

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

Catechetical Session Elementary School Children Lesson Plan E

Theme: Solidarity (One human family)



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

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." Have the Bible enthroned prominently in the room as the centerpiece for prayer.

Begin by asking the children a simple question.

- Who is your neighbor?

Let them speak freely for some time, giving names and information about their neighbors. Then, begin to probe a little deeper. Use the responses they give to form questions that will broaden their concept of neighbor. Questions such as;

- Do neighbors have to live next door or nearby? Why or why not?
- Do you think of people who live in Mexico or Canada as neighbors to the citizens of the U.S.?
- Can neighbors live in places very far away? Why or Why not?
- Who did Jesus say was "our neighbor"?

When someone asked Jesus the question, "Who is my neighbor?" He told them a story. Let's pray and listen to the story.

Opening Prayer

Gather the children in a circle with the Bible reverently enthroned in the middle. Catechist stands in a prayerful posture and prays with hands raised, inviting the children to do the same.

Let us pray.

Father and Creator of all people, we thank you for the beautiful human family you have made. Loving Spirit, help us to be good neighbors. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Scripture Reading & Faith Sharing

Proclaim the reading (Luke 10:25-37):

A reading from the Gospel of Luke...

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

- What happened in the story? (In the beginning, a man was walking down the road. What happened to him? Then what happened? Etc.)
- Who is the "neighbor" in the story? Who helped the man in need? (*Explore with the children the importance of the merciful person being a Samaritan. Explain why this would have been shocking to the hearers. Samaritans were the outsiders. They were not accepted by others.*)
- If this story were written today, who might have been the Samaritan person? Who are the outsiders in our world?

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

A reading from the Gospel of Luke...

- What is Jesus trying to teach us in this story?
- Now, how would answer the question, "Who is my neighbor?"
- How can you be a "good Samaritan" in school? At home? In your neighborhood?
- How can adults be "good Samaritans" in our communities, our country and our world?

Faithful Citizenship Reading and Discussion

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

“We are one human family” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 53). We all need to take care of each other. The Church has a word for our oneness (write the word on the blackboard):

- **SOLIDARITY**

Ask the children to describe the meaning of the word, **solid**. It may be described as "the same all the way through," or "whole, strong, one." Show examples of things that are solid. Bring to class a rock, a piece of wood, and other solid items. This is how God intended our human family to be: Solid.

- Do you think our human family is solid? Why or why not? “Solidarity” is when we care for one another as one, solid family. We need to care for one another as one, solid human family. Just like the Samaritan man cared for a stranger from another land. Pope John Paul II also often calls us to solidarity.
- How can we care for one another when the world is so big? Give some concrete examples.
- What does voting or being a good citizen have to do with solidarity?

Closing Prayer

Return to the adult gathering or return to the prayer circle

Once again use a litany prayer. Pray for those people named in the opening exercise and throughout the session. Catechist leads the litany and the children respond. Allow time for children to add their own neighbors to the litany. For example:

Let us pray. (*Pause*).

Father, our creator, we praise you for the diversity and goodness of all people. We pray now for our neighbors, particularly those in need.

- For the neighbors who live near to us and those in far away places like....We pray to the Lord. "Lord, hear our prayer."
- For the people of Iraq. We pray to the Lord...
- For the people of Afghanistan. We pray to the Lord...
- For the people in the Middle East. We pray to the Lord
- For the people of Africa. We pray to the Lord...
- Gathering our prayers into one, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us. Our Father...