

March: Elderly & Disabled – Lives that Shouldn't be Labeled

Concept

All life is valuable until natural death.

Objectives

- To inform the students of ways they can show God's love and compassion to the elderly and the disabled. Children are very visual, and it is important to teach them that although some people look "different," their lives are very valuable.
- To teach the students that Euthanasia for any reason is wrong and not part of God's plan.

Kindergarten – 5th Grade

- Every person is important and of value – even if they are needy, small, or have a disability.

6th Grade and Older

- Elderly people and those with disabilities may not be able to do all the things that others can, but their lives are just as valuable.

Relevant Bible Verse

“Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”
– Matthew 25:40

Materials

All Grades – Grandparent Letter: copy of blank letter template (attached), or you can go to a local Dollar Tree store and purchase a pack of blank cards.

6th Grade and Older – “Freedom to Die” by Fr. Frank Pavone: visit: www.priestsforlife.org

Lesson Plan Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, You have given each of us life, a life that You designed and planned for us. Help us to value all life – especially the lives of those that appear to be weak, helpless, or different than us. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen

Discussion Prompts & Questions

Discussion about Disabilities

- Discuss the differences we notice in others - even our family members (hair, eyes, age, personalities, strengths, weaknesses, etc)
 - Do these differences make us less valuable? Why or why not?
 - Ask if the students know someone with a disability? What is their disability? How have they overcome this disability?
 - What are some other disabilities that people may have?
 - Are these people less valuable?
 - What are some of their strengths?

- Do we have the right to end his life because of the disability? No, only God can create a life and take a life.
- How can we help the disabled in our community?

Discussion about the Elderly

- How do the elderly (grandparents) help us? Why are they valuable?
 - They can love us and pray for us. The times they lived in are different than ours; therefore, they give us a glimpse of history as they remember it. Life and the way of living was much different when they were your age. Many times they have a different perspective on life because of lessons they learned from choices they have made over the years. Spending time with the elderly is valuable because they are full of history, but may lose some memory as they age.
- What can we do to reach out to the elderly? Ideas – Spend time with your grandparent, adopt a grandparent in a retirement home in your community. Pray for the elderly, visit with them, let them know how much you value them and what they have contributed to the world with their gifts and talents.

6th Grade and Older Additional Discussion Prompts

- Discuss euthanasia and how many people who are in favor of euthanasia use deceptive vocabulary. They may call it “assisted killing” or “dying with dignity.”
- Discuss how euthanasia is not God’s plan as we see in the Matthew 25:39. To go further, have a student read Matthew 25:31-46 and discuss this passage with the students.
- Read and discuss “Freedom to Die” by Father Frank Pavone - <http://www.priestsforlife.org/euthanasia/freedomtodie.html>

Activities

All Grades: Blindfold Activity

- Put the blindfold over a student’s eyes. Have another student lead him/her. Have the blindfolded student attempt to do different activities (ie, write, tie his/her shoe, shake someone’s hand). Try it with several different students. Have each student pay attention to how they feel, what they think they can still do with that disability, etc.
- Blindfold Activity Discussions
 - How did it feel to be blindfolded and led by someone else?
 - Was he/she any less valuable because they couldn’t see?
 - How did it feel leading that person?
 - Have students list/discuss ways that they can help the disabled and the elderly.
 - Discuss the ways that many people overcome their disability.

All Grades: Grandparent Letter

- Have each student write a letter to their grandparent, an elderly person or someone they know who is disabled. Encourage the students to thank these people for things they have done for them and let them know how much they love them and appreciate them. They can also write a prayer for this person and include it.

Closing Prayer:

Glory Be

March Culture of Life Important Dates & Feast Days:

- March 19 – Feast of St. Joseph
- March 21 – World Down Syndrome Day
- March 25 – Feast of the Annunciation

Spiritual Works of Mercy

Novena for March

Dear Jesus, sometimes people have problems that do not allow them to do everything that most people can do. Help us to always remember that even though a person may not be able to move or think or do many things, they are still just as valuable to You and to us as everyone else. May we always help those who are weaker or less able to do things both by our prayers and our actions whenever a person needs help. Please protect those who are disabled or elderly in all that they do. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Corporal Works of Mercy:

Blessing Bags: Retirement Home or Home for Disabled

Contacts:

- The Respect Life Office near your school or parish to see what needs they have
- A retirement home or home for the disabled near your school or parish to see what needs the residence has

