

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALT LAKE CITY



A Christian Steward is one who:

- Receives God's gifts with gratitude
- Cherishes and tends gifts in a responsible and accountable manner
- Shares gifts in justice and love with others
- Returns gifts with increase to the Lord

Bishops' Pastoral Letter of 1992
Stewardship: A Disciple's Response

Office of Stewardship and Development
Seventh Grade and Eighth Grade Curriculum

*“Gratitude
in
Action”*



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STEWARDSHIP
Gratitude in Action
Seventh Grade and Eighth Grade Curriculum

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General Instructions

Each lesson is divided into four sections:

- Scripture Reading¹
- Teaching for the Day
- Activity
- Closing Prayer

Scripture Reading (*depends on the length of the reading; 2 minutes at the most*)

- Choose one from the list given
- The instructor or, preferably, a student should proclaim the Scripture as one would at Mass.
 - E.g. “A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians...” ending with “The Word of the Lord” and all respond “Thanks be to God.”

Teaching of the Day (*7-8 minutes*)

- Several teaching points and additional resources are given to assist the instructor.
- The saint(s) of the day are there to provide a real life example of someone who demonstrates the theme of the day

Activity (*4-7 minutes*)

- Options are given to choose from
- The instructor is free to choose/create other suitable activities not listed

Closing Prayer (*less than a minute*)

- Prayers are primarily taken from the Roman Missal providing an important connection between the Liturgy and living out good stewardship and social justice.

Total Lesson Length: 15 minutes

¹ All Scripture readings in this curriculum were taken from the website for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops - <http://usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/>



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Lesson 1: Introduction to Social Justice

Objective:

To introduce the concept of social justice, this year's theme, and its connection to stewardship.

Teaching

Scripture (*choose one*)

1. What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Indeed someone might say, "You have faith and I have works." Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works. **(James 2: 14-18)**
2. The LORD said to Moses: Speak to the whole Israelite community and tell them: Be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy. Each of you revere your mother and father, and keep my sabbaths. I, the LORD, am your God. Do not turn aside to idols, nor make molten gods for yourselves. I, the LORD, am your God. Likewise, you shall not pick your vineyard bare, nor gather up the grapes that have fallen. These things you shall leave for the poor and the alien. I, the LORD, am your God. You shall not steal. You shall not deceive or speak falsely to one another. You shall not swear falsely by my name, thus profaning the name of your God. I am the LORD. You shall not exploit your neighbor. You shall not commit robbery. You shall not withhold overnight the wages of your laborer. You shall not insult the deaf, or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but you shall fear your God. I am the LORD. You shall not act dishonestly in rendering judgment. Show neither partiality to the weak nor deference to the mighty, but judge your neighbor justly. You shall not go about spreading slander among your people; nor shall you stand by idly when your neighbor's life is at stake. I am the LORD. You shall not hate any of your kindred in your heart. Reprove your neighbor openly so that you do not incur sin because of that person. Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against your own people. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD. **(Leviticus 19: 1-4, 10-18)**
3. Thus says the LORD: Do what is right and just. Rescue the victims from the hand of their oppressors. Do not wrong or oppress the resident alien, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. **(Jeremiah 22: 3)**



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Teaching Points

- **Faith and works always go together. What we believe should shape our thoughts, words, and deeds in our public and private life.**
- **This year we will focus on social justice.**
 - *Social justice is about service to others, working to ensure that we treat others with dignity, and that we serve and promote the common good.*
 - *Virtue of Justice (CCC 1807)*
 - Justice is something we do. That is, in all our actions we respect the rights of others and work toward the common good.
- **How is this connected to stewardship?**
 - *Good stewardship leads to the proper use of our time, talent, and resources for the service and well-being of the community.*
- **Saint of the Day**
 - *Saint Martin de Porres*
 - He was a Dominican brother who spent a great deal of time in prayer and caring for the poor and the sick.
 - His faith was the driving force for his good works.

Activities

- **Going back to the selection from James think of some examples of how our faith can shape our actions and how we treat others.**
- **What are some available service opportunities (parish or otherwise) in the local community?**

Prayer to End the Lesson

O God, who have revealed that peacemakers are to be called your children, grant, we pray, that we may work without ceasing to establish that justice which alone ensures true and lasting peace. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
– *From the Roman Missal: Collect (Opening Prayer) from the Mass for the Preservation of Peace and Justice*



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Lesson 2: Love of God

Objective:

To encourage the formation of a loving relationship with God which is the foundation that leads to true stewardship and social justice.

Teaching

Scripture *(choose one)*

1. Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today. Keep repeating them to your children. Recite them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them on your arm as a sign and let them be as a pendant on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates. **(Deuteronomy 6: 4-9)**
2. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. **(John 15: 4-5)**

Teaching Points

- Last lesson we learned about social justice. Justice is something we do – giving each their due, respecting the dignity and rights of others.
- **Jesus gives us what is known as the Greatest Commandment**
 - *“You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”* – Matthew 22: 37-40
- **How is this connected to social justice?**
 - *Justice toward God is giving God His due – loving Him with all our heart, soul, and mind*
 - *Love of God is the primary element in our lives. The love of God is the foundation that allows us to truly love our neighbor. Through this love we are rooted in the truth and this leads to true social justice.*
- **How is this connected to stewardship?**
 - *God in His goodness has entrusted us with all of our time, talent, and treasure.*
 - *A loving response to this gift would be to use these gifts for our good and for the good of others.*



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- **How do we come to love God?**
 - *Our relationships with our family and friends deepen as we spend time with them. So it is with God.*
 - *Faithfulness to the Sacraments – Mass and confession*

- **Life of a Saint**
 - *St. Dominic Savio*
 - <http://www.ewtn.com/saintsholy/saints/D/stdominicsavio.asp> - for more information
 - From an early age he had a great love for God and spent a great deal of time in prayer.
 - His relationship with the Lord formed his heart very deeply. He was eager to spend time with Him in prayer, and also to tell others about Him and bring them to faith.
 - Dominic became very sick and died at the age of 14. But the example of his life shows us that the pursuit of holiness and a great love of God is possible for the young.

Activities

Have the students on the white board or a piece of paper write down the different ways in which God loves us. Talk about it. Then ask them to write down one way in which we can love on another in a similar way under each of the previous ways in which God loves us. Talk about it.

Watch a video of the latest news, or take a newspaper, and ask the students to identify where they see social justice being practiced well, and not so well. Identify where the love of God is needed and what that could look like in a practical way for the ordinary person.

Prayer to End the Lesson:

Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you: I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures - I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into your hands I commend my soul: I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father. - *Prayer of Abandonment* by Charles de Foucauld (<http://www.brothercharles.org/wordpress/prayer-of-abandonment/>)



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Lesson 3: Prayer and Scripture

Objective:

To encourage the development of a prayer life and devotion to the reading and study of Scripture, to foster greater love of God and form hearts for stewardship and social justice.

Teaching:

Scripture *(choose one)*

1. He was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and do not subject us to the final test.” **(Luke 11: 1-4)**
2. *When Moses had written down this law, he gave it to the levitical priests who carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. Moses commanded them, saying, On the feast of Booths, at the prescribed time in the year for remission which comes at the end of every seven-year period, when all Israel goes to appear before the LORD, your God, in the place which he will choose, you shall read this law aloud in the presence of all Israel. Assemble the people—men, women and children, as well as the resident aliens who live in your communities—that they may hear and so learn to fear the LORD, your God, and to observe carefully all the words of this law. Their children also, who do not know it yet, shall hear and learn to fear the LORD, your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess. (Deuteronomy 31: 9-13)*

Teaching Points

- As we learned in the last lesson, the love of God is the foundation for true stewardship and social justice. Today we will focus on the ways in which we nurture that relationship with the Lord.
- **Prayer**
 - *“For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.” – CCC 2558, quoting St. Thérèse of Lisieux*
 - *People don’t become friends by ignoring each other, but rather by spending time together. So it is with God – to build a relationship with Him we must spend time with Him in prayer.*
 - *There are many forms of prayer, though for this exercise it might be good to focus on communal and, in particular, liturgical prayer.*



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- The Liturgy is the prayer of the Church, when the Body of Christ comes together and is a “visible sign of the communion in Christ between God and men.” (CCC 1071)
- The Eucharist in particular is the “source and summit of the Christian life (*Lumen Gentium 11*, CCC 1324)”
- **Sacred Scripture**
 - *The Bible is the God’s word, His message to us. Knowing the Scriptures is an essential part of our relationship with God.*
 - *The Bible has a lot to teach us about the love of God*
 - And also about stewardship, how the care of creation and the good of our neighbors have been entrusted to us
- **Saints of the Day**
 - *Saints Benedict and Scholastica*
 - Brother and sister
 - Benedict founded monasteries, wrote a rule of life that put great value on reading and praying with the Bible
 - St. Benedict writes in his Rule of Life: “Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ...”

Activities

Class Scripture reading challenge

- Choose a book from the Bible and challenge the students to read it at home within a given time frame.
- Ask the students about their favorite Scripture verses and compile a list. Have them memorize these verses and recite them at a later date. Give a prize(s) to those who successfully complete the task.

Prayer to End the Lesson

O God, who made the Abbot Saint Benedict an outstanding master in the school of divine service, grant, we pray, that, putting nothing before love of you, we may hasten with a loving heart in the way of your commands. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, on God, for ever and ever. Amen. – *From the Roman Missal: Collect (Opening Prayer) for the Mass of the Memorial of St. Benedict on July 11*



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Lesson 4: Love of Neighbor

Objective:

To encourage the growth of a genuine love of others and a recognition of the dignity of all human life, for the building up of the community and for the care of those in need.

Teaching

Scripture (*choose one*)

1. There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” He said in reply, “You shall 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.” He replied to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.” But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’ Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” (***Luke 10: 25-37***)
2. Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. (***Exodus 20: 12-17***)
3. But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them



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4. to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (**Luke 10: 29-37**)
5. God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (**Genesis 1:27**)
6. For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. (**Galatians 3:26**)

Teaching Points

- In the last two lessons we have learned about the love of God and how build our relationship with Him. The love of God helps us fulfill the second part of the Greatest Commandment: to love our neighbor.
- **How is this connected to social justice?**
 - *Once again, social justice is about working for the good of others. Ensuring that their needs are met and their dignity is respected.*
- **How is this connected to stewardship?**
 - *Our time, talent, and treasure that God has entrusted to us should be used for the good of others and not only for our own good.*
- **The dignity of the human person plays a major role in social justice.**
 - *True social justice is aimed at guarding and protecting the dignity of the human person.*
- **Saint of the Day**
 - *Blessed Mother Teresa*
 - She cared for those whom society had cast aside and treated them with according to their God-given dignity

Activities

Spend some more time looking at the life of Mother Teresa.

What do you find inspiring about her story?

How does her life inspire you to greater love of neighbor?

Prayer to End the Lesson:

O God, who wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and still more wonderfully restored it, grant, we pray, that we may share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. - *Roman Missal: Prayer for Christmas Mass During the Day*



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Lesson 5: Love of Enemies

Objective:

To teach that the command to love our neighbor embraces all our relationships and that social justice is to be directed to all, even those we do not get along with.

Teaching:

Scripture (*choose one*)

1. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect. **(Matthew 5: 43-48)**
2. “But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit [is] that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful. **(Luke 6: 27-36)**
3. Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all. Beloved, do not look for revenge but leave room for the wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” Rather, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.” Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good. **(Romans 12: 17-21)**

Teaching Points

- Last lesson we learned about loving our neighbor. Today we will learn how the command to love our neighbor extends even towards the people we do not get along with.



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- Faith, Hope, and Love (charity)...and the greatest of these is love. The virtue of charity seeks the good of the other. By praying for your enemy and asking they receive the good God desires is how we love our enemies.
- All people must be treated with human dignity, even those who treat us badly
- Social justice is not limited only to those we “like” but is to be given for all.
- It is easy to want to “get back” at others when they do us wrong.
 - But this only perpetuates the evil being done and makes things worse
- By loving them instead and returning good instead of evil, the damage stops with you
 - Those opens the door to healing and even forgiveness and reconciliation
 - The one who was your enemy may even end up being your friend
- **Saint of the Day**
 - *St. Gemma Galgani*
 - <http://www.stgemmagalgani.com/2010/10/sign-of-contradiction-crosses-of-st.html>
 - *She was an Italian girl born in the last quarter of the 19th century*
 - *She received many special graces from God including the stigmata (wounds of Christ).*
 - Some people had doubts about what she was experiencing and even became hostile towards her because of it.
 - Rather than become angry and uncharitable to those who had become her enemies, she prayed for them and continued to act charitably towards them

Activities

Discussion: In view of charity, how do we deal with bullies?

Identify those in society that are not treated charitably. What can be done on the practical level to love them?

Prayer to End the Lesson

O God, who have laid down by your precept of charity that we should sincerely love those who afflict us, grant that we may follow the commands of the New Law, striving to return good for evil and bearing one another’s burdens. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. – *Roman Missal: Collect (Opening Prayer) for the Mass For Our Oppressors*



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Lesson 6: Gratitude

Objective:

To encourage recognition that everything is a gift from God to form an attitude of thankfulness and gratitude.

Teaching

Scripture (*choose one*)

1. And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him. He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." **(Luke 1: 46-55)**
2. Shout joyfully to the LORD, all you lands; serve the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful song. Know that the LORD is God, he made us, we belong to him, we are his people, the flock he shepherds. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name; good indeed is the LORD, His mercy endures forever, his faithfulness lasts through every generation. **(Psalm 100)**

Teaching Points

- We have been focusing a lot on the great commandment to love God and our neighbor. Today we will focus on gratitude which is very much a part of loving God and neighbor, as well as being a good steward committed to social justice
- Gratefulness comes from the realization that everything we have is a gift. We give thanks to God Who created all things because everything we have is from him.
- God has given us these gifts for our good and the good of all and so should not be abused.
 - *Being grateful is part of being a good steward, using those gifts for the reason it was intended to be used, using them respectfully, and sharing them with others.*
- "When we realize how fortunate we are, how good God is to us, we want to return the favor. We want to give back. With a grateful heart we want, in turn, to bless others. We realize that the blessings we have are not just for our satisfaction, but are given so that we may do good with them."²

² Connery, Thomas J. *The Heart That Gives: Seven Traits of Joyful Stewardship* pg. 7



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- **Saint of the Day**

- *St. Paul*
- *Almost all of his letters contain a thanksgiving at the beginning.*
- *He sees all blessings as coming from God.*
- *He was a man who often faced difficulties and persecutions in his ministry, and yet he was always filled with gratitude for the good things he had been given.*

Activity

Before you go to bed tonight think of 5 things you are thankful for, and offer a prayer to God thanking Him for those gifts.

Write "Thank You" cards to some people who have done something for you.

Prayer to End the Lesson

God our Father, from whose hand we have received generous gifts so that we might learn to share your blessings in gratitude, accept these gifts of bread and wine, and let the perfect sacrifice of Jesus draw us closer to all our brothers and sisters in the human family. - *Roman Missal: Prayer Over the Offerings for the Thanksgiving Day Mass*



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Lesson 7: Generosity

Objective:

To encourage the development of a generous heart which is key to loving service to God and to the community.

Teaching:

Scripture (*choose one*)

1. So when he had washed their feet [and] put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, “Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me ‘teacher’ and ‘master,’ and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. **(John 13: 12-14)**
2. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes. **(1 Corinthians 12: 7-11)**

Teaching Points

- Last time we talked about gratitude: being thankful for the gifts we receive from God. A heart full of gratitude leads to a generous heart that shares those gifts with others.
- That brings us to today’s topic: generosity.
- Good stewardship requires that we are generous with our time, talent, and treasure according to our means and ability.
- **Time**
 - *Time is a gift that ought to be used wisely*
 - *There are times for work, prayer, play, and rest. Being a good steward of our time is about using our time wisely in all of these ways.*
 - *As for social justice, we are called to give our time to those in need.*
 - This could take the form of service at a local charity, or even simply giving your time to be with someone who needs a friend.
- **Talent**
 - *We all have particular gifts that can be used for the good of the community*
- **Treasure**
 - *We are called to give of our material resources to help those less fortunate than us.*



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- *Giving a donation to a local charity (money, food, used clothing) is a good way of using our treasure to help those in need and build up the community.*
- **Saints of the Day**
 - *Saint Lawrence, martyr*
(http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=366)
 - 3rd century Roman deacon who gave generously to support the poor
 - When Roman authorities ordered him to hand over the treasure of the Church, he gathered the poor of Rome, presented them to the Prefect and declared "This is the Church's treasure!"
- **Highlighting the great importance of caring for the needy**
 - *Saint Jean Vianney* (http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=3946)
 - Parish priest who was very generous with his time, even to spending all day long sitting in a confessional for the many people coming to receive forgiveness for their sins.

Activities

- Food-drive (or something similar)
- Encourage students to bring in canned or other non-perishable food items over the next month to be given to a local food bank.
- Have the students come up with a list of gifts/talents they have been given, and have them brainstorm ideas for how they could use those gifts for the community.
- If you chose the reading from 1 Corinthians, then you could have the students reflect on this passage as well.

Prayer to End the Lesson

Lord, teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, save that of knowing that I do your will. –

Prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits

(http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/prs/stign/prayers.html)



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Lesson 8: Forgiveness

Objective:

To help the students understand that forgiveness is a gift we have received from God and, as stewards of God's gifts, we ought to forgive others as well.

Teaching:

Scripture (choose one)

1. Then Peter approaching asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times. **(Matthew 18: 21-22)**
2. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers." So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began. **(Luke 15:18-24)**

Teaching Points

- Last time we learned about generosity. Following the example of God Himself who is generous with the gifts He gives us, we strive to be generous with our time, talent, and treasure.
- Today we learn about another of God's gifts given to all of us – forgiveness.
- *"Forgiveness reflects the qualities of a good steward. Good stewards refuse to cling to or hold on to the gifts that God has given them. They know that these gifts are not for keeping, but for sharing with others. The faithful steward is able to let go, and so it is with forgiveness. We refuse to hold on to hurts, misunderstandings and mistreatments. We refuse to give in to the temptation of replaying those tapes in our mind" ³*
- Forgiveness is also important for social justice because it leads to healing. Injustices damage the community. Forgiveness begins the healing process.
- One way in which we can learn to forgive others is to ask for forgiveness for ourselves for the wrong we have done
 - *We ask forgiveness of our friends and family*

³ Ibid, 26



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- *We ask God for forgiveness for our sins*
 - In personal prayer, penitential rite at the beginning of Mass.
 - Especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation – Confession
- *When we know what it means to be forgiven and the healing and consolation that comes from forgiveness, then we will better understand the need to forgive others so they can experience that same healing*
- **Saint of the Day**
 - *Blessed John Paul II*
 - On May 13, 1981 a man attempted to assassinate Pope John Paul II
 - A few years later, John Paul II met the assassin and forgave him

Activities

What makes it hard to forgive? How can we overcome that difficulty?

If you chose the reading from Luke on the Prodigal Son, then have the students read the rest of the story concerning the older brother before this activity.

You can also refer to the reading from Matthew for reflection to answer these questions.

Prayer to End the Lesson (choose one)

Graciously hear the prayers of those who call upon you, we ask, O Lord, and forgive the sins of those who confess to you, granting us in your kindness both pardon and peace. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. – *Roman Missal: Collect (Opening Prayer) for the Mass for the Forgiveness of Sins, Option A*

Our Father...

- *Before offering this prayer draw everyone's attention to the petition "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us..."*



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Lesson 9: The New Evangelization

Objective:

To see evangelization as a part of good stewardship and social justice – making known the great love of God to those who do not know Him.

Teaching:

Scripture (Choose one)

1. The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”
(Matthew 28: 16-20)
2. Now I am reminding you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you indeed received and in which you also stand. Through it you are also being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. After that he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one born abnormally, he appeared to me. For I am the least* of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been ineffective. Indeed, I have toiled harder than all of them; not I, however, but the grace of God [that is] with me. Therefore, whether it be I or they, so we preach and so you believed. ***(1 Corinthians 15: 1-11)***

Teaching Points

- **Throughout the last several months we have learned about...**
 - *Social justice: working to ensure that everyone is given their due in accord with their dignity as sons and daughters of God*
 - *Love of God: He created the world and everything in it. He created us and loves us without measure. Our response is to love Him in return through prayer, knowing the Scriptures, and following His commandments.*
 - *Love of Neighbor: Loving God allows us to better love others. This love moves us to serve others and care for them in their need.*



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- *Gratitude, generosity, and forgiveness: We learned to be thankful for the many gifts we have received from God and from others. This motivates our generosity to give just as we have received, or our time, talent, and treasure to build up the community. By forgiving others and learning to ask for forgiveness we can take part in healing relationships damaged by sin.*
- **Our faith in God is a gift.**
 - *Through this faith we love God. Because of this love we strive to be good stewards of gifts He has given us and build a better, more just world.*
 - *Being a good steward of our gifts means we share them with others.*
 - This is true for our faith as well.
- **In his homily for the final Mass of World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, Pope Francis encouraged the young people of the world to do three things:**
 - *Go – The command to preach the Gospel to all nations is given to all of us both young and old. This is done under the impulse of love for Jesus who gave us his whole self.*
 - *Do not be afraid – You are not in this alone. For one, God is always with you. Also, he doesn't send you by yourself because all of us are sent on this mission together, as a Church.*
 - *Serve – following the example of Christ we live our lives for others. We do this in bearing personal witness to the Gospel and in serving those in need (social justice!).*
- **Saint of the Day**
 - *Blessed José de Anchieta*
 - <http://saltandlighttv.org/blog/saints-and-blesseds/getting-to-know-blessed-jose-de-anchieta>
 - He joined the Jesuits when he was only nineteen years old. Traveled to Brazil as a missionary and become known as the “Apostle of Brazil”

Activities

What do you find challenging about the call to evangelize?

What are some ways you can evangelize as a young person today?

Prayer to End the Lesson

O God, you have willed that your Church be the sacrament of salvation for all nations, so that Christ's saving work may continue to the end of the ages; stir up, we pray, the hearts of your faithful and grant that they may feel a more urgent call to work for the salvation of every creature, so that from all the peoples on earth one family and one people of your own may arise and increase. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. – *Roman Missal: Collect (Opening Prayer) for the Mass for the Evangelization of Peoples*



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Appendix

Supplemental Resources

Lesson 1

- The vocation of the lay faithful to holiness implies that life according to the Spirit expresses itself in a particular way in their involvement in temporal affairs and in their participation in earthly activities. (***Blessed Pope John Paul II, Christifideles Laici 17***)
- Justice is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor. Justice toward God is called the “virtue of religion.” Justice toward men disposes one to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good. The just man, often mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures, is distinguished by habitual right thinking and the uprightness of his conduct toward his neighbor. “You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor [Leviticus 19:15].” “Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven [Colossians 4:1].” (***Catechism of the Catholic Church 1807***)
- Summa Theologica II-II, 58 (<http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3058.htm>)
 - *A good resource for a discussion on justice, though it might be challenging to read.*

Lesson 3

- CCC 1066 and following.
- *It is through the sacraments and the exercise of the virtues that the sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community is brought into operation. Incorporated in the Church through baptism, the faithful are destined by the baptismal character for the worship of the Christian religion; reborn as sons of God they must confess before men the faith which they have received from God through the Church (4*). They are more perfectly bound to the Church by the sacrament of Confirmation, and the Holy Spirit endows them with special strength so that they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith, both by word and by deed, as true witnesses of Christ (5*). Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they offer the Divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It.(6*) Thus both by reason of the offering and through Holy Communion all take part in this liturgical service, not indeed, all in the same way but each in that way which is proper to himself. Strengthened in Holy Communion by the Body of Christ, they then manifest in a concrete way that unity of the people of God which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most august sacrament. (***Lumen Gentium 11***)*



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Lessons 6, 7, 8

- Connery, Thomas J. *The Heart That Gives: Seven Traits of Joyful Stewardship*. Fenton: Creative Communications for the Parish, 2013.
 - *A good resource for all of these lessons*

Lesson 9

- Homily of Pope Francis at the Final Mass of World Youth Day, Rio 2013
 - <http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-francis-go-do-not-be-afraid-and-serve>

Useful Links

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/epub/index.cfm>

Church Documents

- www.vatican.va

Information on the Saints

- <http://www.catholic.org/saints/>
- <http://www.americancatholic.org/features/saints/faqs.aspx>

Online Bible

- <http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/>