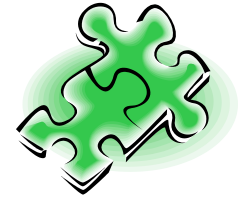


Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility

Catechetical Session Elementary School Children Lesson Plan C



Theme: Avoiding Evil and Doing Good

Materials Needed

- Newsprint (or dry erase board) and markers. You may want to pre-write the quotes from Faithful Citizenship on newsprint.
- Bible, with enthronement and candle, if possible.
- Blank paper
- Crayons or colored pencils

Gathering

The first purpose of the opening of each session is to establish a sense of welcome and hospitality. The second purpose is to begin the session with the child's human experience, i.e. the child's "story." A Bible should be enthroned prominently in the room. Gather around the Word for prayer.

Open the session by reminding students that in previous meetings, they discussed how God gives them the special gift of conscience and the guidance of our parents and teachers to help them know the difference between what is right and what is wrong so that they can be faithful citizens in the world.

Tell the students that we are going to start today with an activity. Ask the students to raise their right hands in the air. Then ask the students to raise only their left hands in the air. Ask the students to tell you why their hands are useful. How do their hands help them do different things? Ask them whether they think life might be more difficult if they could only use one hand. You can then ask for student volunteers to do different things in front of the class to illustrate how it would be difficult to only have one hand. For example, using a pencil sharpener, opening a glue stick, tying a shoe, etc. Explain that today we are going to learn about two ways of living out our faith, both of which are very important and work together, like the right and left hands.

Opening Prayer

Call the group to prayer. After an extended pause, continue with these or similar words:

**Let us pray.
Spirit of life,
We thank you for calling us to help others around us.**

**Help us to do our best to make the world around us better.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Students are seated. Catechist takes Bible from enthronement and proclaims reading. Be sure reading is marked in advance.

Scripture Reading & Faith Sharing

The catechist makes the transition to this movement by saying that in the reading we will hear, Jesus gives important advice to a young man who wants to be a good disciple.

Proclaim the reading (Matthew 19:16-21):

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew...

Ask the children, "What did you hear in the reading?"

After the children's initial response, read the reading again.

- What does Jesus name as important commandments?

See how many of the commandments the children can name. Write them down on the newsprint or dry erase board.

- Is it easy or difficult for you to follow the commandments you named?
- What do the commandments tell us about how people should be treated in our society?
- What do they say in particular about how we should respond to the weak and vulnerable people in our community?

Faithful Citizenship Reading & Discussion Questions

The catechist makes a transition from reflection on the Scripture to discussion on the teaching of the Church. First read from paragraph 22.

“There are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. Such actions are so deeply flawed that they are always opposed to the authentic good of persons. These are called ‘intrinsically evil’ actions. They must always be rejected and opposed and must never be supported or condoned. A prime example is the intentional taking of innocent human life, as in abortion and euthanasia.”

Ask the children:

- What are the bishops saying?

Help the children understand that as Catholics, if we see something bad or evil happening, we are called to try to stop it. You might also help the children to understand that the bishops talk about

some “deeply flawed” actions that are always wrong, like killing another person. The bishops call these “intrinsically evil.”

- What are some examples of bad or evil things you might see that you should always try to stop from happening?

Write their responses on one side or column of the newsprint or on the dry erase board. Possible answers might be: when someone tries to hurt someone else, when someone litters or pollutes the environment, etc. If students are old enough to understand some of the issues that the bishops mention in paragraphs 22 and 23, you can ask them to mention some of those (e.g. abortion, war, etc.).

Then read from paragraph 24, explaining that the bishops also say we must:

“ . . . open our eyes to the good we must do, that is, to our positive duty to contribute to the common good and to act in solidarity with those in need.”

Ask the children:

- What are the bishops saying?
- Can you think of some good things to help others that you should do if you want to love God and help your neighbors?

Write their responses on the other side or column of the newsprint or on the dry erase board. Answers will likely describe ways they can help others. If students are old enough, you can also ask them to name some of the issues in paragraphs 24 and 25 (making sure everyone has food and shelter, respecting human rights, etc.).

Then finish reading from paragraph 24:

“Both opposing evil *and* doing good are essential obligations.”

Explain to the children that we are asked to both stop evil around us and to look for ways we can do good. In the Gospel reading, we heard both negative commandments about what you should not do (“Do not kill”) and positive commandments about what you should do (“Love your neighbor”). Opposing evil or stopping bad things, and doing positive or good things, are both very important to Christians. They are two ways of acting that are necessary for us to be good Christians, just like both our right and our left hands are needed for us to be able to complete tasks, like the ones illustrated in the beginning of class. Explain to the children that as Catholics, we are responsible for taking care of one another, especially the weak and vulnerable in our society. Ask:

- Name some evil or bad things that happen to the weakest people in our society that we must try to stop or prevent.
- Name some good things we must do as a society to make sure that the weak and poor are protected.

Ask the children to trace their hands on pieces of paper. Inside the outline of one hand, they should write or draw pictures of 3 bad things they will try to oppose in the future in order to love God and others better. In the other hand, they should write or draw pictures of 3 good things (that are beyond what they normally do) which they will try to do in order to love God and others better.

Closing Prayer

Gather students together for prayer. Have them hold out their two hands in front of them while you pray the closing prayer.

Let us pray. *(Pause).*

Father who made us, you gave us two hands so that we can help others.

We pray that you will help us to both oppose evil and to do good so that we can love you and our neighbors as best we can.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ who live and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.