

UNIT 5:

Tent Roof.

A Suitable Helper. MORALITY



12th Grade

In order to search for the truth I have to be critical.

The world doesn't offer me happiness.

The truth is written in my heart.

Morality is a walking stick along my path.

Life, a GIFT.

4. I Am a Child: Right or Problem?

“You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother’s womb”

Ps 139:13.



Helping the youth discover the fractures in our society that lead to a culture of death, and to recognize, through their own persons, the greatness of human life as a Gift.

ACTIVITY 1: Begin the session by staging a TV game show. If you have the time and resources, you can decorate the classroom and have a little competition, adding a few fun tasks to create a good atmosphere among the students.

When it comes time to choose the objects, they can either be real or drawn on a piece of poster board. Leave them set up in the classroom so that they can be a visible reference point throughout the session. Another way of organizing the activity would be to distribute the objects among small groups and then compare the results of their choice together as a class.

The objective of the choice of these three objects (a bomb that symbolizes a problem, a present, and a parchment that symbolizes a right) is for them to reflect on this symbolism in their own lives and in relation to others. This leads into the question: What would I like to be for other people: a **problem**, a **right** or a **gift**?

The teacher can also suggest that the youth reflect on concrete situations in their lives:

I am a for my dad when...

I am a.... for my boyfriend when...

I am a.... for my friend when...

Then, establish an analogy between being a child and being a GIFT, and do the same with the vision of life as a gift, as a miracle.



Using a Mafalda cartoon, invite them to recognize that it is parenthood that comes about through the birth of a child, and not vice versa.

Conclude the introduction by inviting the youth to participate in this session from a perspective of respect, recognizing that this is a delicate topic and inviting them not to judge people for their actions but rather to be critical and just regarding the actions that we, ourselves, do.

ACTIVITY 2: Show two contrasting photographs. The first shows the fruit section of a supermarket full of baskets with various different fruits. Everything looks very clean, well laid-out and accessible. The second photo shows a person with a wicker basket looking for some castoffs in a big heap of garbage.

Invite the youth to choose the photo that best represents the society that they live in. Have them reflect on this alongside the relationship that exists between consumerism (represented in the first photo) and the waste presented in the second. The teacher can lead the reflection by asking the youth questions about their opinions, or by briefly explaining three fundamental ideas in our society:

- Consumerism.
- The culture of wellbeing, of what is fleeting and instant.
- Beauty, and worship of the body.

From this point of view, help the youth realize how excess results in leftovers, and throwing them away contributes to making this heap of garbage grow in society. Talk to them about how we try to eliminate pain and suffering by looking the other way and trying not to face it; about how society sells superficial beauty, while casting aside any type of human fragility.

Invite them to observe the photograph of a little girl with Down Syndrome who is smiling at life, and to express the feelings that they experience on associating this smile with somebody that society casts off.

Keep in mind that the body is an expression of the person, and that the body is sexually differentiated: man or woman.

The greatness of motherhood is inscribed in the woman's body; this mystery of life is written both in her body and in the male body, since there is no maternity without paternity.

Nonetheless, the culture of this society numbs this profound and true vision of the body, and ends up reducing it to an OBJECT of consumption, exchange, wellbeing, and rights.

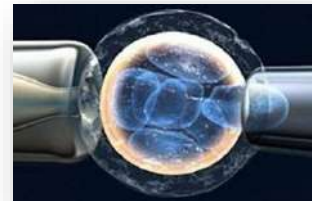
The body is reduced to a RIGHT TO DECIDE.

The gift of paternity and maternity, as a fruit of love, is then also reduced to a RIGHT to choose:

- "I want to have a CHILD".
- "I don't want to have a CHILD".

In this way, the CHILD-person ceases to be a GIFT, and becomes a PROBLEM or a RIGHT.

ACTIVITY 3: This activity presents children as a RIGHT. Show the youth a picture of an operating room. You can ask them to talk about the different components of an operating room and what they are used for. If anyone has had surgery, they can share their experience.



Make reference to the three visions of GIFT, PROBLEM and RIGHT and ask the youth how, in a single operating room, such different "types" of life can be found.

Invite the youth to think about these three different perspectives and conclude with the question:

Do you believe that human beings are the origin of their own creation?

Do people have the right to choose whether or not to have children?

- If they don't, do they have the right to create them?
- If they do, do they have the right to eliminate them?

ACTIVITY 4: This activity talks about the reality of infertility. First, define it according to the W.H.O. as a health problem, and delve into how couples can address this situation.

The dynamic of love is the fruitfulness of love; in other words, this love bears fruit. Spouses desire for their love to continue on in their children, but if children never arrive does their love cease to be fruitful?

You have to distinguish between fertility and fruitfulness.

Give the example of the very fruitful life of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Truly, spouses are called to this type of fruitfulness, rather than having a "right to a child," as if children were like property. Children are a consequence of love, and are not the only way for a marriage to bear fruit.

SEXUALITY



In previous sessions we have seen how there has been a separation between **SEXUALITY** and the **PERSON**, reducing the **PERSON** to an **OBJECT**. To this end, we often hear things like:

- "My body is mine".
- "Give life, donate your eggs".
- "I'm looking for a good sperm bank".
- "I'm looking to rent a womb".

There has been yet another separation between **SEXUALITY** and **PROCREATION**. My sexuality is no longer necessary to conceive a child. A good lab is enough.

When a child becomes a right, we are also separating love from sexuality and from one's own personal dignity. The maximum demonstration of love between a man and a woman is no longer necessary in order to give life. Children miss out on this beautiful and real identity that comes from being a **PRESENT (GIFT)** to their parents.

ACTIVITY 5: This activity presents the child as a **PROBLEM**, using three scenarios in which the arrival of a child seems to be problematic.

It is important to remember how the society we live in (consumeristic, fleeting, utilitarian, etc.) always leads us to eliminate whatever disturbs our wellbeing, and rejects other alternative paths that can be chosen, such as: sacrifice, effort, commitment, generosity, etc.

The idea is to identify which attitude toward life truly corresponds to true personal dignity.

The 3 cases must be analyzed by the youth before you reveal the identity of the people. You should delve into the dramatic situation of each case and see how today's society would surely invite us to simply rid ourselves of the problem.

It is advisable for the youth to present other alternative solutions to each situation, considering that otherwise, these children will never be born. Then, reveal the identity of the people and think about all that society would miss out on if a single person were to cease existing. There are many other anonymous people in the world just like these people.



Ludwig van Beethoven



Ethel Waters



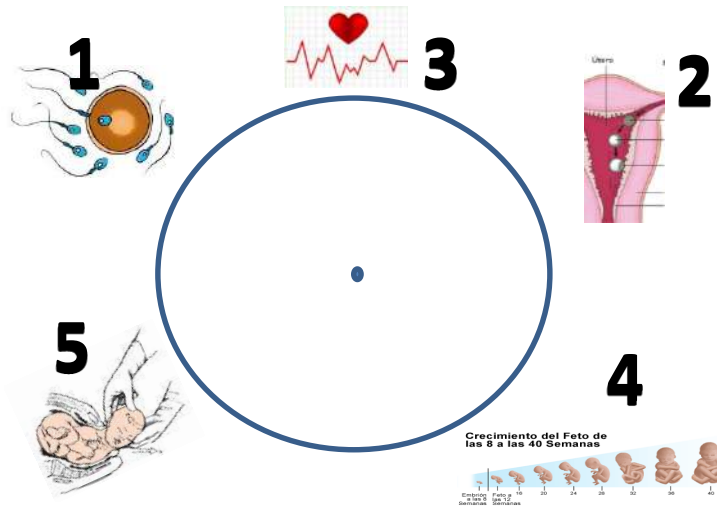
Saint John Paul II

ACTIVITY 6: This next activity centers around the amazement that we experience before the wonder of life, and recognizing when human life begins. To do this, project a video entitled “*The Odyssey of Life*” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvr5UCDM9QI>). You can also invite a biology teacher to explain the images. If that is not possible, give the youth a brief explanation:

- This is a walk through the inside of a woman's body, following the sperm step by step. You can observe the varied physical landscape that goes about twenty centimeters from the entrance of the vagina to the fallopian tubes. There is harmony between the movement and shifting of the sperm and the different elements of the woman's body: the narrowing of the cervix, the mucus, the filaments and cilia. The landscape of life changes to accompany the sperm as it meets the egg. *This vision evokes the difference and complementarity between man and woman.*
- The egg seems to have been awaiting the arrival of its suitors, but only one will be chosen. Once a sperm knocks on the door of the egg and is capable of conquering it, the egg will close all of its doors and not allow anyone else to enter. *This image recalls the personal dynamic of love between man and woman.*
- The union between egg and sperm is so intimate that it causes an explosion that originates life, a new being. *At the origin of the union lies fruitfulness. This is the consequence of love.*
- At one moment in the film we observe how this latent life seeks to make its home in the uterus. A new, intimate union arises between mother and child. The mother will contribute everything necessary so that this life can continue on its path. *The growth of this new being is sustained by life. Love is the source of life.*
- From here, the miracle of humanity begins: the development and commencement of genetic material and subsequent personal growth. *This makes the person a unique and unrepeatable being from the very beginning.*

After watching this video on the miracle of life, ask the youth to indicate the moment when life begins. Have them choose from between five different moments:

1. Fertilization.
2. Implantation in the uterus.
3. Appearance of heartbeat.
4. In another moment of development: of nails, lungs, if it can survive outside of the womb, etc. Be specific.
5. Birth.



It is fundamental that they witness that the origin of a new being occurs at the moment of fertilization. When the egg and the sperm fuse their nuclei they are no longer two different cells, but a new human being.

ACTIVITY 7: Next, give them a challenge. The sentences below are taken from the Constitution of Spain, from the part that defines Human Rights. In small groups, have them assign each one of these rights either to a pregnant mother or to her unborn baby.

**RIGHT TO THE FREE DEVELOPMENT
OF ONE'S PERSONALITY**

RIGHT TO MORAL INTEGRITY

RIGHT TO NON-DISCRIMINATION

RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

RIGHT TO LIFE

RIGHT TO PRIVACY

It is clear that both the mother and the unborn child have the same rights. None of the rights presented is the exclusive personal property of anyone. They are common to all human beings.

It is fundamental to emphasize how life is *given*, how it is a PRESENT or GIFT that must be cared for and respected. This applies to both our own lives and those of other people.

My body is the expression of my person. And I am a sexually differentiated body. My sexuality begins at the moment of the union between an egg and a sperm: XX or XY. I don't reach sexual maturity until after puberty, but I am a sexually differentiated PERSON from conception until death.

My body, as I have already seen, also changes. It develops throughout my life, passing through different stages: embryonic stage, childhood, youth, adulthood and old age. And throughout each and every one of these stages I am a PERSON.

This is why my origin begins with the union of the gametes that carry within themselves ALL that I am, all that makes me unique and unrepeatable.

And my life is a gift. I AM a PRESENT, a GIFT, which always comes from ANOTHER. As much as I might want to add another minute onto my life, it doesn't depend on me. I am not the origin of my own life. Life is given. The origin of life lies in the one who has created us.

Life is given to me to enjoy, respect, and care for. Or would I throw a gift into the trash?

Just like my life is a gift, so, too, are the lives of other people, and they deserve the same respect and care that my own life does.

ACTIVITY 8: Read the text of a living witness from a woman named Lucia, which serves to establish a dialogue among the youth on the consequences of abortion.

We will work on the following issues with the youth using the testimony of Lucia:

- Pregnancy is the consequence of having sexual relations.
- Evading the responsibilities of motherhood and fatherhood in your relationship as a couple.
- The situation of an unwanted pregnancy leaves the woman deeply alone, even her partner blackmails and abandons her.
- People go to a clinic to have an abortion without being sure about it. Deep down it's not what they want, but the problem takes precedence over this desire.
- No other alternatives are offered for the problem of unplanned pregnancies.

- “When you have an abortion you feel like they are ripping out part of your body”.
- After the abortion people have nightmares. It causes strong psychological damage.
- People always remember the date of their abortion and the date when their child would have been born.
- Many times they try to have another pregnancy to repair the damage of the abortion.
- People regret the horrific act of abortion for their whole lives.
- “Abortion doesn’t fix anything, it is just another problem”.

ACTIVITY 9: End the dialogue with the youth by speaking about how many abortions would not take place if women were offered other alternatives and if they were helped with their problems, instead of helping them getting rid of one problem in order to give them another.

At this point, you can invite a non-profit foundation that works to help mothers come talk to the youth about their experiences.

The youth should feel that they have a certain responsibility in this situation, and these activities might help them to feel called to collaborate in this field in a direct or indirect way.

ACTIVIDAD 10: The other face of the coin tells us that there is hope and that the path of abortion is not always the one chosen. There are many moms and dads, grandparents and family members that say, “Yes! I’ll help you”. With this idea, invite the youth to listen to the song “*Cuando tenía que jugar (17 primaveras)*”:

*Diecisiete primaveras las que su corazón
llevaba,
todo un mundo de ilusiones le iluminaban la
cara,
todo se le vino abajo o por lo menos eso
pensaba,
cuando llegó la noticia de que estaba
embarazada.*

*Pero tu fuiste valiente porque pasaste de la
gente...*

ESTRIBILLO

*Cuando tenía que jugar,
cambiaste las muñecas por un niño de
verdad,
tuviste el coraje de afrontar la realidad,
y fue tu recompensa el que te llamara
mamá.*

*No sé cómo conseguiste explicárselo a tus
padres,
porque sé que los de ahora no son como los
de antes,*

*que los tiempos han cambiado, que todo es
diferente,
no se escuchan tonterías, el que dirán de la
gente.*

*Pero tu fuiste valiente porque pasaste de la
gente...*

ESTRIBILLO

*No quisiera decirte que siempre me sentí
orgullosa,
desearía la que soy la más bonita y más
hermosa,
por ser madre y compañera, por ser valiente
entre valientes,
quiero que escuches esta letra y ver lo que
mi alma siente.*

*Ay, pero... tú fuiste valiente porque pasaste
de la gente..*

<http://bit.ly/29RvfGr>

ACTIVITY 11: Conclude the session showing the *Testimony of Maria* on the overhead projector, asking the youth the following question:

Is there something that you, too, can do?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTR6VBcOX>

TIMING AND MATERIALS

This lesson is designed for students in the 12th grade.

Activities 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 can be used to make a textbook about ABORTION to be used in any Secondary School class, although it would be most appropriate for upperclassmen.

The complete lesson is designed to be imparted in two sessions.

ACTIVITY	TIME (minutes)	MATERIALS
Activity 1: Personal reflection.	15	Poster board and markers.
Activ. 2: Personal reflection.	5	Photos of trash and fruit section.
Activ. 3: Personal reflection.	5	Worksheet.
Activ. 4: Personal reflection.	7	Worksheet.
Activ. 5: Personal reflection.	15	Worksheet and photos of people.
Activ. 6: Personal reflection.	10 10	Overhead projector and video player. Place the arrow.
Activ. 7: Personal reflection.	15	Paper, scissors and glue.
Activ. 8: Personal reflection.	15	Worksheet, testimonial.
Activ. 9 and 10: 9 – group discussion, and 10 - personal reflection	10	Worksheet. Song and music player. Non-profit worker who can give witness.
Activ. 11: Personal reflection.	8	Overhead projector, video player.
Conclusion.	5	