

Valuing All Life

The Church says that all human life is special and that the dignity of each person is the basis for a just society. This belief is at the heart of all the Church's teaching about how to live. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than material things, and that all our rules, laws, organisations and practices in society, should exist only to improve the life and dignity of people, and should never threaten it.

- SEE**
- * What are our gifts?
 - * What are the things we are good at?

Activity

Find out what other people see in you:

Give everyone a small pile of post-it notes each. Every member should write something good about everyone else in the group. Use a different post-it note to write something about each person: *What are their gifts? What do you value about them?* Stick the note onto the person's clothing. Once everyone has given their notes to one another, share what was said about each person in the group. Transfer all the post it notes onto a sheet of paper, so the whole group can see them. Discuss the following:

- * Did any of the comments from others surprise us?
- * Do we see ourselves in a similar way to how others in the group do?
- * Are we sometimes less positive about ourselves than others are?
- * Can we think of a time when we didn't feel very good about ourselves?
 - * Why
 - * What happened?
 - * Who was involved?
 - * What caused this?
 - * What were the consequences?

Discuss

"Human life is special. The dignity of each person is the basis for a just society."

The Oxford Dictionary defines dignity as "The state or quality of being worthy of honour".

- * When are people "worthy of honour"?
- * How do we show people honour and dignity?
- * In what ways are people sometimes not shown dignity? Think about people in different situations:
For example:
 - * People with disabilities;
 - * People from different countries;
 - * Elderly people;
 - * Unborn children;
 - * People suffering from mental health problems;
 - * Criminals and their families.
- * Who else may not be shown the honour and dignity they deserve? How?

JUDGE

- * Is it ever alright for people to be treated as if they are not as good as others? Why? Why not?

Impact!

Voice from the Church

The Church says that we, as people, are willed by God; we are made in God's image. Our dignity doesn't come from the work we do but from the people we are.

Adapted from Centesimus Annus, The Hundredth Year, John Paul II, 1991, #11

- ★ What does the Church mean by "Our dignity doesn't come from the work we do but from the people we are"?
- ★ Are we called to show people that we believe they are made in God's image? How?



WordUp

Genesis 1:27

"God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them."

- ★ What is this verse from Genesis telling us?
- ★ What value do you think God gives to each of us?
- ★ What does this say about our own lives and our own dignity?
- ★ How does this call us to live?



ACT

Help:

- ★ How can we help ourselves feel valued?
- ★ How can we help others to feel valued?

Tell it:

- ★ Is there anything about this issue we can share with others?
How can we do this?

Stand up for:

- ★ How can we stand up for someone who doesn't feel they are worth much?

Take it further:

Look at the further issue sheets on: Stereotyping, Pressure and Self-Harm. Also look at the issue Disability on the "Commitment to Others" sheet.

Valuing all Life: Further Issues

SEE

Pressure

- * When do we feel pressured?
- * Do we feel under pressure to be a success?
- * Do we feel we have to achieve certain levels/grades at school? Why?
- * How does this pressure show itself?
- * Have we ever felt under pressure to do something just to be part of the group or stay friends with someone? What happened? Who was involved? What choice did we make?
- * Can we think of a time when we didn't follow the crowd? What happened?

Self-Harm

Self-harm is when someone does something to deliberately hurt or harm themselves, usually in secret.

- * Do we know anything about self-harming?
- * How is self-harming portrayed on TV and in the media?
- * Do we know the reason why some people self-harm? Do we know anyone who is self-harming? Do we know how and why? How did we find out? How did we react when we found out? How did other people react? What support are they getting?

Stereotyping

- * Have we or any of our friends ever experienced any type of stereotyping? e.g. being moved on by the police or security guards when we were with a group of friends? What happened? Who was involved? What were the causes and the consequences of this?
- Find out what the media thinks of young people by keeping a week's worth of local and national newspapers.***
- * What types of stories are included?
 - * How many were positive?
 - * How many were negative?

JUDGE

When you do the JUDGE, there are some general questions to reflect on, whichever of the issues you are looking at. Look at the three questions:

- * What do we think about the issue?
- * Is there anything good about the issue?
- * What is bad, or unfair, about the issue?

Now choose one of the sections below explaining the Church's view and one of the bible passages over the page to help you reflect further (we suggest you continue to use the same column).

Voice from the Church

Whatever progress is made in technology and monetary value, there won't be justice or peace in the world, so long as we fail to realise how great our dignity is; as we were created by God and are His children.

Adapted from Mater et Magistra, Mother and Teacher, Pope John XXIII 1961, #215

We are the clearest reflections of God's presence in the world... For we not only reflect God but we are an expression of God's creative work and the reason for Christ's sacrifice.

Adapted from The Challenge of Peace, US Bishops 1983, #15

Dear young friends, the Lord is asking you to be prophets of this new age, messengers of his love, drawing people to the Father and building a future of hope for us all.

Adapted from Pope Benedict XVI's final homily at 2008 World Youth Day.

- * What do we think the Church is saying?
- * What do we like about this teaching?
- * What do we find challenging about it?
- * How does this link to the issue of Pressure/Self-Harm/Stereotyping?

Luke 10:30-37

Jesus said, "A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of bandits; they stripped him, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveller who came on him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He lifted him onto his own mount and took him to an inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper and said, 'Look after him, and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have.' Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the bandits' hands?" He replied, "The one who showed pity towards him." Jesus said to him, "Go, and do the same yourself."

- * What happened in the passage?
- * Are we ever like the priest or Levite, feeling pressured not to help?
- * The Samaritan acted in a way which would have surprised others. When is it good for us to act differently to how others expect us to behave?

WordUp

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Do you not realise that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you and whom you received from God? You are not your own property, then; you have been bought at a price. So use your body for the glory of God.

- * What is St Paul saying in this passage?
- * What does "you are not your own property mean"?
- * What does this mean for how we should treat our own bodies?
- * What does this mean for how we should respond to others (e.g. who are harming themselves)?

Jeremiah 1:4-7

The word of the LORD came to me, saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you came to birth I consecrated you; I appointed you as prophet to the nations." "Ah, LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you."

- * What is the Lord saying to Jeremiah?
- * What is the message to us, as young people, when we think about stereotyping?
- * What kind of people is this calling us to be?

ACT

Help:

- * Is there anyone who we've talked about who we can help?

Tell it:

- * How can we speak out? Can we let people know what we've found out about this issue? How?

Stand up for:

- * Are there any young people who might need us to stand up and represent them because of this issue?