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## The Living in Christ Series

The Living in Christ series has a different look and feel from traditional high school theology textbooks and teaching manuals.

- The teacher guide, rather than the student book, provides the scope and sequence for the course. Teaching with the student book is more like teaching with *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth* (Saint Mary's Press, 2008) than a textbook. The sequence of a textbook is important because the content builds on what has come before. A handbook provides material in a sensible order, but because the content does not rely on what has come before in quite the same way, the material can be presented in several different sequences.
- The teacher guide provides you with ideas about how to teach not only with the student book but also with the Bible, resources on the Saint Mary's Press Web site ([smp.org/LivingInChrist](http://www.smp.org/LivingInChrist)), and other resources found on the Internet. The teacher guide works as a command center for the course, providing ways for you to teach key concepts to the students by bringing in a wide variety of resources.

# Unit 4 Respecting Human Life and Dignity

## Overview

This unit explains that respect for human life and dignity is the central theme of Catholic social teaching. By examining various social issues that threaten human dignity, the students grow in their understanding of how we are called to protect human life and dignity from the moment of conception until natural death.

## Key Understandings and Questions

Upon completing this unit, the students will have a deeper understanding of the following key concepts:

- Societies are cultures of life when they respect and protect human life, and they are cultures of death when they deny the sacredness of human life.
- Every person's life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception until natural death; this is especially true for the unborn and for those at the end of their lives.
- Freedom does not mean that we have the right to pursue our secondary rights at the expense of someone else's primary rights.
- God loves everyone, and he calls us to love and respect those who are different from us.

Upon completing the unit, the students will have answered the following questions:

- According to Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, how must the Church, the state, and the individual go about building a culture of life?
- How does an erosion of personal conscience contribute to the culture of death?
- How does Catholic social teaching guide our actions regarding social issues affecting human life, such as abortion, euthanasia, cloning, genetic manipulation, and the death penalty?
- How does Catholic social teaching guide our actions regarding social issues affecting human dignity, such as racism, sexual exploitation, and the treatment of immigrants?




## How Will You Know the Students Understand?

The following resources will help you to assess the students' understanding of the key concepts covered in this unit:

- handout "Final Performance Task Options for Unit 4" (Document #: TX001982)
- handout "Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 4" (Document #: TX001983)
- handout "Unit 4 Test" (Document#: TX001988)

## Student Book Articles

This unit draws on articles from the *Catholic Social Teaching: Christian Life in Society* student book and incorporates them into the unit instruction. Whenever the teaching steps for the unit require the students to refer to or read an article from the student book, the following symbol appears in the margin: . The articles covered in the unit are from "Section 3: Respecting Human Life and Dignity," and are as follows:

- "A Culture of Life versus a Culture of Death" (article 27, pp. 130–135)
- "Beginning-of-Life Issues" (article 28, pp. 135–140)
- "End-of-Life Issues" (article 29, pp. 141–144)
- "The Death Penalty" (article 30, pp. 145–149)
- "Sexual Exploitation" (article 36, pp. 177–181)
- "Racism" (article 37, pp. 181–186)
- "Migration and Immigration" (article 38, pp. 186–191)

## The Suggested Path to Understanding

This unit in the teacher guide provides you with one learning path to take with the students, to enable them to begin their study of the core social justice theme: the life and dignity of the human person. It is not necessary to use all the learning experiences provided in the unit, but if you substitute other material from this course or your own material for some of the material offered here, check to see that you have covered all relevant facets of understanding and that you have not missed knowledge or skills required in later units.

**Explain**

**Step 1:** Preassess what the students already know about respecting human life and dignity.

**Understand**

**Step 2:** Follow this assessment by presenting to the students the handouts "Final Performance Task Options for Unit 4" (Document #: TX001982) and "Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 4" (Document #: TX001983).

Reflect

**Step 3:** Explore elements that promote a culture of life over a culture of death through a reflective exercise.

Interpret

**Step 4:** Guide the students to understand and explain Church teaching regarding beginning-of-life issues.

Perceive

**Step 5:** Showcase the students' understanding of end-of-life issues by having them create a one-act play.

Understand

**Step 6:** Provide input and facilitate discussion on the topic of suicide prevention.

Empathize

Perceive

**Step 7:** Create quizzes with the students to help to deepen their comprehension of the material and to assess their understanding.

Empathize

**Step 8:** Engage the students in a class debate to deepen their understanding of the implications of the death penalty.

Empathize

**Step 9:** Unpack the issue of human trafficking, and help the students to discover ways they can help to increase awareness of the issue and work to change social structures.

Understand

**Step 10:** Recognize individual uniqueness by analyzing subtle social structures that often deny individual uniqueness or limit a person's opportunities and dignity.

Empathize

Perceive

**Step 11:** Appreciate the lessons we can learn from all God's children, especially individuals with differing abilities.

Understand

**Step 12:** Deepen student understanding of the Catholic Church's teaching regarding migration and immigration.

Understand

**Step 13:** Make sure the students are all on track with their final performance tasks, if you have assigned them.

Reflect

**Step 14:** Provide the students with a tool for reflecting on what they learned in the unit and how they learned.

## Background for Teaching This Unit

Visit [smp.org/LivingInChrist](http://smp.org/LivingInChrist) for additional information about these and other theological concepts taught in this unit:

- "Reproductive Technology" (Document #: TX001880)
- "Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide" (Document #: TX001879)
- "Catholic Social Teaching and Migration" (Document #: TX001990)

The Web site also includes information on these and other teaching methods used in the unit:

- "The One-Act Play" (Document #: TX001993)
- "In-Class Debates" (Document #: TX001991)
- "Teaching Individuals with Differing Abilities" (Document #: TX001992)

## Scripture Passages

Scripture is an important part of the Living in Christ series and is frequently used in the learning experiences for each unit. The Scripture passages featured in this unit are as follows:

- Matthew 5:38–39 (teaching about retaliation)
- Matthew 5:44 (love your enemies)
- Matthew 18:21–22 (teaching about forgiveness)
- Matthew 7:12 (the Golden Rule)
- Luke 12:35–48 (the faithful servant)
- Genesis 12:1 (God calls Abraham and Sarah)
- Genesis 47:1–6 (Jacob's family migrates to Egypt)
- Deuteronomy 10:17–19 (God's compassion for migrants and immigrants)
- Matthew 2:13–15 (the Holy Family migrates to Egypt)

## Vocabulary

The student book and the teacher guide include the following key terms for this unit. To provide the students with a list of these terms and their definitions, download and print the handout "Vocabulary for Unit 4" (Document #: TX001984), one for each student.

abortion	fornication
adultery	immigration, immigrant
artificial means of conception	masturbation
chastity	migration, migrant
conscience	polygamy
culture of death	pornography
culture of life	racism
diaspora	refugee
euthanasia	sexism
excommunication	suicide

# Learning Experiences

## Explain

### Step 1

**Preassess** what the students already know about respecting human life and dignity.

1. **Prepare** by downloading and printing the handout "Introspect and Interview" (Document #: TX001981), one for each student.
2. **Distribute** the handout and pens or pencils and ask the students to complete the second column on the handout by recording their own response to each life issue listed in the first column. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for the students to complete this part of the exercise.
3. **Invite** the students to complete the third column by interviewing another student in the class about what that student wants to learn about each issue and recording his or her answers. Have the students write the name of the interviewee at the top of column three. Allow 3 to 5 minutes for this.
4. **Ask** the students to now find a different student to interview and to record this student's answers in the fourth column. Have the students write the name of the interviewee at the top of this column.
5. **Collect** the handouts to assess student understanding regarding the life issues covered in this unit so you can determine which concepts in the unit need more attention than others.

## Understand

### Step 2

Follow this assessment by presenting to the students the handouts "Final Performance Task Options for Unit 4" (Document #: TX001982) and "Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 4" (Document #: TX001983).

This unit provides you with three ways to assess that the students have a deep understanding of the most important concepts in the unit: creating a manual for teens on respect-for-life issues, creating a photo album depicting respect for life, and writing an editorial on a life issue for a Catholic newspaper. Refer to "Using Final Performance Tasks to Assess Understanding" (Document #: TX001011) and "Using Rubrics to Assess Work" (Document #: TX001012) at [smp.org/LivingInChrist](http://smp.org/LivingInChrist) for background information.



1. **Prepare** by downloading and printing the handouts "Final Performance Task Options for Unit 4" (Document #: TX001982) and "Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 4" (Document #: TX001983), one of each for each student.
2. **Distribute** the handouts. Give the students a choice as to which performance task to work on and add more options if you choose.
3. **Review** the directions, expectations, and rubric in class, allowing the students to ask questions. You may want to say something to this effect:
  - For option 1 you will work in small groups. If you want to work alone, you may choose option 2 or 3.
  - Near the end of the unit, you will have one full class period to work on your final performance task. However, keep in mind that you should be working on, or at least thinking about, your chosen task throughout the unit, not just at the end.
4. **Explain** the types of tools and knowledge the students will gain throughout the unit so that they can successfully complete the final performance task.
5. **Answer** questions to clarify the end point toward which the unit is headed. Remind the students as the unit progresses that each learning experience builds the knowledge and skills they will need to show you they understand the importance of respecting human life and dignity, defending human life in all its stages, and respecting diversity.

### Teacher Note

You will want to assign due dates for the performance tasks.

If you have done these performance tasks, or very similar ones, with students before, place examples of this work in the classroom. During this introduction explain how each is a good example of what you are looking for, for different reasons. This allows the students to concretely understand what you are looking for and to understand that there is not only one way to succeed.



Article  
27

### Reflect

## Step 3

*Explore elements that promote a culture of life over a culture of death through a reflective exercise.*

1. **Locate** and be prepared to show the video titled "Nick Vujicic, Get Back Up," found on several Internet video sites. Download the PowerPoint "Respecting Human Life and Dignity" (Document#: TX001994). Download and print the handout "Mirror Exercise" (Document #: TX001985), one for each student.
2. **Assign** the students to read article 27, "A Culture of Life versus a Culture of Death," in the student book as preparation.
3. **Ask** a student to lead this prayer:
  - Dear God, thank you for the gift of life. Allow us to truly see you in every person we encounter and to value all life in the way you

intended. Help us to promote the life and dignity of every human person through our thoughts, words, and actions. Empower us to see you in all that you have created. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

4. **View** the video "Nick Vujicic, Get Back Up" with the class. Afterward, ask the students to share their thoughts about the video, especially about its relationship to the life and dignity of the human person.
5. **Engage** the students in a 3- to 5-minute partner share using the following prompt:
  - Share one way you have respected the life and dignity of another person in the past twenty-four hours.

After the partner share, invite the students to share in the large group. Comment as appropriate.

6. **Present** the PowerPoint "Respecting Human Life and Dignity" (Document #: TX001994). After the presentation introduce the following exercise with these comments and reflection questions:
  - As we continue to discuss the life and dignity of the human person (the core social justice theme), we want to examine our own attitudes and behaviors.

### Teacher Note

Another video you could use in this step is "Butterfly Circus," which can be found on several Internet video sites. It is another inspirational film promoting the life and dignity of the human person. After viewing the film, use the following questions to generate class discussion:

- What is the message of this film?
- How is the life and dignity of the human person demonstrated in this film?
- What connections can you make between this film and our creation in the image and likeness of God?
- What one image in the film touched you the most and why?

- Do I promote a culture of life, in which all human life is sacred from conception to natural death, or a culture of death, denying that human life is sacred in all its stages?
- In what ways do I respond to people who are different from me?
- Do I respond from a place of respect? disrespect? indifference? prejudice?

7. **Distribute** the handout "Mirror Exercise" (Document #: TX001985) and give the following directions:

- One way to respond with respect to all God's people is to understand how we are different from others. Once we understand "difference," we may be more capable of responding with respect.
- The handout lists several examples of difference in column 1. In column 2, you are to write an example (a word or phrase) to show how respect can guide your responses to difference.
- Be honest in your responses. Work alone and in silence.

Allow sufficient time for the students to complete the handout.

8. Ask for volunteers to share their responses for each of the items. Generate a discussion about how we can build a culture of life as opposed to a culture of death within the classroom, the school, the local community, the Church, the country, and the world.

- What is the message of this film?
- How is the life and dignity of the human person demonstrated in this film?
- What connections can you make between this film and our creation in the image and likeness of God?
- What one image in the film touched you the most and why?



Article

28

Interpret

### Step 4

*Guide the students to understand and explain Church teaching regarding beginning-of-life issues.*

This step provides two teaching options. Please review both options and decide which one you will use in class.

#### **Option 1: Develop a Pamphlet about a Beginning-of-Life Issue**

1. **Prepare** by ensuring that each student will have access to a computer with Microsoft Publisher (which has pamphlet design ability), or another suitable word-processing or layout program, and a printer. Locate and be prepared to show the video "Sanctity of Life: A Video for Right to Life Sunday (Orphans of God)," found on several Internet video sites.
2. **Assign** the students to read article 28, "Beginning-of-Life Issues," in the student book as preparation.
3. **View** the video "Sanctity of Life: A Video for Right to Life Sunday (Orphans of God)" with the class.
4. **Divide** the class into five small groups. Assign one of these beginning-of-life topics to each small group:
  - abortion
  - in vitro fertilization
  - genetic engineering
  - stem-cell research
  - cloning

Inform the groups that they will be researching their assigned topic and creating an informational pamphlet on it using word-processing or layout software. The pamphlet will be designed to be printed on an 8½-x-11-inch sheet of paper folded in half to create four panels. (That is, each panel will

be one half of one side of the paper.) The contents of each panel should be as follows:

- **Panel 1 (cover):** Include the name of the topic, an appropriate picture, and the names of the students in the group. Be creative in the design and colors.
- **Panel 2 (first panel on the inside):** Include the definition of the topic and all pertinent information (with citations). Gather the information for the panel from appropriate databases such as Science Resource Center, Opposing Viewpoints, SIRS, and so on, not from Web sites.
- **Panel 3 (second panel on the inside):** Include an appropriate Scripture quotation as well as the moral teaching of the Catholic Church on the topic. Use accurate information from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Church documents, the USCCB Web site, the Vatican Web site, and so on. Please cite all sources.
- **Panel 4 (back cover):** Include an appropriate picture with a closing summary. Make up a name for the organization producing the pamphlet.

Each person in each small group will be needed to help complete a panel of the pamphlet. All of the group members can work on a panel at the same time, with one person importing the information into the pamphlet template in Microsoft Publisher or a similar program.

5. **Direct** the students to send an electronic copy of their pamphlets to you and also to print out a copy to pass around to the other students in the class. If desired, all of the pamphlets can be saved in a class folder on a school-approved file-sharing service so that the students can view all of the creations of their classmates.

### **Option 2: Develop a Hands-On Exercise**

1. **Prepare** by ensuring that each student will have access to a computer to conduct online research. Decide whether you will conduct the sample hands-on exercise with the class to demonstrate the kind of hands-on exercises the students will be creating in this option. If you choose to conduct the exercise, prepare as follows. (If you choose to skip this part, proceed to part 2 of this option.)

- Gather one blue balloon for each male student in the class and one pink balloon for each female student in the class.
- Research abortion statistics to determine the percentage of viable pregnancies that were aborted last year. Apply this percentage to your class size to determine the number of students who will represent the percentage of aborted pregnancies in the year you researched.
- Print out slips of papers that say "You are a healthy bouncing baby girl" or "You are a healthy bouncing baby boy." Make enough of each slip to correspond to the numbers of boys and girls in the class that represent



last year's percentage of live births. Place the baby girl slips in pink balloons and the baby boy slips in blue balloons (one slip per balloon), but do not inflate them yet.

- Print out slips of paper that state "You have been aborted" and cite the abortion statistics you found. Make enough slips to match the number of aborted pregnancies you calculated by applying statistics to your class size. Also place these slips inside pink and blue balloons.
  - Blow up all the balloons with the slips of paper inside, and place the balloons in a large bag.
- 2. Assign** the students to read article 28, "Beginning-of-Life Issues," in the student book as preparation.
- 3. Divide** the class into five small groups. Assign one of these beginning-of-life topics to each small group:
- abortion
  - in vitro fertilization
  - genetic engineering
  - stem-cell research
  - cloning

The students will need to research the topic itself as well as Church teaching regarding the topic.

Inform the small groups that they are to create a hands-on exercise demonstrating the life and dignity of the human person in relation to their assigned topic. Each exercise must involve the whole class and be designed to bring a deeper understanding or experience to the assigned topic.

- 4. Conduct** the sample hands-on exercise, if you have chosen to do so. Tell students that this is a sample hands-on exercise that profoundly demonstrates the impact of abortion:
- Distribute the balloons to the students by gender. Have the students stand.
  - Direct the students to pop their balloons and read the message (or messages) inside the balloon. Ask the students who received the abortion slips of paper to stay standing.
  - Ask volunteers who received the abortion slips of paper to read the statistics you included. Invite other volunteers to name one thing they learned from this exercise or to share how this exercise made them feel.
  - Tell students that if this were an exercise they had designed, the student leaders who created it would conclude by speaking about the implications of the demonstration. What new understanding do they have as a result of the activity?

5. **Direct** the students to break up into their small groups to research their assigned topics and to develop hands-on exercises that will inform their classmates about the topic and the Church's teaching on the topic. Ask them to gather the information from appropriate databases such as Science Resource Center, Opposing Viewpoints, SIRS, and so on, not from Web sites. They should research the moral teaching of the Catholic Church on the topic by seeking accurate information from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Church documents, the USCCB Web site, the Vatican Web site, and so on.
6. **Invite** the small groups to conduct their exercises with the class. At the end of each exercise, ask the group leading it to comment on new understandings they gained by researching the topic and developing the exercise.



Article  
29

### Perceive

## Step 5

*Showcase the students' understanding of end-of-life issues by having them create a one-act play.*

1. **Assign** the students to read article 29, "End-of-Life Issues," in the student book as preparation.

### Teacher Note

An article on this teaching method, "The One-Act Play" (Document #: TX001993), is available at [smp.org/Living inChrist](http://smp.org/Living inChrist), if you would like background information. This exercise can take place in one class period if the small groups are given 20 minutes to write their short one-act plays and then perform the plays during the same class. Another option would be to assign the writing of the plays as homework and then have the small groups perform the plays during the next class.

2. **Divide** the class into small groups of two to four students who will work together in creating a one-act play on an end-of-life dilemma.

3. **Inform** the students that they will have 20 minutes to create a one-act play about a person (can be a husband, wife, teenage son or daughter, or other relative) at the end of life. The setting could, for example, have the main character lying in a coma in a hospital bed surrounded by his or her loved ones. The students can decide if the person near death is in a coma, is fully conscious, or can hear what is going on but is unable to respond. They should also decide on what end-of-life issues to depict in the play, including decisions about medication, nutrition and hydration, life support, and so on.

Instruct the students to focus on the internal monologue of the person near death as well as the dialogue of the other people in the scene, such as loved ones, doctors, nurses, and priests. Ask the following questions:

- What is the main character thinking as loved ones are considering what steps to take?
- What obstacles must the main character overcome? What do all the characters in the play do?
- What is the high point, climax, of the play?
- What is the conclusion of the play?
- How does the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding end-of-life issues come into play?

The plot should lead all the characters through some obstacles, difficult decisions, or events, examining the different points of view (including that of the person at the end of life) before reaching a climax. As soon as this moment occurs in the play, the conclusion quickly follows.

4. **Direct** the small groups to act out their plays. They can read from a script or improvise from a script outline. Invite the students in the audience to rate the message of the play as well as the performance.



Article  
29

### Understand

## Step 6

*Provide input and facilitate discussion on the topic of suicide prevention.*

1. **Prepare** by downloading and printing the handout "Suicide Prevention" (Document #: TX001986). Obtain index cards, one for each student, and purchase a bag of individually wrapped Life Savers so that you can distribute one Life Savers candy to each student. Locate and be prepared to show a video version of the song "What a Wonderful World," recorded by Louis Armstrong, or another inspirational music video. Write the following on the board to use later in the lesson:

#### Reasons Teens Might Consider Suicide

- family problems
- breakup with boyfriend or girlfriend
- being bullied
- loneliness
- being different from others
- other ???

2. **Assign** the students to review the section regarding suicide in article 29, "End-of-Life Issues," of the student book as preparation.
3. **Distribute** the handout and one index card to each student. Review the handout's information regarding suicide with the students. Add any further information you feel is important, such as Scripture and Church teachings,

facts to consider, what to do if someone you know is considering suicide, and why it is important to discuss this topic in a religion class. You may also wish to discuss depression and the warning signs, recognizing that people suffering from depression or mental illness are in an extremely distressed situation and may need professional help. (If you have a school counselor with mental health training, it may be helpful to invite him or her to join this discussion.) Ask the students if they have any questions before proceeding with the next part of the step.

4. **Refer** the students to the reasons for suicide you have written on the board. Invite the students to pick one of the reasons and write it on one side of the index card. On the reverse side of the card, ask the students to write five ways to cope with that reason. For example, for the issue of family problems, they could list the following ideas: talk to friends, listen to music, go to a favorite place, talk to a school counselor or campus minister, talk to another family member.
5. **Conduct** a large-group discussion by inviting the students to identify the issues they have chosen and their responses for coping with those issues. Ask for a student volunteer to write all the responses on the board. After each student shares, give him or her a Life Savers candy as a symbol that he or she can be a life saver for others. When all the students are done sharing, review the responses with the class. Be sure to caution the students that some people's despair or illness is so great that professional help is required. Sometimes the best thing we can do for someone we love or care about is to get that person into the care of qualified professionals.
6. **Divide** the class into small groups of three to create role-plays. Allow 3 to 5 minutes for each small group to create a quick role-play in which one student is talking about suicide or demonstrating some warning signs of suicide. The other two members of the group portray this student's friends, who respond in a "life-saving" manner, using the skills discussed in class.
7. **Invite** the small groups to present their role-plays to the class. Address any issues as necessary.
8. **Conclude** with an inspirational music video such as "What a Wonderful World," sung by Louis Armstrong. As a homework assignment, you may wish to have the students interview a parent or guardian and submit a paragraph summarizing their conversation. (Either the student or the parent could write the brief reflection.) Pick one of these questions to use as a focus for the assignment:
  - When you were growing up, did you ever have a friend, family member, or classmate who dealt with suicide? What happened? How did you deal with the situation?
  - When you were growing up, how did you cope with \_\_\_\_\_? (Allow the students to pick one of the following topics: family problems, a breakup with a boyfriend or girlfriend, being bullied, loneliness, or being different.)



Collect the homework during the next class and, if there is time, have the students share their interview summaries in class.

Empathize

Perceive

### Step 7

Create quizzes with the students to help to deepen their comprehension of the material and to assess their understanding.



Articles  
27, 28,  
29

1. **Prepare** by asking the students to bring their student books to class.
2. **Divide** the class into pairs or small groups of three and allow them 10 minutes to write five true-or-false questions and five multiple-choice questions (each with five options) from articles 27–29 in the student book. Instruct the students to use their books and to write their questions neatly so that they are easy to read. Also ask them to provide an answer key on a separate sheet of paper. The answer key should include the page numbers on which the answers can be found in the student book.
3. **Collect** the papers with the questions as well as the answer keys from the students. Use the papers with the questions as quizzes. Distribute one quiz to each pair or small group of three, making sure no one gets the quiz her or his group created. Ask the pairs or groups to work together to complete the quizzes.
4. **Collect** the completed quizzes and use the answer keys for grading. For an optional exercise, have each pair or small group share the one question that they found most challenging on the quiz they took. Use the quiz scores to assess student understanding of the material.



Article  
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Empathize

### Step 8

Engage the students in a class debate to deepen their understanding of the implications of the death penalty.

1. **Prepare** by obtaining the DVD *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death* from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The video can also be viewed online at the USCCB Web site. Preview the video before showing it so that you will be prepared to answer any questions the students might have. Also have a stop-watch or some kind of timer available.

#### Teacher Note

An article on this teaching method, "In-Class Debates" (Document #: TX001991), is available at [smp.org/LivingInChrist](http://smp.org/LivingInChrist).