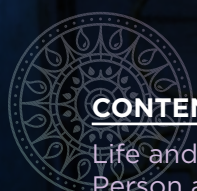


life and dignity of the human person

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: VIETNAM

LESSON PLANS GRADES 1-8



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Photo by Laura Sheahan/CRS

background information for session leaders

LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

The principle Life and Dignity of the Human Person is one of the seven themes of Catholic social teaching (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). We believe that God created man and woman in his image (Genesis 1:26–27) and because of this all people have inherent dignity. There is nothing anyone can do to gain or take away their human dignity, since it is God given, not earned.

Because of this, we believe that every life is sacred and that no life—born or unborn—is disposable. All of the principles of Catholic social teaching flow from the core belief that every person has inherent dignity that must be respected.



A CRS program that provides in-home tutoring for children with disabilities has helped Thuan Trinh learn to read and write.
Photo by Laura Sheahan/CRS

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. We are motivated by the example of Jesus Christ to assist poor and suffering people in more than 100 countries on the basis of need, without regard to race, religion or nationality. Founded in 1943, CRS reaches 85 million of the world's poorest people each year with innovative solutions to poverty, hunger, drought, disease and emergencies. CRS works in close partnership with the Catholic Church around the world, and with local,

national and international organizations that share our commitment to finding ways to meet immediate needs while empowering communities for the long term.

LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON AND CRS

CRS' programming overseas upholds the Catholic social teaching principle Life and Dignity of the Human Person. In Vietnam, disabilities can carry stigma and children with disabilities are often ostracized—in some cases, by their own families. Schools often lack the resources to serve students with disabilities. We support parents and teachers to ensure children with disabilities achieve their potential. Our work recognizes the inherent dignity of each person and demonstrates that quality education must be a priority for all people.



Thuan's story



Above: Vietnam, located on the eastern coast of the Indochina Peninsula, has experienced significant economic growth, causing a widening gap between rich and poor. Far right: Thuan has learned to read and write through the support of CRS' Inclusion for Vietnamese with Disabilities program.

Map credit: OCHA. Top Photo by Kim Pozniak/CRS. Bottom Photos by Laura Sheahen/CRS.

Quat Trinh and her daughter, **Thuan**, live in Vietnam. Thuan has cerebral palsy and can't walk or move easily. When Thuan was young, her mother was frustrated and cried often. Quat wanted her daughter to learn, but Thuan wasn't strong enough to go to school. And schools in Vietnam often lack resources to serve students with disabilities.

Catholic Relief Services invited Quat to a meeting for parents who have children with disabilities. Quat learned how to exercise Thuan's muscles and how to help her eat on her own. She wrote the alphabet on the wall near Thuan's bed so she could learn it. Quat also received help from a tutor who worked closely with Thuan. In the beginning, Thuan could not even hold a pen. With time, she was able to write many things, including math problems and even poems! Thuan's tutor was amazed at how much she accomplished.



Still, Quat and Thuan faced daily challenges because they didn't have much support. Quat helped organize a local parents association where parents shared advice about how to care for children with disabilities, celebrate their children's accomplishments and comfort each other through difficult times. Quat is proud of her daughter—who she brags is very smart—and is grateful for all the progress Thuan has made.

LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Every person is made in the image of God. This means that every life is sacred and all people are worthy of respect, no matter who they are or where they live. We are called to care for all human life.

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COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: VIETNAM

LESSON PLAN GRADES 1-3

45 Minutes

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle Life and Dignity of the Human Person (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching) through the story of Thuan Trinh, a child with disabilities who lives in Vietnam.

MATERIALS

- Bible
- Coloring supplies
- **Life and Dignity of the Human Person Activity Sheets, Grades 1-3**
- **Thuan's Story**
- Whiteboard and marker
- World map

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Explain that today you will reflect on the Catholic social teaching principle Life and Dignity of the Human Person.
2. Share that all people are made in the image of God. This means that all people have God-given dignity, and are worthy of respect no matter who they are, where they live or what they have done.
3. Explain that living out this principle means that we do things that show we care for other people. Ask students to brainstorm class rules about caring for other students. Write their answers on the board.

ACTIVITY (20 MINUTES)

1. Say that you will reflect more about the principle Life and Dignity of the Human person through the story of Thuan, who has a disability and lives in Vietnam.
2. Locate Vietnam on a map and read **Thuan's Story**. Answer questions students have about her story.
3. Distribute **Life and Dignity of the Human Person Activity Sheets, Grades 1-3**, and coloring supplies, and allow them time to complete them.
4. Ask students: How did Quat's actions respect her daughter's dignity? How did the people in Quat's community respect the dignity of all people?

CLOSING PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Read Psalms 139:13-14.

Creator of all people, we pray that we always remember that everyone is wonderfully made in your image. Help us always treat others in a way that honors their dignity. Amen

TAKING IT HOME

Encourage students to talk to their families about how they treat each other, their friends and members of their community.

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COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: VIETNAM

ACTIVITY SHEET GRADES 1-3

Draw pictures of Thuan's story.

Quat Trinh and her daughter, Thuan, live in Vietnam.

Thuan wasn't strong enough to go to school, so she stayed home with her mom.

Catholic Relief Services taught Quat how to help Thuan eat on her own.

A tutor helped Thuan learn how to write.

Quat helped organize a group of parents who now support each other.

Quat is very proud of Thuan!

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COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: VIETNAM

LESSON PLAN GRADES 4-6

45 Minutes

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle Life and Dignity of the Human Person (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching) through the story of Thuan Trinh, a child with disabilities who lives in Vietnam.

MATERIALS

- Bible
- Blindfolds, one per group
- Coloring supplies
- **Life and Dignity of the Human Person Activity Sheets, Grades 4-6**
- Pens or pencils
- Simple puzzles, one per group
- **Thuan's Story**
- World map

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Divide students into small groups.
2. Give each group a puzzle and blindfold one member.
3. Ask the groups to assemble the puzzles. Explain that each member of the group must help.
4. As the groups work on the puzzles, take note of how groups include the blindfolded student.

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Discuss the puzzle activity. Ask: Was the blindfolded student included? Did he/she get frustrated? How did the other members interact with the blindfolded student?
2. Explain the Catholic social teaching principle Life and Dignity of the Human Person. Ask: How does this principle relate to the puzzle activity?
3. Locate Vietnam on a map and read **Thuan's Story**.
4. Ask how Quat and her community live out the principle Life and Dignity of the Human Person.
5. Distribute **Life and Dignity of the Human Person Activity Sheets, Grades 4-6**, and coloring supplies. Ask students to share their ideas with each other.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Read Genesis 1:27.

Creator God, You have made us in your image and likeness. Help us remember to treat each person with respect and welcome them into our community. Amen

TAKING IT HOME

Ask students to hang their activity sheets somewhere in their homes to remind them of their commitment to live out the principle Life and Dignity of the Human Person.

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COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: VIETNAM

ACTIVITY SHEET GRADES 4-6

Use words and images to show how you can live out the principle Life and Dignity of the Human person in your:

Family

School

Neighborhood/community

World

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COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: VIETNAM

LESSON PLAN GRADES 7-8

50 Minutes

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle Life and Dignity of the Human Person (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching) through the story of Thuan Trinh, a child with disabilities who lives in Vietnam.

MATERIALS

- Bibles for each student
- Pens or pencils
- Sticky notes, one for each student
- **Thuan's Story**
- Whiteboard and marker

ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES)

1. Explain that today you will reflect on the Catholic social teaching principle Life and Dignity of the Human Person. Share what this principle means.
2. Divide students into groups and pass out Bibles. Assign groups a passage (Luke 10:29-37, Mark 1:40-45, Matthew 9:9-12, John 9:1-11) to read and reflect on. Ask students to discuss: Who does Jesus reach out to in the story? How does Jesus honor the person's dignity? What do others think of this person? (Write Bible passages and questions on the board.)
3. Depending on time, ask each group to create a short skit or come up with a modern example of a way they or society can honor people's dignity. Share skits and/or examples.

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Explain that we are invited to live as Jesus did by treating other people with dignity in our daily lives. Share that you will read a story with one example of how this is lived out.
2. Locate Vietnam on a map and read **Thuan's Story**.
3. Ask: How was Thuan's dignity honored? Before Catholic Relief Services helped Thuan and her mom, Quat, how did Thuan's disability limit her access to things we take for granted?

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Distribute a sticky note to each student. Ask each student to write a specific way they can practice the principle Life and Dignity of the Human Person in their own lives this week.

Jesus, we pray that we will always treat others as you did, by honoring their dignity. We pause now as we silently ask you to help us live out your example in our own lives this week. (Pause for a moment of silence.) Amen

TAKING IT HOME

Invite students to put the sticky note in a place where it will remind them of their commitment for the week.