

The Gift of Human Life



Based on Chapter 29, “The Fifth Commandment: Promote the Culture of Life,” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, pages 387-402)

I. Lesson of Faith (pages 387-389)

The Prayer Leader reads or invites the participants to read silently, “The Dorothy Day Story” and then invites a short period of shared reflection on following:

How does Dorothy Day’s story of conversion to Christ and His Church personally inspire you?

II. From the Catechism: (taken from page 389)

Prayer leader invites personal response and gratitude with the following summary thought:

Human life is sacred from its beginning, it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end; no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being. (CCC 2256)

III. Meditation –Deuteronomy 30:19

Reader:

I have set before you life and death; the blessing and a curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live.

After a short period of silence, the Reader introduces the Response.

IV. Response (based on Doctrinal Statements on page 400)

“God’s creative action is present to every human life and is the source of its sacred value.” In confidence, let us offer our petitions.

The response is: Jesus, Gift of Life, hear our prayer.

For catechists, that they promote the Culture of Life in all their teaching, let us pray: (response)

For those who are contemplating an abortion, that Your powerful love give rise to an understanding of the precious gift they carry, let us pray: (response)

For those who suffer from sickness and old age, that their sacred dignity not be compromised, let us pray: (response)

V. For Discussion (based on page 389)

The Prayer Leader introduces the discussion questions to groups of two or three.

Groups discuss for three to five minutes.

“The Fifth Commandment calls us to foster the physical, spiritual emotional and social well-being of self and others...we are called to promote a culture of life and work against a culture of death.”

- What are the root causes for the culture of death today?
- How can we promote the value of human life in all its stages in contrast to abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment?

VI. Ending Prayer -- introduced by the Prayer Leader

Let us pray together the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying
that we are born to Eternal Life. Amen.

