

# GRADES THREE THROUGH FIVE

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## **GRADES THREE THROUGH FIVE**

### **Credal/Belief**

#### **GENERAL RELIGION THEME:**

**God is Creator and Father**

#### **RELIGION OBJECTIVES**

God is the Creator of the angels, the universe, and people, and all living and non-living creatures.

God is a loving and caring Father.

#### **SUGGESTED RESPECT LIFE LESSONS**

How God Cares for His Creation

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Babies are Gifts from God

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## **How God Cares for His Creation**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:  
Describe how God cares for His creation

**Materials:** Clay  
Bible

**Media:** None

**Catechism:** 301, 339, 2270

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verse:** Psalm 139:13-16

How God cares for his creation, especially babies in the womb

Discuss meaning of this verse.

How has God formed and fashioned us? (Answers may vary—recall the story of creation, consider that God places babies in the womb, and consider that God’s grace fashions us in his image every day as we grow in love and wisdom.)

**Word clarification:**

What does formed and fashioned mean?

(Answer: to create something, to mold it or make it, to care for it)

**Activity 1:**

After the opening prayer, recall the line “Give us this day our daily bread.”

1. Ask children what this could mean.  
(Answer: God gives us what we need to live.)
2. Discuss how God gives us the things we need to live. What sort of things do we need? Where do we get our food, house, clothes, etc.?  
(Answer: Our parents help provide them by working hard)

**Activity 2:**

Let children “fashion” from clay a form. It can be anything.

During this activity, remind children that they are being imitators of God by creating something new from clay.

**Closing Prayer:**

Dear God, Thank You for giving us our daily bread. Thank You for giving us all the things we need to live. Thank You for our mothers who cared for us in the womb and our parents who care for us every day. Amen.

Huntsville

## **Babies are Gifts from God**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:

Explain that babies are gifts from God.

**Materials:** Pictures that children bring in from home  
Bible

**Media:** None

**Catechism:** 355, 2270

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verse:** James 1:17-18

### **Discussion:**

1. What does the phrase “from above” mean?  
(Answer: from God who is the Father of heavenly lights)
2. What are some good gifts he gives us?  
(Answers may vary—our families are good gifts, babies are good gifts, etc.)h

### **Discussion:**

1. Who makes up a family? (Answer: parents, children, grandparents, and babies)
2. How does each of these members of a family help the good of the whole family?  
(Answer: Parents teach and provide, children bring joy and help, grandparents care for us and teach us, babies bring joy and responsibility and love) Humans are always created as good gifts because we are made in the image and likeness of God, who is perfect goodness.

### **Activity:**

Have children bring pictures of their moms while they were pregnant with them or with their siblings, pictures of themselves as babies, and pictures of their families. Break up into groups of 3 or 4. In small groups have children tell stories about the pictures they brought. Tell children to focus their discussion about how each member of their family is a gift from God.

**Discussion:**

Gather the class back together and share a couple of stories with the whole class about how family members are gifts from God.

1. Who is the oldest member of your family?
2. Who is the youngest member of your family?
3. Who is the strongest?
4. Who is the loudest?
5. Who is the funniest?
6. Who is the kindest?
7. Who is the most important?

(Answer: Everybody is important in his or her own way and are special gifts to the whole family). Grandparents and even babies in the womb bring families much joy and love and allow us to see God in different ways in different people.

**Closing Prayer:**

Dear God, Thank You for our families. Thank You for babies in the womb, our brothers and sisters, our parents, aunts and uncles, cousins and grandparents. Thank You for everyone who plays an important role in our lives and families. Thank You for showing Yourself to us in so many different ways and faces. Amen.

## **GRADES THREE THROUGH FIVE**

### **Sacramental/Worship/Prayer**

#### **GENERAL RELIGION THEME:**

**God's Grace, Conscience, Choosing Good**

#### **PRO LIFE RELIGION OBJECTIVES**

God's grace is always present to help us to choose good, to avoid temptation, and the occasions of sin which are: any person, place, or thing that might easily lead us to sin.

To know the function of one's conscience and the need to form the conscience correctly and to follow it.

#### **SUGGESTED RESPECT LIFE LESSONS**

God Created Us to Do Good Works

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## **God Created Us to Do Good Works**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:

Explain that God created us to do good works

**Materials:** Paper, Crayons, Scissors, Glue, and Pencils  
Age-appropriate Bible

**Media:** None

**Catechism:** 358, 2427-2428

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verse:** Ephesians 2:8-10

Discuss meaning of this verse.

1. What sort of good works can we do to serve God?
2. What sort of good works can we do to serve each other?
3. How can we show Jesus to others by the things we do?

### **Instructions:**

Explain to children that God creates us to use our bodies as special tools to do good works. We are supposed to serve God and each other with our bodies.

Mothers use their bodies to serve God by carrying babies until they are ready to be born. Sometimes it is very difficult for mothers to carry babies in their wombs. Sometimes they get very tired and it becomes uncomfortable, but they are happy to carry babies in their wombs because it is God's special work especially for mothers to do.

### **Discussion:**

1. How can we serve God with our bodies? (E.g., do good works to help people in need)
2. Name some ways that we can offend God with our bodies. (E.g., hitting people)
3. How do mothers serve their children and God with their bodies? (E.g., taking care of their babies—feeding them, hugging them, etc.)
4. What about mothers who have babies in their wombs?

5. Do we serve God even when we do things that are difficult?

**Activity #1:**

Have children make thank you cards for women who are pregnant or who have just had a baby. Deliver the cards to the postpartum ward of a local hospital or to a crisis pregnancy center.

**Activity #2:**

Have children break up into groups of 3 or 4. Have them discuss how they can use their bodies to serve others. Have children plan a service project. Ideas: throw a shower for pregnant mothers who are in need or do a puppet show for a younger class to teach them about serving God with their bodies. Gather the class together and vote on a project that everyone can do together. \*\*\*Good end of the year activity!

**Closing Prayer:**

Dear God, Thank you for creating us to do good works. Thank you for our bodies that help us serve you and each other. Thank you for mothers who serve you in such a special way by carrying babies in their wombs. Help us all to do your good work and show Jesus to others by the things we do. Amen.



## **GRADES THREE THROUGH FIVE**

### **Christian Living/Morality**

#### **GENERAL RELIGION THEME:**

##### **Human Dignity**

#### **PRO LIFE RELIGION OBJECTIVES**

Human persons are made of both body and soul, and that we are made in the image of God.

Because we are made in God's image, we have the ability to reason, to make choices, and to love.

Explore how differences in personalities, races, and nationalities are good for the whole human family and we show appreciation for God's creation when we appreciate differences.

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## **Human Beings are Made in the Image of God at the Moment of Conception**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:

Demonstrate that all people have everything they need to be images of God from the moment they are created by God.

**Materials:** Craft mirrors, various decorative items (beads, paper, ribbons, etc.), glue, paper, markers, age-appropriate Bible

**Media:** Pictures of babies at various stages of development

**Catechism:** 357, 2270

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verse:** Genesis 1:25-27

God made us to be like him.

Discuss meaning of this verse.

1. Why would God create us to be like him?
2. How did God create the first person (recall the story of Adam and Eve)?
3. Are people made from clay, like Adam and Eve, today? When does life begin?

### **Word clarifications:**

1. What is an image?  
(Answer: Something that is very much like another thing, like a reflection in a mirror.)
2. How are we images of God?
3. How are we images of our parents?
4. What is divine?  
(Answer: Supremely good, heavenly, and Godlike)
5. How do we reflect the God in us?

### **Discussion:**

Ask children to think of people that they know who best reflect the image of God. (Mother Teresa, Pope John Paul II, a grandparent, aunt, uncle, parent, little child, etc.) Discuss why these various people can be good reflections of God.

Discuss how we can be good reflections of God.

Consider how a baby before he or she is born is a reflection of God. He or she may have features like his or her parents, who are reflections of God. He or she may be able to move around and therefore can one day be an image of God in doing good works.

He or she has a soul from the moment God places him or her in the womb, so pre-born babies are a good reflection of heavenly goodness and are like God in spirit, just like all of us when we try to do God's will.

**Instructions:**

Consider that we are all made to be like God from the moment we are placed in the womb. While we are not made from clay, we are made from genes (tiny parts in our bodies that God uses to tell the body how to look and grow). God uses these genes to help us grow and develop in our mother's womb. From the very moment God puts us in our mother's womb, we have all the genes that we need to grow.

Even when we are the size of the tip of a pencil, we still have everything we need to be images of God—especially a soul! For those students who are mature enough, show pictures of babies at different stages of development in the womb. Point out the different developmental stages (heartbeat, fingers, toes, eyes, mouth, etc.).

**Activity:**

Using inexpensive craft mirrors (can be purchased at a craft store or use hand mirrors purchased at a dollar store), decorate mirrors to give as a gift to a special person in a child's life.

On the back or attached as a card, use today's Scripture verse to help remind whoever receives that mirror when they look in to that they are created in the image of God. This is a good activity to do for Mother's Day, Father's Day, or Christmas.

**Closing Prayer:**

Dear God, thank you for our genes. Thank you for giving us all the things we need to be like you. Help us to use our gifts to love and serve you. Amen.

## **Creation of Man in God's Image and Likeness**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:

Explain that each person has his own individuality.

**Materials:** Bible  
Inkpad  
Paper  
Poster board or plain paper

**Media:** None

**Catechism:** 343, 357, 2501

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verses:** Genesis 1:24-31

**Discussion:** None

**Activities:**

1. Make thumbprints of each student to see how different each is
2. Perform activity where hands cannot be used and make each student perform something, such as writing (could use mouth to write), flipping book pages (could use nose). Idea to show that we can still function even when we are “limited/challenged”
3. Science: Have each child create on poster paper or sheet of paper a “Human Traits Chart”; make chart of hair color, eye color, eyelashes. Note that there is only one set of DNA unique to each individual, we are all unique (23 chromosomes from each parent)

Huntsville

## **Pre-Born Babies Can Do Many Things**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:

Explain that a pre-born baby can do many things while God is still forming him/her

**Materials:** Paper, pencils

**Media:** None

**Catechism:** 357, 2270

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verses:** Psalm 139:13-16

God knew and saw us while we were still in the womb.

Discuss meaning of this verse.

1. What is the secret place?  
(Answer: a mother's womb)
2. Why is it called secret?  
(Answer: because inside it is not visible to everyone)
3. What does it mean to be "woven together"?  
(Answer: this refers to how we grow and develop in our mother's womb.)

### **Discussion:**

It was not long ago that it was impossible to see a baby in the womb. Today, however, we have technology that allows us to get a glimpse of a baby while he or she is still in his or her mother's womb before he or she is even born.

We have special cameras and devices that let us see the different stages of development of a baby before he or she is born. Because of this special technology, we are able to see what only God used to be able to see. We can see into the once "secret place," a mother's womb.

### **Discussion:**

Once a baby is born, he grows very quickly and can do many things by the time he turns one or two years old.

1. What sort of things does a baby learn to do after he or she is born?

2. What sort of things do you think a baby can do while he or she is still in the womb?
3. Have you ever felt a baby kick while he or she is in her mommy's womb?
4. Do you know that babies can get hiccups while still in the womb?
5. Did you know that pre-born babies can suck their thumbs? Wiggle their toes? Grab things? Yawn? Lick their lips? Do flips?

**Activity:**

What does God see in a mother's womb? Play a game to help children think about the different things that a baby can do while still in his or her mother's womb.

Children should sit in a circle with their legs crossed. Explain that each child should come up with something that they think a baby can do while still in the womb.

Have children write that activity on a strip of paper. Collect the papers and redistribute the papers to different children. Make sure everyone can read his or her word without saying it aloud in front of everyone yet.

Start the beat with out saying anything. Slap your knees twice, clap twice, and snap twice—keeping a constant beat until everyone catches on. Then have each child add in the word on his or her paper in the place of the snaps. Example: Slap, Slap, Clap, Clap, Kick-ing . . . (*Next child*) Slap, Slap, Clap, Clap, Sleep-ing . . . (and so on to allow every child a turn).

**Closing Prayer:**

Dear God, Thank You for forming me in my mother's womb. Thank You for my life before and after I was born. Thank You for all the special things I can do. Please be with me as I continue to be formed in Your image. Amen.

## **Babies in the Womb**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:  
Witness that life began before a baby was born

**Materials:** Fetal Development Pictures:  
Online: <http://priestsforlife.org/resources/abortionimages/fetaldevelopment.htm>  
DVDs: *The Biology of Prenatal Development* (Free video clips from this DVD are available online at Endowment for Human development: [www.ehd.org](http://www.ehd.org)  
*Baby Steps: 16 Stages of Pre-Birth Development* (American Life League)  
Both DVDs are available from the Nebraska Catholic Conference (for loan) at 402-477-7517  
Flier: The Second Look Project: Fetal Development  
Available from the Nebraska Catholic Conference at 402-144-7517 or [www.nebcathcon.org/printedresources.htm](http://www.nebcathcon.org/printedresources.htm)

**Media:** None

**Catechism:** 357, 2270

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verse:** Jeremiah 1:4-5

**Discussion:** None

**Activities:**

1. Discuss pictures
  - a. Were you an active baby in your mother's womb?  
Ask your parents, could they feel you kick?
  - b. When did baby's heart begin to beat?  
(Answer: 22<sup>nd</sup> day).  
At what week you can hear babies' heartbeats?  
Answer: 2<sup>nd</sup> month (via stethoscope)
  - c. At what week can you determine the baby's gender?  
Answer: 3<sup>rd</sup> month (via an ultrasound)
  - d. How long were you inside your mother before you were born?
  - e. When did your life start?  
Answer: From the point God placed you in your mother's womb.
  - f. Were you a baby inside your mother's womb?

Huntsville

## **Man Has Dignity Regardless of Size or Shape**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:

Demonstrate that every person has dignity, no matter what size or shape

**Materials:** Bible

**Media:** Book or Video: *Horton Hears A Who*, by Dr. Seuss  
Video: Available for free on YouTube.com (search for "Horton Hears a Who")  
Book: Available from Nebraska Catholic Conference (for loan) at 402-477-7517

**Catechism:** 295, 356

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verses:** Psalm 104:24-25

**Readings:** *Horton Hears A Who*

This book tells the story of Horton, the kindhearted elephant who rescues the citizens of Whoville.

Discuss the humanity and dignity of all people.

**Discussion:**

All people, no matter what size or shape, are people. All people are created to be temples a soul and the Holy Spirit. Even people who are very sick or very old are temples of the Holy Spirit, which means that God lives in them.

Even little babies who are no bigger than the size of the tip of your pencil are temples of the Holy Spirit. We should look for God in everyone no matter how big or small they are. We should treat everyone like they have God inside him or her. We should never hurt or mistreat others because they are temples of God just like we are.

**Activity:**

Have children break up into groups. Each group will be given one specific group of special people to discuss (unborn, elderly, handicapped, sick). Have each group answer these questions:

1. How are people in this group different from the rest of us?
2. How is this group of people important?



3. How do they show us Jesus?
4. How do we know that God dwells in them?
5. How can we better serve this particular group of people?
6. How can we protect them to make sure they are safe from harm or destruction?

**Discussion:**

Have each group choose a speaker and share the answers to the questions with the rest of the class. Open the discussion to the whole class.

**Closing Prayer:**

Dear God, Thank You for our bodies. Thank You for living in us. Thank You for other people. Help us to remember that You are inside of everyone and help us treat everyone like temples of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Our Souls Dwell in Our Bodies**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:

Explain that our bodies are important places for our souls to dwell

**Materials:** Pencils, Paper  
Age-appropriate Bible

**Media:** None

**Catechism:** 362-367, 797

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verse:** 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Discuss the meaning of this verse.

1. How are our bodies temples?  
(Answer: Our souls and the Holy Spirit dwell in our bodies just as people dwell in a temple.)
2. In what ways do we destroy our bodies?  
(Answer: We destroy our bodies by abusing them or by not using them according to God's commandments—taking drugs, hitting ourselves or others, or even eating too much.)
3. How can we use our bodies as holy places for God to dwell?

**Word clarification:**

Temple: a church or holy place

Dwell: to live inside

**Activity:**

Discuss with children how we care for our bodies as temples. Ask children to bring in a personal hygiene product or food item to donate to a homeless shelter or women's and children's shelter to help others take care of their "temples."

**Closing Prayer:**

Dear God, Thank You for our bodies. Thank You for living in us. Thank You for other people. Help us to remember that You are inside of everyone and help us treat everyone like temples of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

## People are Made in God's Image

**Objective:** The students will be able to:

Explain how we can use our gifts from God

**Materials:** Bible  
Photos of celebrities or athletes with disabilities  
Any Special Olympics video  
Cite the example Helen Keller (girl that learned to speak after having been disabled); there's a movie about her titled, *The Miracle Worker*

**Media:** DVD player if video is used

**Catechism:** 358, 2276, 2289

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verses:** John 9:1-12. (This is the story of Jesus healing a blind man, who can still do God's work despite his handicap. Jesus says, "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me.")

**Activities:**

1. Talk about well-known people with physical disabilities and the fact that they still possess various gifts, just as everyone does. Examples:
  - Singers & song writers: Stevie Wonder and José Feliciano (known for "Feliz Navidad") – both are blind
  - Former football player Mike Utley – played football for the Detroit Lions and was paralyzed from a game injury; later established Mike Utley Foundation to help raise money for spinal cord damage cure; he continues to have a very active life—for story, go to <http://www.mikeutley.org/>.
  - Painter Joni Eareckson Tada – swimmer who became paralyzed from diving accident and became famous for her paint brushed paintings she did by using her mouth.
2. Homework assignment: Bring in article about a celebrity, athlete, or someone you know who has a physical disability and share with the class what you know about this person, the talents and gifts they have.
3. Show video of Special Olympics.

**Closing Prayer:**

Gracious heavenly Father, You have given me many talents that we can use to serve you. Help us determine these talents so we can use them to glorify you daily.

Huntsville

**“Handicapped” is just a word. (“Handicapped” is another word for “unique”.)**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:

1. Explain that diversity in the world is what makes it interesting.
2. Demonstrate that God has also made each of us different or unique, including some who are not able to do all the things others can.

**Materials:** Large box  
Blindfold  
Wheelchair  
Old glasses  
Earplugs

**Media:** None

**Catechism:** 2276, 2289

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verse:** Luke 13:10-12 (Cure of a crippled woman)

**Lesson:**

There are five senses: the sense of sight so we can see people and things around us, the sense of smell so we can smell people and things around us, the sense of touch so we can touch people and things around us, the sense of hearing so we can listen to people and things around us, and the sense of taste so we can taste the things around us.

These five senses are given to us as gifts from God, but sometimes people aren't born with one of these senses, or sometimes people lose one of these senses. If someone is blind, for example, he/she does not have the sense of sight And if someone loses one of his/her senses, the other senses become stronger to help the person adapt.

What we need to realize is that no matter what senses we have, no matter what we look like, no matter what nationality we are, no matter how smart we are, no matter what we can do or can't do, we are very valuable.

Isn't it great that we are all different and unique? Wouldn't it be sad if everyone looked exactly the same and talked exactly the same, wore the exact same clothes, ate the same kind of food every day, told the same jokes, listened to the same music, was the same age and liked only brown M&M's? This would be a very dull world.

What is a better gift than our five senses is our uniqueness. From the unborn baby to the elderly person, we are all different and we are all very valuable and very special. No one has ever been created like you and no one ever will be. You are one of a kind. WOW!

This means that we all have the responsibility to respect this uniqueness in every single person. This means that regardless of who someone is, what he/she looks like, or what he/she can do, we must respect him/her. No one has a right to put someone else down or to hurt him/her in any way.

For example, let's go back to the brown M&M's. Wouldn't it be strange if someone said we could only like and eat brown M&M's and any other color of M&M's we had to throw out in the garbage? Strange idea, right? Just think of all those pretty colors and all that delicious chocolate being wasted.

Well, we can't waste another person just because they are blind or deaf or a different color or have different ideas or a different faith than we have. No one deserves to be put down or to be thrown into the garbage.

What we need to do more of is to celebrate how fantastic each person is. We need to work very hard at accepting the differences of others, and to explore the uniqueness of other people. For example, don't be afraid to ask a person how he/she compensated if he/she has lost one of his/her senses. How does a blind person know what clothes to wear so they match? How does a deaf person know if the phone is ringing? How does a person in a wheelchair get around town?

How does a person from a new culture adapt to this country? Ask questions. Learn from others who are different, because then we are all smarter and better people. Older people often have time to talk to us. They are full of wisdom so we must take the time to visit them. We must salute the uniqueness of each person. We must learn to like and to love things and people who seem different to us.

Remember, it is because of our differences that we are special, and we all make this a better world by celebrating the uniqueness of each person. (Show visual.)

- Questions:**
- 1) Why did God create such a variety of people?
  - 2) What nationality are you?
  - 3) What special customs does your family have for holidays?
  - 4) What does it mean to be "disabled", or "handicapped", or "physically or mentally challenged"?
  - 5) If you had to choose a sense to lose, which one would it be and why?
  - 6) What smells do you associate with certain places? (For example, a bakery, McDonald's, a swimming pool, or a meat packing company)
  - 7) What foods would you enjoy eating less if you lost your sense of taste?

- Activities:**
- 1) Get a large box, turn it on its side and cut two arm holes in it on the bottom. Place a variety of objects in the box and have students feel them and guess what they are.

- 2) Blindfold a student and have another student give him/her directions to walk across the room without bumping into something.
- 3) Borrow a wheelchair and have students try to get around in it.
- 4) Blindfold a student and have him/her try eating something from a plate with eating utensils.
- 5) Get some old glasses and smear petroleum jelly on the lenses. Have the students wear them while they try to read, write, or draw.
- 6) Get earplugs and have students wear them. Speak very softly and have them read your lips.
- 7) Blindfold some students. Have them taste different types of soft drinks and see if they can name them.
- 8) Bring in a physically challenged person to speak to the students.

**Closing Prayer:**

Dear Father in heaven,

Help me to appreciate the gifts that each one of us brings to this one. May I see others as Jesus would see them if he walked today among us.

## **We Were Once Very Tiny; We Learn How We Grow**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:

1. Recognize that life begins very small and develops in unique ways.
2. Recall some of the times when their bodies were able to do different functions.

**Materials:** Birthday decorations, games, cake (with frosting to decorate)  
Baby pictures

**Media:** None

**Catechism:** 295, 356, 2270, 2323

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verse:** Psalm 126:1-3 (“The Lord has done great things for us!”)

### **Lesson:**

Have any of you watched a baby chicken peck its way out of the egg shell? Has anyone found a bird egg, or seen a baby bird being fed by its mother?

Babies of all types are special, but people babies are the greatest. We were all once tiny babies growing in our mother’s womb. Some people called us a fetus, which is just another term used to describe a tiny baby who is growing in his/her mother’s womb.

As we grew in this safe place, we were quite the sight. Some people think we looked rather funny when we started out; some have even said we were rather ugly. They just didn’t realize that they looked that way too when they were growing, and they weren’t ugly; they were special.

We must remember that a tiny, developing baby in a mother’s womb is a very unique, beautiful person. It’s like breaking the shell of a peanut to get to the good food inside. We’d never throw a peanut shell away until we ate the peanut, but they sure don’t look alike.

We’d never throw a person away because to some they don’t look right. We’d save everyone, for everyone is beautiful in his or her own way, no matter what he/she looked like years ago.

Just remember that the developing baby is the way every single person looked when he or she started. So if others see a picture of the baby growing inside his/her mother and say, “Boy that’s funny looking. That’s sure ugly,” you should remind them that they’re talking about themselves too! They’re talking about how we looked and we’re all good-looking, right?



Yes, it seems impossible that we were once very tiny. In fact, we were even smaller at our beginning. At our beginning, we were just a tiny speck, but we were all there, and just grew. Our mothers never had to go to the doctor and have him add a leg or another finger. From the moment of conception, we were all there, but we just grew and developed into the wonderful people we are today.

Let's examine the talents we had as we grew safely in our mother's womb.

At close to 18 days, our heart muscles started to beat. At 19 days, our eyes began to develop, and at 20 days, our entire nervous systems were laid down. At 28 days, we had 40 pairs of muscles developing and our arms and legs were forming. Even with all of this growth, we couldn't go to the weight room to see how much we could lift, but those muscles were growing and getting stronger.

Close to 30 days, blood was flowing within our vascular systems and our ears and noses began to develop. 40 days into our development, our brains were functioning. Electrical brain wave patterns could be recorded. This is usually evidence that "thinking" is taking place. Today that same brain of ours is hard at work helping us every day.

Around 56 days, all organs were functioning. Our stomachs, livers, kidneys, and brains were all intact. At this time or 8-9 weeks, our fingerprints could be seen with the aid of a microscope. Our fingerprints were and are unique only to us. No one has, nor ever will have, fingerprints exactly like ours. We are special and unique!

Also at 8 weeks, if someone tickled our noses, we would flex our heads backwards, trying to escape the tickling. Are some of you still ticklish?

We could also make a tiny fist, hiccup, suck our thumb, wake and sleep. Soon after that, or at 9 or 10 weeks, we could squint, swallow, and retract our tongues. We would squint if our eyelids were stroked or turn our heads if our foreheads were touched. Our fingernails were present now too.

At 4 months or 16 weeks, we were really showing off our talents for now we could swim with a natural swimmer's stroke, breathe fluid steadily, kick and turn somersaults. Eyelashes were forming, but we hadn't learned to wink yet, and our facial expressions were now beginning to resemble those of our parents. Close to this time, about 16 ½ weeks, all 20 milk teeth buds were in place, but we still weren't able to eat tacos or pizza.

At 18 weeks or 4 ½ months, our vocal cords were working. We couldn't sing the Star Spangled Banner or call someone on the phone, but we could cry. By now our activities began to reflect our distinct personalities, and we began to react to our mother's voices and to react to music or to loud noises.

By 20 weeks or 5 months, hair began showing on our heads and we weighed around one pound and we were about 12 inches in length. At 22 weeks we could open our eyes. Sometimes babies about 5 months old are born, and need a great deal of special attention because they are so small. Usually the unborn baby at 5 months isn't ready to be born. The baby stays in the mother's womb where he or she practices all his/her talents, grows, and waits for his/her birthday. Usually a baby is born after being in his/her mother's womb for 9 months. But if a baby is born early, doctors, nurses, and special machines and instruments are needed to help the tiny baby live a healthy life outside the womb.

According to a February, 1995 article in *The Omaha World Herald*, the tiniest infant to survive weighed 10 ounces when born. Nebraska claims another tiny survivor born 13 weeks prematurely weighing between 11 and 12 ounces, and was kicking and crying when she was born at the University Medical Center. It was five months later when her parents were able to take her home. Thanks to expert medical people and equipment, Torey is now home being loved by her family.

So you can see that as unborn babies, we were very talented. There was a lot taking place in our mother's wombs as we grew.

At birth, the doctor, using a special tube, removed the mucus that was left in our throats and noses, and we started breathing air. As air swept through our nostrils and lungs, we were able to utter our first cries.

The doctor also cut our umbilical cords to separate us from our mothers. That is how we received our tummy buttons, belly buttons, or navels. When we were in our mother's wombs, we obtained oxygen from our umbilical cords. After we were born, we no longer needed them because we breathed air and our parents now fed us and took care of us.

We must always remember that we were all tiny unborn babies at one time, and we must always remember that all we did was grow. Let's work and pray so that every unborn baby gets the opportunity to grow up like Torey Johansen and us. (Show visual.)

- Questions:**
- 1) What does the word fetus mean?
  - 2) How does a baby change when he/she is born?
  - 3) What are some of the things we could do before we were born?
  - 4) How much did you weigh when you were born?
  - 5) What things do we need to do for a baby after he/she is born?
  - 6) How do you and your families celebrate birthdays?

- Activities:**
- 1) Hold a birthday party for the class. Play games, blow out candles, and celebrate life.
  - 2) Have students bring baby pictures and current pictures to class, and discuss how everyone has changed and grown.
  - 3) Invite a police officer to come and do fingerprinting. Discuss how unique each fingerprint is.
  - 4) Ask a mother or father to bring his/her new baby to class and to share what his/her responsibilities are in caring for the baby.
  - 5) Invite a dentist or dental assistant to discuss how people are identified by their dental work.
  - 6) Have students work on a family history. Point out how life continues from generation to generation.
  - 7) Contact a county extension or 4-H leader to do a lesson on hatching baby chicks.
  - 8) Decorate a birthday cake and take it to a nursing home.

**Closing Prayer:**

Dear God,

Please help me see the world as a gift of love to us, especially as it is renewed through the gift of life.

## **GRADES THREE THROUGH FIVE**

### **Christian Living/Morality**

#### **GENERAL RELIGION THEME:**

##### **Treating People With Dignity**

#### **RELIGION OBJECTIVES**

Because of the dignity that God gave all human beings, we are to respect others and ourselves in thought, word, and deed.

The family is the basic unit of the Church and of society and it needs to be protected and respected.

We respect and care for our bodies because they are temples of the Holy Spirit.

#### **SUGGESTED RESPECT LIFE LESSONS**

We Receive the Gift of Life at Conception & Serve God Through His Gifts to Us Pg. 28

Each of Us is Different and Each of Us is Valuable Pg. 30

Prematurely Born Babies Pg. 32

What if You Were Not Born Pg. 34

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## **We Receive the Gift of Life at Conception & Serve God through His Gifts to Us**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:  
Know that the gift of life is given to everyone from the first moment they are created in the womb and that each person is special because God gives us all gifts to love and serve him through each other.

**Materials:** Bible

**Media:** None

**Catechism:** 357-358

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verse:** 1 Corinthians 7:7

God gives everyone special gifts that we use to love and serve him with our bodies and souls.

Discuss meaning of this verse.

What are some gifts that God gives us to love and serve him with our bodies and souls?

### **Discussion:**

Ask children to think about the different sorts of gifts that they have received during their life. Ask each child to think of the most special gift they have ever received.

Then, suggest that God has, in fact, given them the best gift: Life!

When are we given this gift?

Is it when God places us in our mother's womb?

Is it when we are born?

God first gives us our gift of life when we are placed in our mother's womb. He continues to give us this gift everyday and with every breath we breathe and every beat of our heart. Life, the biggest and best gift of all, is like a big present that has lots of smaller parts.

One of the first and most important parts of the gift of life is the gift of our soul. From the very moment we are created in our mother's womb, we are given a soul.

Even before we have a heartbeat, a brain, hands, feet, and everything else, we have a soul. It is through our soul that God continues to give us other spiritual gifts like: love, truthfulness, hope, faith, kindness, patience, etc.

**Instructions:**

The Gifts of the Spirit, Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord are the gifts of the Spirit that we are given as followers of Jesus. Discuss the meaning of each gift as it applies to the church.

**Activity:**

Have children discuss how they can use their various gifts to serve others in the church or community. Devise a class project that they can do together in service of the others and God.

**Discussion:**

Remind children that this gift of life is the most important gift we are given. We are given this gift from the first moment we are created in our mother's womb. It is this gift of life that allows us to enjoy all the other gifts we receive during our lifetime.

**Closing Prayer:**

Dear God, Thank You for giving me the gift of life. Help me to use all my gifts to love and serve you. Please give me gifts that help me become more like you. Help me to remember all the little babies in their mother's womb who You have given the gift of life. Thank You for all life. Amen.

## **Each of Us is Different and Each of Us is Valuable**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:  
Appreciate the gifts and talents which each person, including the elderly, has and can share with others.

**Materials:** Bible

**Media:** None

**Catechism:** 308, 361, 2276

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verse:** 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

### **Lesson:**

There is a girl who likes to dye her hair purple and a boy who has tattoos all over his arms. There is a man who is 28 years old but will always act and think like a 1 year old. In a nursery crib there is a baby who was born with no arms, and in a nursing home there is an elderly woman who can't always remember her name. In this world, there are many different people and God loves every one of them in a very special way.

A special group of people that we need to spend more time with is the elderly. They are the men and women who are probably someone's grandpa and grandma or great-grandmother or great-grandfather. Each of them has a lesson, or many lessons, that we can learn, and each of them needs to be loved and respected.

Sometimes the elderly are very sick and can't talk or play with us. What they can do is teach us the beauty of silence and the gift of patience. We can sit by their bedside, hold their hands, and listen to the silence while we think of all the things these elderly people used to do. Did they milk cows and squirt some milk to the kittens? Did they make bread from scratch and watch the dough rise? Could they play the piano or the violin, or dance faster than a rabbit? Could they laugh and smile and bring happiness to others?

And what is this gift called patience? The elderly can teach us to wait for things and that waiting is a virtue, a good quality. Because they cannot walk as quickly as they used to, they teach us to be patient as we walk beside them. Because they may not drive as fast as they used to, they teach us to slow down and to see the beauty around us. Because their fingers aren't as nimble as they used to be, they show us that sometimes all they need is a little more time.

There are also elderly people in their 90s who are active. One couple in the Columbus, Nebraska area has been married for 60 years and they're in a bowling league. We all probably know some elderly people who are very active. Many are excellent gardeners, some make beautiful items from wood; others can knit, sew, crochet, or make lace. Most of us also know someone who makes the best cookies in the world. Some teach us where the fish always bite, or where there is a nest of baby birds. Others babysit with us, and teach us how to behave, and how to have fun.

The elderly are full of wisdom because they have experienced many things. They can teach us a great deal about living. We must take the time to visit with them and to ask them questions so we too can learn.

Many elderly people are wonderful story tellers. They enjoy visits from people because they often can't go as many places as they used to go.

Another wonderful quality of these people is that they are so ready to listen to us and to all that is happening at school, at home, or with our friends.

Strive to make friends with the elderly so you can learn from them, brighten their day, and show God how much you respect all of His people.

- Questions:**
- 1) Why do we need to love and to respect people of all ages?
  - 2) What things could you do to help an elderly person?
  - 3) What family activities do you attend that include the elderly?
  - 4) What do you think it must be like to be very old?
  - 5) Can you name some special things you've learned from an elderly person?
  - 6) Do people sometimes have to wait for you? When?

- Activities:**
- 1) Write letters to grandparents or an elderly relative or friend.
  - 2) Invite an elderly person to come to class and talk about "the good old days."
  - 3) Have a demonstration of an art from the past. For example, tin punching, butter making, candle making, soap making, taffy pulling, etc.
  - 4) Draw pictures for people in a nursing home.
  - 5) Plan a "tea" party and ask the students to invite an elderly person.
  - 6) Visit a nursing home or an elderly person in his/her home.

**Closing Prayer:**

Dear God,  
Please help me to appreciate and give thanks for all those, who give so much to me,  
especially my grandparents.

Slusarski



## **Prematurely Born Babies**

**Objective:** The students will be able to:  
Explain how premature babies have the same needs, activities, and value as any other child.

**Media:** Search online for “premature birth photos” and/or “premature birth videos”

**Catechism:** 2270, 1934-1936

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verse:** Ruth 4:14-16

**Discussion:**

What happens if a baby is born before 9 months?  
Is it still a baby just because it looks different? Is it alive?

Cite examples of babies (“premies”) born before 9 months that have survived. Is there anyone in the class that was born prematurely or that knows someone who was? How prematurely? (The concept is to have students realize that babies can survive outside the mother’s womb even before the usual 9-month gestational period and yet it is legal to abort babies throughout the 9 months of gestation.)

**Activities:**

1. Show pictures or a video of premature babies in incubators. How are they similar to full-term babies? (E.g., they are fed, bathed, held at times, etc.) These babies continue their development outside the womb. Today’s premature babies have a better chance of survival than they did in the past because of the medical advancements.
2. Guest Speaker: Have a doctor or nurse from Neo-natal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) come and talk to the class (must be pro-life).

**Closing Prayer:**

Gracious Heavenly Father, we open our minds and our hearts to your word so that each thought and each action is what you would want us to do. Guide us to say the proper words to others that do not understand that a baby exists inside the womb.

## What If You Were Not Born?

**Objective:** The students will be able to:  
Describe what would have been the impact if certain people had not been born.

**Materials:** Bible

**Media:** Reference to video, *It's a Wonderful Life* (starring Jimmy Stewart) where an Angel shows him what life would have been if he had not been born.

*Crescendo*, a 20 minute video based on the diaries of Beethoven's mother. In one part she contemplates suicide and abortion and then she has a change of heart. Available from the Nebraska Catholic Conference (for loan) at 402-477-7517. Purchasing information available at [www.cpcmovie.com](http://www.cpcmovie.com).

**Catechism:** 305, 2115

**Opening Prayer:** The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be

**Bible Verses:** Luke 2:1-14 (The birth of Jesus)

### Activities:

1. List famous people: Pope, Mother Teresa, and Martin Luther King Jr. What did they do?
2. What if they had not been born, what would be the outcome?
3. Consider the impact on the world if some of great leaders had not been born (e.g., Presidents Washington, Jefferson (Revolutionary War), Lincoln (freed slaves), and Reagan (Russia's fall); Emperor Constantine (made stopped the persecution of Christians in Rome); Mother Teresa (served and saved sick/poor)
4. Think about those not yet born that will find cure for cancer, diabetes, heart disease, AIDS, etc.
5. Give each child pin of 10 week "precious feet." By wearing these tiny feet on your garment, you are speaking for those that cannot speak for themselves. When people ask they need to know that this is the size of a 10-week-old baby growing inside the mother's womb.

### Closing Prayer:

Dear God, may I come to accept that my plan for my life may not be God's plan for my life, and learn to trust God more.

Huntsville

## Cross Curricular Lesson Plan Ideas

### Grades 3-5

Subject	Lesson/ Activity
Science	If weather permits, take a brief walk outside identifying elements of creation. Once inside, invite students to share their feelings about God's creation. From these experiences shared, students will find pictures in a magazine or draw elements of creation to honor God with a "Creation Wall".
Math	Ask students to determine their Life Day (the day they were conceived 9 months before their birthday) by subtracting their birthday numerically. Celebrate the day their life began in a prayer thanking God for this great gift.
Art	Even though we are not sure what angels look like, ask students to draw a portrait of the Angel Gabriel after discussing his message to the Blessed mother. Then draw a picture of Mary before and after she heard what the Angel Gabriel had to say to her.
Math and Social Studies	Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth right after Jesus was conceived in her by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:39). Mary lived in Nazareth, Elizabeth lived near Jerusalem. On a map of the Holy Land, determine the distance between Nazareth and Jerusalem and approximate how many days it would take Mary to get there if she was walking. Why was it so important for Mary to make this journey?
Drama	Read the story of the boy Jesus at the Temple from Luke 2:41-52. Assign the roles of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and some relatives and read the story a second time having the students take their stage direction and act out the roles as the story is read. Students will discuss afterward how a single life is valued.
Math	According to the National Adoption Center at <a href="http://www.adopt.org">www.adopt.org</a> , there are 115,000 children in foster care waiting to be adopted. How many families would it take to give them all a home? Say a prayer for these children. Say of prayer of thanksgiving for your families.
Art/Computer	Acquire a copy of Michaelangelo's Sistine Chapel's famous image of the outstretched arm of God and man and title the picture; <b><i>God-For Life</i></b> . Have students do a computer search of things God has created that fascinates them within the entire universe (stars, galaxies, rocks, lions, etc) Ask students to explain their favorite choices.
History	Chief Seattle (for which the city in Washington is named) is of the Suquamish tribe of the Puget Sound Indians. In 1854 he delivered a speech to an assembly of tribes preparing them to sign treaties with the Americans. His speech reflects a natural knowledge of the wonder of creation. Read the speech to share in his understanding and discuss what was learned. Chief Seattle became a Christian before his death.
Religion	Have students read Psalm 8 which present a lofty view of human life created by God. Discuss the incredible value God places in human life.
Social Studies	Examine the 5 <sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution. Discuss how this amendment supports a pro-life belief that protects human life.
Math	IN 1970 the U.S. Population over age 65 was 2%. In 2000 it rose to 12.5 % of the population. What was the percent increase? Discuss the implications of our aging population in terms of the need for Christian churches to be involved in end-of –life care.

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