

# 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 those who are weak and 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...**

*Now someone approached him and said, “Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?” He answered him, “Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” He asked him, “Which ones?” And Jesus replied, “ ‘You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother’; and ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” The young man said to him, “All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to [the] poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

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, proclaim 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 be a disciple who puts faith into action?
- 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. 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 never supported. A prime example is the intentional taking of innocent human life, as in abortion and euthanasia. . . . A legal system that violates the basic right to life on the grounds of choice is fundamentally flawed.

Similarly, human cloning, destructive research on human embryos, and other acts that directly violate the sanctity and dignity of human life are also intrinsically evil. These must always be opposed. Other direct assaults on innocent human life and violations of human dignity, such as genocide, torture, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified. Nor can violations of human dignity, such as acts of racism, treating workers as mere means to an end, deliberately subjecting workers to subhuman living conditions, treating the poor as disposable, or redefining marriage to deny its essential meaning, ever be justified (no. 23).

Opposition to intrinsically evil acts, which undercut the dignity of the human person, should also 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. . . . The moral imperative to respond to the needs of our neighbors—basic needs such as food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work—is universally binding on our consciences and may be legitimately fulfilled by a variety of means. Catholics must seek the best ways to respond to these needs (nos. 24-25).

### **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/newspaper 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 "doing 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 disciples who put our faith in action by both opposing evil and doing good. The 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 food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work 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.**