

**Archdiocese of Los Angeles Respect Life Curriculum**  
**Office of Life, Peace and Justice**

Teacher Resources Day Five	
<b>Title/Theme</b>	<b>Living for LIFE</b> Loving those most in need: the sick, the elderly, and those with special needs
<b>Grade/Subject</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Religion
<b>Length of Unit/Timeframe</b>	<i>One day with optional follow-up service-learning activities</i>
<b>Overview</b>	Day 5 of a 5 day Respect Life Curriculum for Respect Life Week Sept. 30-Oct. 4, 2013
<b>Day 5: Religion</b>	Teachers and students will discuss teaching on euthanasia and physician assisted suicide. In addition, students will be presented with the Catholic viewpoint on death with dignity. See below and student handout for recommendations.
Essential Questions:	
As people of LIFE, what is our responsibility to the elderly? How can we show people who are suffering or dying that they are loved unconditionally by God? What can we do to break down the barriers of loneliness or depression?	
Essential Vocabulary	
Euthanasia, Family, Elders, Culture of Life, Culture of Death, Terminal Sedation, Assisted Suicide, Hospice, Palliative Care	
Resources	
<p><b>Classroom Instruction:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. View the Powerpoint on Euthanasia               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ask ‘What is euthanasia?’ Refer to CCC#2276-2279</li> <li>b. Discuss the similarities between the definitions of abortion and euthansia.</li> <li>c. As a group have students research in class (using iPads/internet, etc..) other violations against human life</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Based on the powerpoint and group research, ask why euthanasia is wrong? Facilitate the discussion among the students.</li> <li>3. Read an excerpt from Living The Gospel of Life (#23) and have small groups connect the document to the following questions: <b>What have the elderly done to make your life better?</b> (examples could be Defending the country, Helped to build industry and jobs; Brought us through the Great Depression, etc...); <b>What have I learned from the elderly?</b> (examples: responsibility, hard work, patriotism, compassion, generosity, commitment) <b>Does Euthanasia show respect for the elderly or that we value them?; How is the Family the sanctuary of life?</b> (Refer to The Gospel of Life #4) <b>Compare and contrast the disability of a broken leg in adolescence to the disability of walking or eating independently in the elderly. Compare and contrast the keen and quick mental abilities of an adult to the impaired cognition of the elderly. Does one possess more or less dignity as a person and deserving more or less of respect and love?</b></li> <li>4. Once they’ve made that connection, use their findings to do one of the following:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Describe an incident that illustrates the unitive aspect of the family in pulling</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	

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together during adversity to protect one or more of its members.

- b. Create a list of organizations that assist those who are less fortunate and do not have a family.
- c. Share with the class

#### **Homework Activities/Projects (optional—choose one):**

1. Students can bring in pictures of themselves and their family members, inserting them into a timeline that includes the ages/stages of human development and violations of life that could occur along the way.
2. Collect pictures and photographs of a wide variety of persons -- old and young. Make sure the collection consists of persons who will be viewed by the youth positively and negatively (ex. newborn infant, a prisoner, a well known athlete, a homeless person, dying person, etc.). Show or project the pictures one at a time and ask the students to name a positive or good characteristic about each person. To make it more challenging, you may ask for a rapid response that requires 5 seconds to name as many positive qualities. Point out that it is not easy to see the good in some people; however, God created all in His image and likeness. Consequently, the Church teaches that each person is precious and valued. Compare how easy/difficult it was to come up with good qualities especially by those viewed negatively. Compare the answers to how society sometimes places false values on certain persons. This should lead to such discussion questions as:
  - What does it mean that humans are created in God's image?
  - Have students name a quality within themselves that is of God's image.
  - Ask, if we are made in God's image, then why do some people commit evil acts?
  - Ask the question if all have the same dignity? (ex. doctor, terrorist, unborn, etc..)
  - Why are some treated differently?
3. **Debate:** Take one of the scenarios listed below and state a pro/con defense based on Church Documents, Scripture, Catechism of the Catholic Church, Church Doctrine, and etc...

#### **Scenario #1: Insurance Companies and Sustaining Life**

Imagine that you are a vice-president of a major health insurance group. You are asked to develop a policy detailing the point at which your insurance company will cease to support efforts to keep a patient alive. Specify the rationale for your decisions.

#### **Scenario #2: Physicians' Special Responsibilities**

Some who are faced with terminal illnesses turn to physicians for assistance in dying. What special responsibilities do physicians have in this regard? Do they have any special obligation to their own patients simply because they are their own patients? Do they have any special obligations as physicians not to do anything that would end life?

#### **Scenario #3: Hydration and Nutrition**

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An elderly woman is admitted to a nursing home after having suffered a stroke which left her unable to speak or walk. Due to her difficulty in swallowing, a feeding tube is inserted into her stomach. She is able to hear and understand others, and communicates her needs by mumbling or writing on a notepad. She is otherwise very healthy without any other medical problems and able to sustain in this condition for a few years. Suddenly, one day, her brother who has power of attorney over her finances and medical decisions, requests to remove the feeding tube because “she is not getting better”. How would you respond to his request? If the feeding tube is removed, what would be her cause of death?

#### **Scenario #4: Government Regulations and Conscience Protection**

Imagine you are the president of a Christian store and provide health insurance for your employees. The government has required that you provide health insurance coverage for abortions and medications that produce abortions. You know that this is morally wrong and is in contradiction to your conscience. If you don't comply with the government regulation, your company will be fined a very costly tax that may put you out of business. Discuss options of what to do?

#### **Teacher background**

**Catholic Social Teaching: The Call to Family and Community**  
([teacherweb.com/NJ/.../ThemesofCatholicsocialteaching123.ppt](http://teacherweb.com/NJ/.../ThemesofCatholicsocialteaching123.ppt) )

**Priests For Life Resources and Activities for The Youth**

<http://www.priestsforlife.org/youth/>

**Priests For Life Podcasts**

[www.priestsforlife.org/podcast/](http://www.priestsforlife.org/podcast/)

**The Choice Game: Interactive Computer Game for Moral Decision Making**

<http://www.thechoicegame.com/>

**Glossary of Terms Concerning End of Life Issues**

[http://www.finalexit.org/glossary\\_assisted\\_suicide.html](http://www.finalexit.org/glossary_assisted_suicide.html)

**“Evangelium Vitae (On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life)”, Pope John Paul II, 1995**

**“Salvifici Doloris (On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering)”, Pope John Paul II, 1984**

**The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/end-of-life/euthanasia>

**Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Nov. 7, 2009.**

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**Catholic Medical Association Conference, Phoenix, Arizona (2011)**

- “Moral Decision Making”, by Sister Terese Auer, O.P., PhD
- “Current Conscience Litigation Landscape” by Alan E. Sears, JD
- “The Practice of Virtue in the Practice of Medicine” by Sister Mary Diana Dreger, O.P., M.D. F.A.C.P.
  
- “The 10 Commandments for Health Care Workers” by Chris Kaczor, PhD
- Keynote Speaker: Most Reverend Jose Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles

**“Life Issues Forum: Mercy and the Gospel of Life” by Tom Grenchik**

**“Caring For Each Other, Even Unto Death” by Marie T. Hilliard, MS, MA, JCL, PhD**

**“Statement on Euthanasia”, NCCB, Sept. 12, 1991**

**“Killing the Pain, Not the Patient: Palliative Care vs. Assisted Suicide”, Doerflinger, Richard and Carlos F. Gomez, MD, PhD.**

**[old.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/98rlpdoe.shtml](http://old.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/98rlpdoe.shtml).**

**“To Live Each Day with Dignity: A Statement on Physician-Assisted Suicide”, NCCB, 1991**

**“Assisted Suicide:Death by Choice?”, Rita Marker, 2009**

**“Euthansia: False Light” IAEZTF video 1995, P.O. Box 760, Steubenville, Ohio 43952**

**“Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy: How to Spiritually Care for the Sick, Injured and Dying” DVD**

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*"The spirit in the schools of one generation, is the spirit in the Government of the next."*

**May be included for the older/more mature students.**

**Church Teachings on The Sanctity of Life**

1. Read excerpt from Donum Vitae (#5 Intro.)- "From the moment of conception, the life of every human being is to be respected..."
2. Define Abortion and Discuss other related methods such as Assisted Suicide, Euthanasia, Terminal Sedation, Hospice)
  - a. Distinguish between an unintended death by a licensed Physician who performs a procedure to save the life of the person, therapeutic treatment or surgery on preborn children that result in unintentional death, removal of a preborn child who has died, and cases of miscarriage versus treatments that intend to terminate the life of a child or adult/elderly person.
  - b. Review Church teachings that affirm the Dignity of Life: Catechism of The Catholic Church #2271-2274, #2277-2278, #2322; Scripture References; The Gospel of Life #45 & #60; Pope Benedict XVI Address on February 27, 2006 entitled God's Love Doesn't Distinguish Embryo, Toddler, Teen and Elderly.