

CATECHETICAL SESSION JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL LESSON PLAN D

Theme: Catholic Social Teaching and the Public Square

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. A Bible should be enthroned prominently in the room. Gather around the Word for prayer.

Prior to this session, collect recent newspapers and current events/news magazines. If you have internet access and devices, bookmark websites of major news organizations and tag recent popular memes, videos, etc. about current events or issues. Ask the participants to spend the first ten minutes exploring some of these materials to identify some of the current events or issue that people are concerned about in today's world.

After the participants have had a chance to spend some time looking through the materials, invite responses from the large group about what some of those issues are. List them on a dry erase board or newsprint.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Spirit of all life and goodness,

We praise you for the beauty of your people.

Help us to work to respect the dignity of all people, and to protect the common good.

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 (Matthew 25:31-46):

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew...

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’ Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

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

- What experience have you had with a person who is hungry, a stranger, ill, or in prison? How was the face of Christ present in him or her?
- What is Jesus trying to teach us in this story?
- How does this teaching relate to our roles as faithful disciples who are called to be active community members?

After the student's initial response, proclaim the reading again.

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew...

Ask the following or similar discussion questions:

- Think about the current events and issues you brainstormed a few minutes ago. Who do you think is hungry, thirsty, naked, ill, a stranger, or imprisoned in our world today?

Faithful Citizenship Reading and Discussion

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

The Catholic approach to faithful citizenship rests on moral principles found in Sacred Scripture and Catholic moral and social teaching as well as in the hearts of all people of good will. . . . Human life is sacred. The **dignity of the human person** is the foundation of a moral vision for society. . . . We revere the lives of children in the womb, the lives of persons dying in war and from starvation, and indeed the lives of all human beings as children of God. We stand opposed to these and all activities that contribute to what Pope Francis has called "a throwaway culture" (nos. 44-45).

The human person is not only sacred but also social. Full human development takes place in relationship with others. The **family**-based on marriage between a man and a woman-is the first and fundamental unit of society . . . How we organize our society-in economics and politics, in law and policy-directly affects the common good and the capacity of individuals to develop their full potential. Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate actively in shaping society and to promote the well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable (nos. 47-48).

Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible, and a right to access those things required for human decency-food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing, freedom of religion and family life. . . . Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities-to one another, to our families, and to the larger society. . . . The economy must serve people, not the other way around. It is therefore necessary that an economic system serve the dignity of the human person and the common good by respecting the **dignity of work and protecting the rights of workers**. . . . We have a moral obligation to protect the planet on which we live-to respect God's creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for human beings, especially children at their most vulnerable stages of development (nos. 49-51).

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 (no. 52).

Ask the following or similar discussion questions to spark discussion:

- What values do these quotes lift up that should be important to Catholics?
- How might these values help us, as Catholics, to form our perspectives about the issues facing the world that we brainstormed in the beginning of this session?
- What issues facing members of our human family are you most concerned about? How could you and your school (or parish) respond?

Beforehand, the catechist should visit the WeAreSaltAndLight.org. . . website, which is a project of the USCCB Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development, to gather ideas about how the young people can pray, reach out, and learn together in order to explore a particular issue of interest in light of our faith. Any effort to respond to an issue of concern should be preceded by prayer and reflection (**Pray Together**. . .), encounter with those who are impacted (**Reach Out Together**. . .), and social analysis guided by Catholic social teaching (**Learn Together**. . .). The **Act Together**. . . section suggests numerous ways of acting through service and relief, advocacy, community development, ethical choices and more. The site also contains **over 60 stories**. . . of how communities of faith, including youth, are putting faith in action.

Closing Prayer

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

After all have gathered in silence, proclaim the reading.

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew...(Matthew 25:31-46)

Ask the young people to call to mind those who are hungry, thirsty, imprisoned, or stranger. Pray for them now.

Pause in silence.

Let us pray.

Father of all creation, You made humanity in your image and likeness.

May we see Jesus' face in those who are hungry, thirsty, imprisoned, and stranger. Spirit of justice, help us and all your people to seek respect for the dignity of all people and work to protect the common good.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.