

# OVERCOMING DIFFERENCES

## GRADES 4-6 – Lesson I

### **Goal:**

Students should be able to recognize that the unity of humanity—in all its diversity—is rooted in our union with God. They will learn to celebrate the diversity of God’s family as expressed in liturgical celebrations by various cultures and identify as problematic the failure to represent the diversity of God’s family in publications, illustrations, and narratives of the predominant culture.

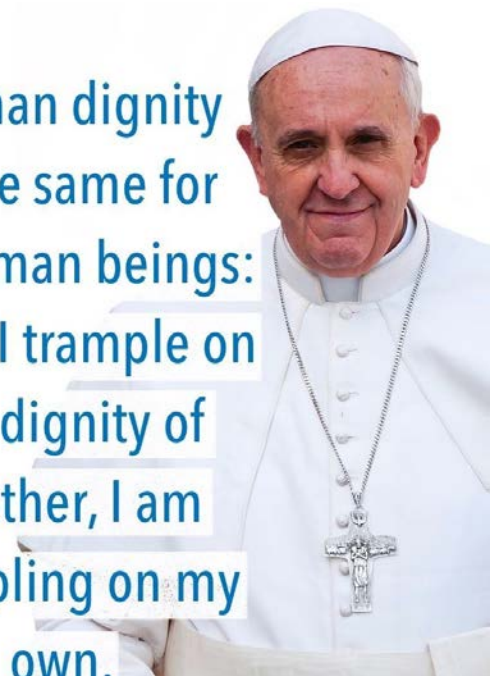
### **Lesson:**

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:**

Read: [Revelation 7:9-10](#)

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



As homework prior to this lesson, have students research what percentages of various ethnic groups [make up the Church in the U.S.](#) (or in the [Archdiocese](#) or New York City).

### **Watch/Discuss:**

- Find some examples on YouTube of the Eucharistic Liturgy being celebrated in another culture. Show a few examples. Some ideas: [North India](#); [Mexico](#); [Togo](#); [African heritage Mass in Brooklyn](#)
- Ask students to share what they noticed about these celebrations. Instruct students to share observations, but not judgments. (For example, begin statements with “I noticed that...” instead of “It was strange how they...”.) This is an important teaching moment about the value of diversity and noticing and observing differences and our reactions to those differences.
- If you are blessed to have a multi-cultural classroom with students from different backgrounds, consider inviting everyone in the group to speak from their own experience—i.e., what special gifts from your culture are celebrated as part of the liturgy in your (or your parents’) country of origin?

Review the following catechetical concepts:

- The Church is a “sign and instrument” of our communion with God and with one another as a human family (CCC 775; Lumen Gentium, no. 1).
- Because we are all united to God as his children, we are united with all other members of our human family: “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues” (CCC 775, Rev. 7:9). We should celebrate the gifts from the many cultures that are part of our Church—for example, when we can enjoy the tradition that another culture brings into its liturgical celebration.

God’s family includes peoples from many parts of the world, each with its own traditions and culture.

Discuss the following questions:

- Do we always recognize the diversity of God’s family?
- Why or why not?
- What are some examples of different ways to celebrate the diversity of God’s family?

**Activity:**

Summarize or read excerpts from the article, [“For Young Latino Readers, an Image is Missing.”](#) Discuss the following questions:

- Why is it a problem that some children do not see themselves in the books they read?
- Do you think that the materials we use in our own classroom reflect the diversity of the Church in the United States?
- Refer to the statistics about what percentages of various ethnic groups make up the Church in the U.S. that the students researched for homework. In this activity, you will compare findings with representation found during students’ inventory project.
  - What groups are not well-represented?
  - Which are over-represented?
  - Have students perform an inventory of the classroom, identifying what cultural backgrounds are represented by images in their textbooks, on classroom posters, etc.
- Discuss what was discovered:
  - What could be done to better ensure that that great diversity of God’s family is reflected in the images we see?
  - What could we do about this at our own school or parish or in our own classroom?
- Have a few examples of diverse books or materials ready to share.

**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.

Lessons plans are taken from the USCCB curriculum on racism [Open Wide our Hearts](#)



open wide our hearts

the enduring call to love *a pastoral letter against racism*

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