

Lesson Plan for Lesson 28

Respecting Life

Preparation and Supplies

- Study chapter 28, “Respecting Life,” in the handbook.
- Gather a variety of reports on a recent scandal (from supermarket tabloids to mainstream newspapers); sheets of newsprint and markers, one of each for each group of three or four; and a Bible.
- Make copies of the handout “Promoting a Culture of Life” (Document #: TX003415), one for each participant.

Pray It! (5 minutes)

Tell the participants that class is going to begin with a reflection by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, who was an outspoken advocate for the protection of all life, from natural conception to natural death. **Direct** the young people to the Pray It! “Seamless Garment of Life,” on page 315 in the handbook. **Ask** the participants to prayerfully reflect on the words the cardinal wrote shortly before he died. **Read** with conviction the cardinal’s words.

Study It! (40 to 50 minutes, depending on your class length)

A. Human Life is Sacred

1. **Distribute** a copy of the handout “Promoting a Culture of Life” (Document #: TX003415) to each participant. Introduce the activity with these or similar words:
 - Pope Saint John Paul II taught about a *culture of life* and a *culture of death*. A culture of life is created by words, attitudes, or actions that promote people’s dignity or protect their God-given rights, especially the right to life. A culture of death is created by words, attitudes, and actions that take away people’s dignity or threaten their God-given rights, especially the right to life.
 - Read each statement on the handout and determine if it creates a culture of life or a culture of death, and place a check mark in the appropriate column.

Give the participants 3 minutes to complete the task. **Review** their answers with the rest of the class, and **ask** the young people to give reasons why it promotes life or death. **Acknowledge** the following:

- Promoting life is more than just being “for” or “against” something. Promoting life means that all our actions, words, and values embody a respect for human life in all its stages.



2. **Direct** the participants to read the chapter introduction and the sections “Human Life Is Sacred” and “Legitimate Defense,” on pages 306–308 in the handbook. The content covers points 1 through 4 on the handout “Lesson 28 Summary” (Document #: TX003414).
3. **(Optional) Direct** the young people to the Reflect directions on page 308 in the handbook and lead a discussion on them.

B. Life Issues and the Fifth Commandment

1. **Share** with the participants various reports of a recent scandal that has been in the news. Do this by **providing** them with a range of papers that cover the story, from supermarket tabloids to mainstream newspapers. **Invite** the participants to read and compare the different versions of the story by studying the kinds of words used, the style of grammar, and the overall tone of the stories. **Ask** which stories promote respect and dignity for people and which promote disrespect and violate people’s dignity by their mood, tone, or word choice.
2. **Direct** the young people to read the section “Life Issues and the Fifth Commandment,” on pages 308–317 in the handbook. The content covers points 5 through 9 on the handout “Lesson 28 Summary.”
3. **(Optional) Invite** questions and observations on the content. You might also select one of the Reflect questions on pages 308, 312, 315, or 318 in the handbook, and invite discussion.

Live It! (10 to 15 minutes)

1. **Direct** the participants to form groups of three or four. Give each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker. **Direct** them to turn to the Live It! “Five Ways to Promote Life,” on page 313 in the handbook.
Explain the task as follows:
 - Each group is to read the list provided in the Live It! “Five Ways to Promote Life.”
 - Building on this list, create a list of additional ways in which you can actively promote life.
 - Select someone from your group to write your group’s ideas on the sheet of newsprint.
2. After the groups have had time to create their lists, **invite** a representative from each group to share that group’s list. **Post** the sheets of newsprint around the room. **Ask** the participants to review the lists and to select one task each young person would be willing to take on as a project to promote life in her or his community.
3. **Share** the following comments in your own words:
 - The natural law God has put in our heart tells us that every human life has eternal value. From the unborn child to the elderly person suffering from a debilitating disease, every human life has dignity and is sacred.
 - God expects us to stand in awe of human life, to have profound respect for the dignity of the human person. But no generation before has had to consider so many complex and controversial issues that threaten the dignity of life. This is all the more reason for people of faith to take a strong stand in protecting the dignity of life.



- We are all made in the image of God. This statement is at the heart of morality. It is the foundation for loving other people, our God, and ourselves. The beginning and end of every life is up to God, and only God.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Following any announcements, **invite** a participant to read John 10:10. Conclude by **leading** the following prayer:

Dear God,

You call us to respect the dignity of all people

And you walk with us when we face the forces that violate human life and dignity.

Be with us now and always as we continue your work of protecting human life and dignity.

And let our days and our deeds overflow with your love and your abundant life.

All: Amen.

