



LESSON 14

Respect Life



Learning Objectives

In this lesson you will:

- Realize that the fifth commandment calls us to treat all human beings with respect.
 - Learn how Jesus treated children, older people, the disabled, and the sick.
 - Grow in appreciation of the Mystery of Anointing of the Sick and respect for people who are suffering.
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Opening Prayer

O Lord, help me to always see you in every person I meet.
And may every person only see Jesus in me. Amen.



Opening Activity

Scan the QR code to access the online resources.

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Introduction

Have you ever wondered why you should be good? The Israelites had this same question. They had followed Moses into the desert and were hot, tired, and discouraged. They wanted life to be easier. Here is how God answered them: “If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess” (Deut 30:16).

Reflection Questions

1. *Why do you desire to be good?*
2. *How do you feel when you break one of God’s commandments?*





Point 1

The Fifth Commandment

The fifth commandment goes as follows: “You shall not murder” (Ex 20:13). All people are made in God’s image and likeness. He created us with a body and a **soul**. God gifted our body and our soul with dignity. To have **dignity** means “to have worth, value, and honor.” That’s why it is so important to respect ourselves and other people. In the past, adults thought children did not deserve the same dignity as adults. Sadly, this harmful thinking still occurs today. This commandment also calls us to respect other people. We are called to defend the sanctity of every person.

Point **2**

Jesus' Witness

Following Jesus' example is the best way to treat others with dignity. Jesus treated everyone with respect and displayed a great love for children, older people, and the disabled. He told his followers to do the same. As we will see in the Climbing the Mountain section, he wanted the children to come to him (see Lk 18:15-17).

Jesus also entered the house of Peter and saw “[Peter’s] mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever; he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him” (Mt 8:14-15). The actions of Jesus teach us that older people also have dignity and deserve our respect.

On the last Sunday of Lent, we read the story of Bartimaeus, a blind man who wanted to see. When Jesus passed him, he shouted, “Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!” People in the crowd told him to be quiet, but he kept shouting. Jesus called him forward and said, “Your faith has healed you,” and he was able to see. (Mk 10:46-52)





Point 3

Defending the Vulnerable

In our society, some groups of people are not treated with the dignity they deserve. Some people get **abortions**, which end the life of an unborn baby. Some parents beat or abuse their children. Some employers overwork or “use” young people. Older people are sometimes seen as “less than human.” This is especially true if these people can no longer work or take care of themselves. Some people neglect the needs of older people and abandon them.

Some people think that a person with a physical disability or a mental illness is less important. They often make jokes about them and will not lend a helping hand.

Throughout history, some people thought sickness was God’s punishment. The Church shows respect for people who are ill through the Holy **Mystery of Anointing of the Sick**. This is when a priest anoints people with blessed oil and asks God to heal their bodies and souls.

Activity 1

Make a Card

Directions: *Make a card for a person who is shut-in or in a nursing home.*



My Prayer for the Sick

Directions: *In the space below, write the names of people you know who are sick. Then write a prayer asking God to help them and be with them in their suffering.*

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People who are sick:

1.

2.

3.

My prayer:



Maronite Wisdom

“O Good Physician, when you took the hand of Simon Peter’s mother-in-law who was lying on her bed, she suddenly rose from her infirmity and she was immediately occupied with the work of your service. Now, O Lord, in your mercy, support, heal, and strengthen these your servants, and we will raise glory to you, now and for ever.”

— *Rite of the Lamp: Third Vigil*





My Role Model

Saint Rafka

Saint Rafka was a Maronite nun who lived in nineteenth-century Lebanon. As a young sister, Rafka taught children in different villages. She treated all the children with respect and love. During a time of persecution, she even saved one little boy from death. She hid the boy under her cloak. Years later, Rafka became very sick. Her eyes began to hurt. Slowly she became blind. But Rafka did not ask why God had done this to her. Instead, she offered up her pain with dignity. She continued to do so even when she became paralyzed and confined to bed. Rafka was blind and paralyzed for many years, yet she never stopped loving life. She reminded her sisters that all people are valuable. Rafka inspired others by her own faith in God's love for her. Maronites honor Saint Rafka on March 23.

Saint Rafka, pray for us.

Recall



Use the words below to answer these questions

1. Every human being on this earth is made in God's image and has _____.
2. Every human being has a body and a divine _____ gifted by God.
3. _____ is the killing of an unborn child.
4. _____ is a Holy Mystery about bodily and spiritual healing.

Abortion | Anointing of the Sick | Dignity | Soul



Weekly Journal

How have you treated people who are older, sick, or disabled?

Write: One way you have shown kindness to someone in need and one way you can show kindness this coming week.

Concluding Prayer



We adore you, O Lord. We give you thanks, for you made us in your image. By the sign of your cross, may children be raised safely. May the aged be made wise. May the sick be restored to health. And may all people live happy and holy lives. O Lord, Maker of life, we glorify you, your Father, and your Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

Climbing the Mountain

Bonus Materials for Students & Teachers



Jesus Blessed Little Children

Lk 18:15–17

Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

Reflection

Just like the disciples in this verse, many people see children as a burden. They try to push them aside and ignore their dignity as human beings. Abortion is the clearest example. In another Scripture verse, Jesus says that children are the greatest in the kingdom of God. Specifically, Jesus said, “Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 18:4). We must become childlike to reach heaven.

Saintly Quote

“It is to recognize our nothingness, to expect everything from God as a little child expects everything from its father...to be disquieted about nothing, and not to be set on gaining our living,” that is, “the eternal life of heaven.”

— *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*

Questions

1. What do you feel are some qualities you must have to be more childlike?
2. What does it mean to be dependent on Jesus like a child?

Reaching the Summit

For Teachers & Parents



“Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God.” — CCC 2319

Why Follow God?

We obey God’s commandments because doing so brings us life. Being alive means growing in the joy of Christ. Morally good people choose life and respect the lives of others. God created us in his image. He loves every single part of us. He wants us to love and respect others in exactly the same way. That is what the fifth commandment means when it says, “You shall not kill” (Ex 20:13). It invites us to respect life in all its stages as a mystery.

View of Illness and Infirmities

Throughout history, some people have thought sickness was God’s punishment for sin. As a result, they avoided sick people and thought they were “bad.” They did not take care of them or help them get better. But Jesus said that sickness is not punishment for sin. Instead, he showed great love for the sick. He treated them with respect. Often, he healed them. One day, a leper came to Jesus and said, “Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean” (Mk 1:40). The leper begged for healing and Jesus was moved with compassion. Jesus healed the leper.

Catholic Social Teaching

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

“In no case, therefore, is the human person to be manipulated for ends that are foreign to his own development, which can find complete fulfilment only in God and his plan of salvation: in fact, man in his interiority transcends the universe and is the only creature willed by God for itself. For this reason neither his life nor the

development of his thought, nor his good, nor those who are part of his personal and social activities can be subjected to unjust restrictions in the exercise of their rights and freedom.” — *CSDC 133*

Discussion Questions

1. How can you help your child see the dignity of every person from conception to natural death?
2. How can you teach your child to never use someone as a means to an end?



Words to Know

Q. What is the **Mystery of Anointing of the Sick**?

A. A healing mystery in which the priest makes the sign of the cross with holy oil on the forehead of people who are old, sick, or dying. The Church prays that these people may receive health of body and soul.

Q. What is **dignity**?

A. To have worth, value, and honor. We believe all people have dignity because they are made in God's image.

Q. What is the **soul**?

A. The spiritual part of us given directly by God to each person at the moment of conception, and that will live forever, beyond the death of the human body.



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more information.**

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