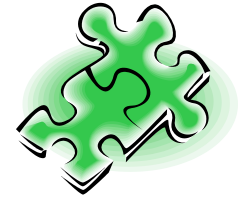


# Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility

## Catechetical Session Junior/Senior High School Lesson Plan C



### Theme: Avoiding Evil and Doing Good

#### 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 young person's human experience, i.e. her/his "story" or ideas. Have a Bible prominently enthroned in the room as the centerpiece for prayer and the proclamation of the Word.*

Open the session by reminding students that in previous meetings, you discussed why Catholics are called to bring their faith to the political process, and about forming consciences so that you can make good decisions. Ask the students to say out loud some of the things they think Catholics like themselves are called to advocate for. Put things that Catholics are called to oppose on one side and things Catholics are called to support or promote on the other side. So, it might look something like this:

End abortion	Provide access to health care for everyone
End use of the death penalty	Increase the minimum wage
Oppose euthanasia	Support immigration laws that respect dignity of immigrants
Etc.	Etc.

Don't label the columns in any way, just write responses on one side or the other.

#### Opening Prayer

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

**Let us pray.  
Father of all people,  
Help us to be attentive to your voice in our hearts, that we might answer your call to  
defend the weak and the vulnerable.  
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 is looking to live out his faith authentically.*

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

**A reading from the Gospel of Matthew...**

After the reading a brief period of silence follows. Then, ask the students these or similar questions:

- What did you hear in the reading? Name the word or phrase you most remember.
- What does Jesus name as important commandments?

After the students' initial response, read the reading again.

**A reading from the Gospel of Matthew...**

Ask the following or similar discussion questions:

- How do some of the commandments that Jesus mentioned relate to any of the issues that you named at the beginning of this session?
- How does Jesus challenge the young man in the reading?
- How is God calling you to go beyond the basic requirements of your faith and to put your own faith into action? What does true faithful citizenship involve?
- What is the relationship between the commandments Jesus mentioned and our call to bring our faith to political life?

**Faithful Citizenship Reading & Discussion Questions**

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

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. These intrinsically evil acts must always be rejected and never supported. A preeminent example is the intentional taking of human life through abortion. It is always morally wrong to destroy innocent human beings. A legal system that allows the right to life to be violated on the grounds of choice is fundamentally flawed.

Similarly, direct threats to the dignity of human life such as euthanasia, human cloning, and destructive research on human embryos are also intrinsically evil and must be opposed. Other assaults on human life and dignity, such as genocide, torture, racism, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified. Disrespect for any human life diminishes respect for all human life.

Opposition to intrinsically evil acts also prompts us to recognize our positive duty to contribute to the common good and act in solidarity with those in need. Both opposing evil *and* doing good are essential. . . The basic right to life implies and is linked to other human rights to the goods that every person needs to live and thrive—including food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work. The use of the death penalty, hunger, lack of health care or housing, human trafficking, the human and moral costs of war, and unjust immigration policies are some of the serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act.

- *The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (bulletin insert)

Discuss the following with the students:

- The bishops say that “both opposing evil *and* doing good are essential”? Why are both (not just one or the other) important for Catholics?

Go back to the list on the dry erase board/newsprint and ask if anyone can tell you why you organized the list like you did. Explain that some of their responses fell into the “opposing evil” category and others can be classified as “supporting good.” Ask if there are other responses they might like to add.

- According to the bishops, what is an intrinsic evil? Give examples of acts that are intrinsically evil. Why must intrinsic evils always be opposed?
- How does opposition to intrinsic evils prompt us “to recognize our positive duty” to do good?
- What are some ways that you feel personally called to both oppose evil and do good?

### Closing Prayer

Gather students into a circle. Use a litany prayer as part of your closing prayer. Pray that we might be faithful citizens, both opposing evil and doing good. Catechist sets the example and then invites young people to add to the litany.

**Let us pray.** (*Pause*).

**Father of goodness, we praise you for giving us the desire to work for justice for all. We pray now that you would strengthen us to oppose evil and to do good in our communities.**

- That we might be strengthened to work together to end abortion. We pray to the Lord. "Lord, hear our prayer."
- That we might work to provide health care for all. We pray to the Lord...
- For an end to the use of the death penalty. We pray to the Lord...
- Pause for student's prayers.
- Gathering our prayers into one, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us. Our Father...

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