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Thank you for your interest in the Monthly Lesson we are offering for you to use in your home or classroom.

Each month, we will provide a FREE Lesson focusing on a USCCB Respect Life topic.

Our Footprints for Life Program is a comprehensive supplement that educates children on ALL life issues and how they can make a difference.

For more information on our complete program, please visit <http://www.choosethechild.com/footprints-for-life-and-more.php>

If you have any questions, please contact Natasia Kissinger at ntkissinger@choosethechild.com or 504-339-5384.

Empowering & Educating Children to Change the Culture

A Culture of Life Program

Natasia T. Kissinger

Footprints for Life
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**There is no footprint too small that
it can't leave an imprint on this world.**

- Author Unknown

**Train the young in the way they should go;
even when old, they will not swerve from it.**

- Proverbs 22:6

*This book is dedicated to my Blessings:
Alexis, Jordan, Kylie, Britton, Keira and Ava*

*In memory of my dad, Douglas C. Turner, DCT
December 17, 1948 – March 4, 2015*

I would like to thank God for the inspiration for this book. He has provided the patience, grace, and time that was needed to build this life-saving program. Also, I am so blessed to have Ricky, my husband, and his continued belief, encouragement, and love throughout this process. I am so grateful that God provided with me with my mom, Melanie, for instilling a foundation of faith and spiritual direction, and to my dad, Doug, for inspiring me to become more active in the Culture of Life and the inherited trait of leadership. Many thanks to Debbie Shinskie, Alex Seghers, & Rob Stephens who gave their precious time and valued input. Another thank you to Mrs. Kathmann and the teachers at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School for their support and faith. Finally, to all of my family, friends, and supporters of Choose the Child.

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Welcome & Introduction

Greeting and welcome to this journey!

Educating and empowering our children to be a voice for the voiceless is an exciting, fun, challenging, and, most importantly, prayerful task. Children learn what they live, and parents and teachers are their first role models and leaders. As a mom of six children, I am responsible for teaching my children how to respect all life and to become a voice for the voiceless. I look forward to you joining me on this journey. There are so many people in our community who struggle with unplanned life events and feel hopeless and devastated. It is extremely important to teach them that ALL life should be treated with dignity, compassion, and truth.

By teaching our children to pray for, respect, and support those in need, we raise them to stand for what they believe in and to always have faith that God will provide. Our children can become the footprints for those who can't find the strength to walk through life's difficult roads. Children today have a very strong passion to help others – they just need a path.

This program is designed to be used in any grade. All of the lessons can be adapted to fit the needs and ages of your children.

The monthly themes, lessons, and activities contained in this book are designed to allow children to be the voice – the voice that will become the wind beneath someone's wings so that we may all soar together in this world and to heaven one day.

Please know that I am praying for you and your children as you begin this life-changing journey to save lives.

Blessings,
Natasia

How to use this book

This program was designed to be used in a classroom and/or home setting. Each month offers several components to reinforce the concept/objective for the month. It may not be possible to do the entire monthly lesson in one class period or sitting. The lessons and activities can be taught over several days or weeks.

Concept and Objectives

The concept lets you know which USCCB respect life theme that the lesson focuses on for the month. In the objectives, you will find a list of goals that we want to teach the children based on that theme. These are to give you a goal for the lesson each month.

Bible Verses

The Bible verses are an important part of each lesson because they help the children understand the root of our beliefs and values. To reinforce the Bible verses, display these verses in the classroom throughout the month. Read them to the children and then have them read it together as a group. Ask the children what they think the bible verses mean. Discuss the verse with children throughout the month. If it fits within your curriculum, include the bible verse on a test that month.

Spiritual Adoption Update

As explained in the Spiritual Adoption introduction, you will be praying for an unborn baby throughout the year. Each month is an update on the unborn baby that the children are praying for daily. The update is written in first person from the point of view of the unborn child to reinforce the humanity of that child. The children enjoy hearing the updates and learning about the baby they are committed to praying for.

Materials

The Materials section lists supplies that are relatively inexpensive and will be used in the activity(ies) for the month. Many of these are items that you may already have.

Opening Prayer

This is a simple prayer to open the lesson.

Discussion and Questions

The discussion and questions are the substance of each month. The discussion engages the children in the topic and teaches them more about the impact they can have in their community to help create a culture of life. The questions help children synthesize the information and think critically about the ideas at hand.

Activity

Each activity encourages children to become actively involved in building a culture of life. The activities are designed to be simple, effective, and fun.

For most months there are resources and templates in Appendix A that help complete the activity.

Closing Prayer

The Glory Be prayer is appropriate to end the lessons because it reminds us that God deserves all the glory.

Culture of Life Important Dates & Feast Days

These are significant dates in the Respect Life Movement. On these days, maybe an extra prayer can be said or you may want to begin or end the monthly novena on some of these dates.

Spiritual Works of Mercy

Each month includes a novena to pray for those suffering in some way. These novenas can be said for 9 days of the month. You may want to start or end the novena on one of the Culture of Life Important Dates.

Corporal Works of Mercy

The Corporal Works of Mercy are a great way to teach the children how to tangibly help the less fortunate in the community. While you may not be able to do the Corporal Works of Mercy each month, maybe you can choose a few to do throughout the year.

Appendix A: Templates & Resources for Monthly Activities

This section contains resources that will help you complete the monthly activities. It is ordered by month beginning in September and ending with April.

Appendix B: Ladybug Lessons

The Ladybug Lessons contain an additional prayer idea for each month. The prayer ideas are a reflection on a specific decade of the rosary. This appendix also contains themed color and snack ideas to accompany the monthly lessons.

Appendix C: Tidbits & More to build a Culture of Life

This section contains additional activities, resources, ideas, and prayers that may be helpful to add to the other lessons.

Mission Statement

The importance of laying a foundation in children cannot be emphasized enough. In a world that glorifies the culture of death, it is vital that we teach our children to build a Culture of Life. This program encourages relationships among teachers and children, which is essential to building a Culture of Life. In addition, it allows the teachers to speak to the humanity of the children – teaching them that they are worthy of dignity and respect.

“For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ”

- 1 Corinthians 3:11

Gospel of Life Statement

“To be truly a people at the service of life we must propose these truths constantly and courageously from the very first proclamation of the Gospel, and thereafter in catechesis, in the various forms of preaching, in personal dialogue and in all educational activity.”

- The Gospel of Life 82

4 Pillars of Respect Life Work

from the USCCB Pastoral Plan for Respect Life Activities

1. Public Information & Education — Increase awareness of all life issues
2. Pastoral Care — Care for those whose lives are in danger
3. Public Policy — Be a voice for the voiceless in public life
4. Prayer & Worship — Pray for those whose lives are in danger & those who make decisions about life

Monthly Teacher Checklist

- Concept/Objectives
- Bible Verse
- Spiritual Adoption Update
- Materials
- Opening Prayer
- Discussion/Questions
- Activity (Resources - Appendix A)
- Closing Prayer
- Culture of Life Important Dates
- Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy

Note: It is suggested that the word “abortion” should not be used until 4th/5th grade. That is a delicate topic that should be treated delicately with younger children. The entire concept of this curriculum is to focus on being “Positively Pro-Life.” If the word should be mentioned by a student in the classroom, some possible responses might be: “Where did you hear that?” or “We aren’t going to discuss that right now; we need to get back to our topic.”

Spiritual Works of Mercy in the Lessons

The Spiritual Works of Mercy are to:

- Counsel the Doubtful
- Instruct the Ignorant
- Admonish the Sinner
- Comfort the Sorrowful
- Forgive Injuries
- Bear Wrongs Patiently
- Pray for the Living and the Dead

I have worked these works into the lesson plans through two activities:

1. A Novena for the Month's Focus – In each month, you will find a short novena. A novena is a special prayer said for a specific intention for nine consecutive days. These days aren't designated and can be determined by the teacher.

***Suggestion: Say the Novena leading up to or starting with one of the Culture of Life Important Dates.*

2. A Spiritual Adoption — A spiritual adoption is a prayer said for someone over a designated time. In this case, we will spiritually adopt an unborn baby who is in danger of abortion. (For grades K-4, it is encouraged to tell the children that we are praying for a baby to be born healthy. It is not suggested to talk about abortion in those grades.) Although we do not know who the actual baby is, God does, and He will direct your prayers to a life in danger. This is also a great school-wide project. Here is a simple plan:

1. Have each class in grades K-5 spiritually adopt a baby and name it. The name is chosen by the students and/or the teacher. Each student in 6th grade and up will spiritually adopt their own baby individually. The students can decide on a name for their baby.
2. The classes are asked to pray daily for 9 months for their unborn baby and his/her mommy.
3. 6th grade and older students will make posters for each classroom. For PK & Middle School, the posters say "Pray for the Unborn." For K – 5th grade, the poster displays the name they chose for their spiritually adopted baby. Also, every poster has a picture of an unborn baby and the spiritual adoption prayer by Archbishop Fulton Sheen. (See Appendix A - October)
4. The spiritual adoption update can be read monthly at the school Mass or via the school announcements. You can visit ChoosetheChild.com for more information.
5. Hold a baby shower to celebrate the lives being saved through the spiritual adoption. This can be held anytime during the year. A couple of suggestions are near January 22 (anniversary of Roe v Wade) or during the Easter Season (New Life).
6. Another option: the whole school or pro-life club can spiritually adopt a baby but keep the gender unknown. Have a "gender reveal" celebration/baby shower.

Corporal Works of Mercy in the Lessons

The Corporal Works of Mercy are to:

- Feed the Hungry
- Give Drink to the Thirsty
- Shelter the Homeless
- Visit the Sick
- Visit the Prisoners
- Bury the Dead
- Give Alms to the Poor

I have worked these works into the lesson plans through two activities:

1. Blessing Bags – Every month the children may make “Blessing Bags” for a ministry associated with the Culture of Life theme for that month. These bags are a great way to incorporate the Corporal Works of Mercy in the classroom. In each lesson there are examples of items to include in the Blessing Bags. When you are doing the month’s lesson you can contact the Archdiocesan Respect Life Office or the organizations directly to find out the specific needs at that time.

Many Blessing Bags may include a Spiritual Bouquet. These cards can be found in Appendix A.

2. Baby Bags (Optional) – These are made for families expecting a baby and families who have had a baby. You can either have the children decorate the bags or use small bags purchased from your local craft store. Appropriate items for these bags include Spiritual Bouquets, rosaries, prayer cards, feet pins, rosary bracelets, pro-life magnets, and anything you think would be a “Blessing” to the family. You can find items through Heritage House (hh76.com), your local religious supply or craft store. The student can make cards to attach to the bags. These are given to families at school, in the parish or community when they learn that they are expecting a baby and/or when the baby is born.

October: Life of the Unborn Child – Pray & Protect

Respect Life Month

Concept

Life begins at creation – the moment that God places the soul inside his/her mother.

Objectives

Kindergarten – 5th Grade

- Teach students the following: You were planned by God and created in your mother’s womb. He has a purpose for you in this world. When you were growing inside your mom, you were the same person that you are today. You were just much smaller and needed protection to grow. We are called to pray for and protect the unborn babies.

6th Grade and Older

- Make students aware that although we change and grow from the moment of creation until death, we are still the same person that God created. All of us have a specific purpose in this world.

Relevant Bible Verse

“My bones are not hidden from you, When I was being made in secret, fashioned in the depths of the earth.” - Psalm 139:15

Spiritual Adoption: A Reflection on a 1-month old

Thank you for praying for me every day! Can you believe I am already one month old? My heart is now pumping my own blood and my backbone is growing. I still very tiny, and I am so thankful for your prayers. I know that your prayers are helping me to grow every day.

Materials for Discussion

All Grades – Fetal Development Brochure or Handout

- You can order brochures from: Heritage House – hh76.com
- You can also make a handout from fetal development found on these internet sources:
 - National Right to Life Fetal Development page: <http://www.nrlc.org/archive/abortion/facts/fetaldevelopment.html>
 - Pro Life Across America Fetal Development page: <https://prolifeacrossamerica.org/baby-developmental-facts/>
- Another option is to display the aforementioned website pages on the projector in your classroom. You can also display pictures of the unborn baby at the different stages of development.

All Grades Suggested Aids

- Fetal Models: “Young One” (a small baby model that is the size of a 12-week unborn baby) or “Precious Feet” pins (feet are the size of a 12-week unborn baby) from Heritage House (hh76.com) You can have one for each student or a few to pass and share. These can be used all year.
- Video: Ultrasound videos are available on YouTube.com

Materials for Activities

All Grades – Slogan Posters Activity: ½ poster board, stickers and/or stamps, markers, crayons, sample of slogans (Appendix A)

All Grades – “It’s a Baby...but it’s still Me” Activity: Students need to bring in a baby picture of themselves. They shouldn’t show the picture to anyone until the game is played. (Another option: bring in a baby picture and current picture of a grandparent)

All Grades – “One Light, One Spark” Activity: A small flashlight

Lesson Plan Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, You have created each of one of us in our mother’s womb. Thank You for the gift of life that You have given us. Help us to cherish our life each and every day. Please show us the purpose for which we were created so that we may always live Your Will. We ask this in Jesus’s name, Amen.

Discussion Prompt Points

- “Fetus” means “little one,” not “blob of tissue.” It is a life.
- Stages of Fetal Development – Refer to the handout/brochure/display of Fetal Development and point out these very important milestones:
 - Creation – ALL inherited traits are determined – eye color, hair color, dimples, height, gifts, talents and so much more! With ultrasounds and research, science is proving that life begins at conception/creation.
 - 18-22 Days – The baby’s heart begins to beat
 - 43-45 Days – Brain coordinates movement
 - 7 Weeks – Baby is moving
 - 9 Weeks – The baby has permanent, individual fingerprints
 - 10 Weeks – The baby has a sense of touch and can feel comfort and pain
 - 12 Weeks – The baby can smile, suck his/her thumb and make a fist. ALL of the baby’s organs are present by 12 weeks. (liveactionnews.org)

Discussion Questions and Ideas using Fetal Development Sheet

These questions are to help the children learn more about the humanity of the unborn baby.

- When does the unborn baby’s heart begin to beat? (Between 18-22 days)
- When are all the organs formed? (12 weeks)
- When can the parents find out if they are having a boy or a girl? (4th month via ultrasound)
- How long is the unborn baby inside it’s mother’s womb? (9 months/40 weeks)

- What happens at _____ weeks? _____ month?
- What is most surprising to you about the unborn baby's development?
- Is the baby a human before it's born? Why or why not? (Yes, humans create humans)
- Were you alive before you were born? (Yes)
- When does an unborn baby's life have value? (When God placed him/her inside the mother's womb or at creation/conception)
- Discuss the fetal development with the children. Encourage them to pray daily for their spiritually adopted baby.

6th Grade and Older Additional Discussion Ideas:

- Abortion is when the mother chooses to end the life of her baby. This is not God's plan because she is taking the life of another person. There are many reasons that a mother may choose abortion such as fear, hopelessness, age, etc.
- What effects do you think that abortion has on women?
- Explain to the students that most abortions happen at this time in an unborn baby's life.

Activities

All Grades: Slogan Posters

- Have the students create posters with Respect Life slogans on them. A full size poster board cut in half works well for this project. The posters should be positive and inspirational. The students could possibly print pictures of unborn babies from the internet. These posters can be displayed at school for October, Respect Life Month. The posters can also be submitted for the New Orleans Right to Life Poster Contest (See Slogan Ideas – Appendix A).
- Have the students share their posters and tell why they wrote that particular slogan.

All Grades: "It's a Baby...But It's Still Me"

- Objective: to show the students that, although they have grown and changed over the years, they are the same person. This is just like the unborn baby – it doesn't look like a newborn baby but it is the same person.
- Directions: Have each student bring a baby picture to school. It should be a photograph of the student before the age of 1. Tell the students to keep the photographs hidden from the other students. You can also add photos of staff, teachers, celebrities, etc. The teacher/moderator should collect the baby photos and tag them in some way. Once the photographs are tagged (with a number or symbol), display them in the classroom. Give each student a sheet of paper with the numbers or symbols listed on it. Have the students take turns guessing which baby picture is which student.
- Another idea: bring a current photograph of a grandparent and a baby picture of the grandparent – they have changed dramatically, but still the same person with the same value.

All Grades: One Light, One Spark

- Make the room as dark as possible. Notice how dark the room is with no light. Turn on the flashlight. Explain to the students that although the room (world) seems dark sometimes, it only takes one person to add light. One spark can spark someone else and so on. Before you know it, we are setting the world on fire with our passion for LIFE!
- Discussion Question: What are some things you can do to be a light in this world?

Optional Activities

“Young One” Model

- Have students hold their “Young One” model (from Suggested Aids) or pass one around for all of the students to hold. Have the students pay attention to the detail and the size.
- Discussion Questions:
 - What do you notice about the model?
 - How old do you think that size baby would be inside it’s mother? (The baby is the size of a 12 week old unborn baby. The mom may not even know that she is pregnant yet when the baby is this size.)
 - 6th Grade and Older Discussion – Let them know that millions of babies have been aborted at this age or older.

Ultrasound Video

- Ultrasound video from YouTube
- How did you feel as you watched the baby on the ultrasound video?
- What were some things you noticed?
- What is different about this baby and a baby that is already born?

Lesson Plan Closing Prayer

Glory Be

October Culture of Life Important Dates & Feast Days:

- First Sunday of October – Respect Life Sunday
- October 8 – Stem Cell Awareness Day
- October 9 – National Pro-Life Cupcake Day: Give away or sell cupcakes to celebrate the lives of all the unborn who never get to celebrate their birthday (cupcakesforlife.com). You can also have cupcakes to celebrate the lives of the babies that you are saving through the Spiritual Adoption. Bubbles for Babies – Blow bubbles on National Pro-Life Cupcake day to celebrate the lives they are saving through their pro-life efforts
- October 22 – Feast Day of Pope Saint John Paul II
- 40 Days for Life Continues & Rosary Congress

Spiritual Works of Mercy

Novena for October

Dear Jesus, You have created people to start out as tiny babies. Every single one of us, no matter how young or tiny, is an important person who is loved by You and created by You to do something very special in this life. Even before we are born, You love us just as You always will. Help us to always remember to pray for unborn babies as Your special way for our lives to begin. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Corporal Works of Mercy:

Blessing Bags Idea: NICU – Mom & Baby

- For Mom: Spiritual Bouquet, rosary, prayer card, travel-sized hand sanitizer & lotion, candle, journal & pen
- For Baby: Spiritual Bouquet, rosary, prayer card, travel-sized toiletries, premie hats & onesies, children’s book for mom to read to her baby (Spiritual Bouquet cards – Appendix A)

Contacts:

- The Respect Life Office near your school or parish to see what needs they have
- The hospital near your school or parish to see what needs they have

October

Suggested Slogans*:

Life – the Greatest Gift

Babies are Blessings

Children Color the World Beautiful

Dignity – Compassion – Truth for All

*There are more possible slogans. However, any slogans with the words “abortion” or “killing” shouldn’t be used. We are focusing on being “positively pro-life.”