

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

Catechetical Session Junior/Senior High School Lesson Plan E



Theme: Solidarity (One human family)

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 young person's human experience, i.e. her/his "story."

Open the session by describing the discussion for the day as being about the oneness of the human family. We live in a global village where we are neighbors with people around the globe. Think about the notion of "neighbor."

- Describe a time when someone was a "good neighbor" to you.

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 young people in a circle with the Bible reverently enthroned in the middle. The Catechist stands in a prayerful posture and prays with hands raised, inviting all to do the same.

Let us pray.

**Father 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.**

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 (Luke 10:25-37):

A reading from the Gospel of Luke...

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

- What strikes you in this reading? What stands out for you?
- Who was the hero in the story? Why?
- What might you have done? Which character in the story do you think you would have been?
- What does this story tell us about how we should live our lives?
- Listen to the story again. As you listen, imagine the characters being people of today.

After initial response, read the reading again.

A reading from the Gospel of Luke...

Ask the following or similar discussion questions:

- What did the story look like in your imagination, set in current times?
- Who was the Samaritan? What were the other characters like?
- Why did you imagine the characters as you did?
- Who are our neighbors—those we must care for—today?

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, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions and requires us to eradicate racism and address the extreme poverty and disease plaguing so much of the world. Solidarity also includes the Scriptural call to welcome the stranger among us—including immigrants seeking work, a safe home, education for their children, and a decent life for their families. In light of the Gospel's invitation to be peacemakers, our commitment to solidarity with our neighbors—at home and abroad—also demands that we promote peace and pursue justice in a world marred by terrible violence and conflict. Decisions on the use of force should be guided by traditional moral criteria and undertaken only as a last resort. As Pope Paul VI taught: "If you want peace, work for justice" (*World Day of Peace Message*, January 1, 1972) (no. 53).

-- *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility* (no. 44)

After the reading, explain that the Church has a word for our oneness (write the word on the blackboard): **SOLIDARITY**

God made us to be one, solid human family. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we are united with our sisters and brothers throughout our school, our neighborhood, city, country and the world. Ask the following:

- When listening to music, watching television, being at a concert or sporting event, do you ever have the sense of being connected to others? Describe.
- How can you be responsible for someone who lives in another country?
- What can you do to show your solidarity with others? Some ideas to consider include:
 - Plan a "Food Fast" as a way to help those who are hungry and to heighten your solidarity with the poor. See the Catholic Relief Service website at <http://crs.org/>. Contact your diocesan director of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) to identify a local group working to empower low-income people. Find out how you can work with the group.
 - Establish a pen pal relationship with a class or youth group from a parish in another part of the world.
 - When you read a newspaper article or watch a news story that tells about someone who is suffering, spend some time in prayer to lift up their pain, ask God to heal their suffering, pray for those who might have caused the suffering, and ask for help in responding to the issue.
 - Sponsor a "Work of Human Hands" holiday bazaar where your parish or school community can buy holiday gifts from workers in other lands that are receiving fair wages. Go to <http://www.crsfairtrade.org/crafts/>
 - Organize your school or parish to use "Fair Trade" Coffee, which is grown by workers who receive fair wages. Go to <http://www.crsfairtrade.org/>.
 - Contact your parish social concerns coordinator or your diocesan social action director for additional ideas.
 - Write a letter to a legislator on international justice and peace issues about which USCCB has issued action alerts. Visit <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/takeaction.shtml> .

Closing Prayer

Return to the adult gathering or return to the prayer circle

Use a litany prayer. Pray for "neighbors" who are in need, particularly those mentioned during the session. Catechist sets the example and then invites young people to add to the litany.

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 children and teens throughout the world, especially those who are poor and do not have the freedom we enjoy. 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...
- Pause for student's prayers.
- Gathering our prayers into one, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us. Our Father...