|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | * **9**
 |
|  | **Prejudice:****Stereotypes and Other Loud Noises** |
| What’s the Point? | Our basic attitude toward certain groups can color our feelings about social justice for this or that group. This class seeks to make the kids confront their stereotypes and eliminate them when thinking about the Common Good. |
| **Background Information** | ***Reference**** ***CCC****: ¶* *1877-1896, 1928-1948*
* **NAB** : *Gen1:26-27; 1 Sam 16:6-13 ; Lk 18:9-14;* ***Jn 13:34****; Rm 2:1-11, 12:3-8; 13:8-10; Gal 3:26-29; Eph 4:32, 6:9; 1 Cor* *12:12-26*; *Jam2:1-26*
* Attitudes Vol 3: Changing the World, pgs 11-14

Injustice is begins when individuals or groups are denied human dignity and their basic needs are not met. What causes the marginalization of individuals and groups? Why is it that anyone in discriminated against? We are an enlightened society living in an enlightened country, right? The problem with even ‘enlightened’ human activity is that definition of ‘enlightened’. It flows not from God and God’s revelation to us, but from a human sense of right and wrong that developed in the 17th century, the ‘Age of Enlightenment’. This time ushered in the next phase of humanism and began to push religious truth to the side. The Protestant reformation had shifted the understanding of truth away from Revelation and toward human judgment, leaving society to lose its foundation in the Natural Law of God and toward self-dependence on the laws of Man. Society suffers from this Garden-based hubris as it seeks to create ‘The Great Society’ by its own will, only to fall short again and again.We Catholics live in a *truly* enlightened society, what we call the Body of Christ, lit by its head, Jesus. The Church is enlightened in two ways, first by the Light of Christ and second by the rational conscience lit by that revelatory Light. We have objective guiding principles in the Commandments and the Beatitudes. We see the world in a holistic way, and moral questions within the cloak of the Seamless Garment. “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*” (*Gal* 3:28)We humans are social creatures. It is within our very created natures: “*It is not good for the man to be alone*.” (*Gen* 2:18) We need society and society needs us. Jesus reminds us though that if we love only those who love us then we are no better than the ‘enlightened’ society around us. That means that we see only as God sees and are blind only as God is blind: we see other children of God and are blind to their sins, their color, there sex, or anything else which would cause us to see them as anything other than God’s child. If we look at it like Aquinas, we are *in substance* God’s children and it is only *accident* that anything seems different about us.There is no room for prejudice of any kind within the Church, nor in the service done by the Church; we help others because we are Catholic not because they are, and that holds true for all things. This is not to say that there are not roles or views of human beings which are by Scripture or Tradition laid out, like male and female, merely that we do not hold those things to be a reason to deny any one their needs (not their wants – those can be denied). Being what we are is essential to understanding the Body of Christ. Paul makes that clear: that we each have a part to play and the Body is incomplete without us. Still, an arm is an arm, a hand is a hand, and a foot is a foot. We must be what we are in order for the Body to function and be whole. We cannot hold the hand to the level of the head and say since it is not the head it is useless. (c.f. *Rm* 13:3-8, *1 Cor* 12:12-26)Prejudice harms the Common Good and is a cancer on the Body. “If [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.” (*Cor* 12:26) It is important for us not to use the Commandments and the Beatitudes as clubs to beat those we disagree with. Human judgment about another is never right. The Commandments and the Beatitudes guide us with love, not with self-righteousness. They call us to live and act like God would act, that is why He gave them to us. We may hate the sin but we must love the sinner! |
| Materials Needed | * PowerPoint
* Computer
* Overhead projector
* Paper, blank badges or sticky pads, pencils, poster sheets, markers
 |
| **Attention Grabber** | **(10 min)*****Some Pigs Are More Equal***Place badges or pads at each table. In front of the whole group, instruct each table that they are different animal types, for instance cows, sheep, snakes, rats, dogs, cats, etc. Tell them to make up ID badges and put them on. After each table has their assignments and every group is known to the others, have them take a sheet of paper and divide it in half with a line. One side is the things they think are great about being their animal; the other what is bad about being the other animals.Have each table share their lists.**Separate But Unequal**Arrange chairs in rows and segregate the room by groups. Using the Beatitudes, apply messages of the Good News only to one group or the other but never to all groups at the same time. You could also you use the Commandments to chastise one group or another. After each positive statement, invite the groups to brag or cheer; after each negative, invite the *other* groups to brag or cheer. |
|  |
| **Outline** | **Prayer**:  | *Romans 13:8-10.* |
| **Presentation**:  | *PowerPoint.* |
| **Activity**:  | *Some Pigs or Separate But Unequal* |
| **Table Discussion**:  | *Questions*. |
| **Post Discussion:** | *None* |
| **Closing Prayer**:  | *Group Prayer/Petitions.* |
| **Prayer** | **Introductory Prayer:** (**2 min,** after candle is lit…**)*****Romans 13:8-10*** *Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.* *The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, [namely] “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* *Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.* |
| **Pre-discussion Presentation** | (5 min) |
|  | **Loving Your Neighbor**We are called to “*love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself*.” (*Lk* 10:27; *Mk* 12:28-31) That is the sum of the Law according to Jesus. When Paul mentions the Law he too is talking about the whole of the Law, as Jesus was. The Law is not “*thou shalt not*…” but more like “*if I am your God and you are my people, it would be simply impossible for you to…*.” This is more than an external, imposed limitation but an interior disposition.When we hear Paul say this then we must keep in mind that he is reminding us that this is not ‘just what we do,’ it is *who we are*!Prejudice and stereotypes can keep us from being present to those whom we deem ‘below us’ or not worthy of our consideration. We can let ignorance make our decisions for us rather than relying God’s wisdom (St. Martin de Pores is a great example for us - PowerPoint). “*whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me*.” (*Mt* 25:40)If instead of seeing color, or social standing, or ability we see Christ, then prejudice would disappear! Who can we help and what kind of advocacy can we do if we label one group or another as somehow unworthy of our advocacy? Love is the fulfillment of the Law, of God’s Will! If we freely love one another then we are following God’s Will. We often wonder if we are doing what God wants – this is a pretty good test of that! |
| **Activity / Table Talk** | Table Discussion (35 min) |
|  | QUESTIONS:1. How did your group decide what to brag about? ***OR*** How did you feel when your group was praised?
2. How did your group decide what to criticize? ***OR*** Did you agree with the criticism of the other groups?
3. Did the statements made about your ‘group’ bother you?
4. If they did not, was it because you are not like that? That is to say, you can step back and say that it does not apply to you?
5. Do you have to lower someone else in order to raise yourself up? What does that say about you?
6. Have you ever been the subject of a stereotype or prejudice (example: because you are Catholic)?
7. Have you ever participated in taunting or mocking of another because of race, social status, creed, disability, ignorance, or color?
8. How difficult is it to speak against prejudice in school? At home? With friends?
9. What are some of the best ways to combat the ignorance of prejudice and stereotypes?
 |
| Post-Discussion Activity | **(15 min).**  |
|  | Have five (5) poster-sized sheets of paper with the following headings: *Hispanic, African American, European/American, Asian, American Indian, women, men, Special Needs, Mentally Ill, Homeless.*Each table needs to take about 5 minutes and create a list of stereotypes associated with each group, writing them down on a sheet of paper. These statements may be offensive, but warn them to have some decorum.Have representatives from each table come up and write down the stereotypes they have for each group, rotating about every 30 seconds to a minute.After a brief discussion, take the papers outside and gather around a fireproof container, like an empty metal garbage can and say:“*Flame, burning away the darkness is a powerful Christian symbol. The darkness of fear and ignorance which is prejudice needs to be burned from our lives, like the Scripture tells us: “See, I refined you, but not like silver; I tested you in the furnace of affliction.”(Is 48:10) and “**In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Pt 1:7).**As this burns, let us think about the things that keep us from loving fully, those things in our world which continue injustice and pray for strength and the grace to begin to overcome them*.” |
| Closing | **Announcements and Prayer (5 min).**  |
|  | **Group Prayer**Intercessions ***Dear gracious God, burn away our prejudice and replace it with your love. Amen***. |
| Reminder | **\*\*\*\* REMEMBER IMPORTANCE OF RECORDING ATTENDANCE!!** This is a legal document! Please, write down on your attendance sheet the name of any teen at your table, whether they are on your roll or not. |
| Attachments | **Below:*** *None*
 |