Election Season](https://www.usccb.org/resources/dos-and-donts-guidelines-during-election-season)

Do:

·         Address the moral and human dimensions of public issues.

·         Share church teaching on human life, human rights, and justice and peace.

·         Apply Catholic values to legislation and public issues.

·         Conduct a non-partisan voter registration drive on church property.

·         Distribute unbiased candidate questionnaires covering issues of human life, justice, and peace that have been reviewed and approved by your diocesan attorney.

·         Check with your diocesan attorney if you have any questions about what is appropriate.

Don’t:

·         Endorse or oppose candidates for political office.

·         Distribute partisan campaign literature under church auspices.

·         Arrange for groups to work for a candidate for public office.

·         Invite only selected candidates to address your church-sponsored group.

·         Conduct voter registration slanted toward one party.

·         Distribute a biased candidate survey.

3.       [Discussion Questions on Faithful Citizenship](https://www.usccb.org/resources/questions-reflection-and-discussion)

4.       Prayers:

·         [Novena for Faithful Citizenship](https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/novena-for-faithful-citizenship)

·         [Prayer Before an Election](https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/prayer-before-an-election)

·         [Liturgy suggestions leading up to an election](https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/liturgy-and-prayer-suggestions) – intercessions, votive Masses, hymns, Scripture

·         [Nine Ways to Pray as a Faithful Citizen](https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/praying-like-a-faithful-citizen) **–** (incorporating Lectio Divina, Ignatian prayer etc.)