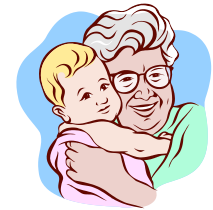


Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility

Catechetical Session Elementary School Children Lesson Plan D



Theme: Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Materials Needed

- Newsprint (or dry erase board) and markers. You may want to pre-write the quotes from Faithful Citizenship on newsprint.
- Bible, with entronement and candle, if possible
- Pictures and photographs of a wide variety of people cut from newspapers, magazines, the internet, and other sources. Each picture should be taped to a piece of sturdy paper.

Gathering

The first purpose of the opening movement 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.

Prior to this session collect pictures and photographs of a wide variety of people. Cut out pictures from newspapers, magazines, the internet, and other sources. Tape each picture to a piece of sturdy paper or cardboard so you can hold up individual pictures to show the class.

Try to include pictures of people the students will likely view positively and people they will likely view less positively. Examples include pictures of a newborn, an elderly person, a prisoner, a homeless person, a rich person, a movie star, a famous athlete, a pop music star, people of various ethnic backgrounds, people of various colors.

Hold up the pictures one at a time and simply let the children look at them.

Opening Prayer

**Let us pray.
Father of all people,
We thank you for the gift of life.**

Help us to see the beauty in each person.

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

Proclaim the reading (Genesis 1:26-31):

A reading from the Book of Genesis...

After the reading a brief period of silence follows. Then, the catechist asks the children these or similar questions:

- What is God telling us about human beings?
- What does this tell you about yourself?

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

A reading from the Book of Genesis...

- What does it mean that humans are created in God's image?
- How can all people be created in God's image?
- What does this mean for the way we should treat others?

Faithful Citizenship Reading and Discussion

The catechist makes a transition from reflection on the Scripture to discussion on the teaching of the Church, quoting from Faithful Citizenship in the second paragraph below.

We believe that every human being is good in his or her own way because every person was created by God. Therefore, even people who may seem mean or ugly, must be treated with kindness. The weakest people in our world must be given special attention by Christians because sometimes they are forgotten or mistreated, especially unborn children, old people, and people who are very sick.

Our Church teaches us that humans are “created in God’s image and likeness and endowed by the Creator with dignity and rights (no. 9)” Because of this, we are called to “promote the well-being of all, to share our blessings with those most in need, and to protect the lives and dignity of all, especially the weak, the vulnerable, the voiceless (no. 10)”

- Think about the person you like least in this world. Picture the person in your mind. Now, remember that person is a holy child of God. How should you treat this person? Be specific. How should you treat all people? Give concrete examples.

- What can you or your class do to show you believe that every person is created in goodness and holiness by God? For help, see the resource, "Putting Faith into Action," found in the "Parish and School Leaders" section of the Faithful Citizenship website (www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship). Some ideas to consider:
 - Consult your parish "Right to Life" Committee and ask how you might help support mothers and their unborn children. Or, have a "baby shower" and donate the goods to your local Right to Life chapter.
 - Contact your local nursing home or senior citizen center to see how you might bring joy to the elderly.

Hold up each picture again. Ask the children to use their imaginations to name a positive or good characteristic about each person. Below is a sample of what the list might look like. Write the list on newsprint.

Picture	Positive Quality
New born baby	sweet and cuddly
Shakira	popular, good singer
LeBron James	great athlete
Old person	wise
A homeless person	kind to others
A convicted prisoner	Helpful to other prisoners

As you hold up pictures of the people the students view "less positively" (prisoners, homeless people), note that the children will be slower about naming positive qualities. Make note of this. Point out that it is not easy to see the good in some people, even though there is some good in every person. Sin is a part of all our lives and some people turn to sin in significant ways.

Nonetheless, Catholic Christians believe that all people are created by God with goodness and holiness. We believe each person is a precious child of God from before we are born through the end of our lives.

Closing Prayer

Return to the adult gathering or return to the prayer circle.

Return to the pictures used in the opening exercise. Respectfully place the pictures in the middle of your prayer space near the Bible. After all have gathered in silence, proclaim the reading.

A Reading from the Book of Genesis...(Genesis 1:26-31).

After reading, allow for a few moments of silence. Then close in prayer:

Let us pray.

Father of all creation,

May we always be respectful of your people, especially the unborn, the elderly, the sick and the poor.

Spirit of life,

Help us all to live as the holy people you made us to be.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.