



PURPOSE

To introduce the hierarchy of beings by explaining the basic powers which distinguish living beings from non-living beings.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Name and explain the powers to eat, grow, and reproduce.
2. Identify the role these powers play in their own lives.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- *The Body Plan* worksheet (see Materials)
- *My Habit Tracker* worksheet (see Materials)

VOCABULARY

- **power:** the ability of a living thing to do something on its own
- **eat:** the power to take in nourishment
- **grow:** the power to increase in size from within
- **reproduce:** the power to create another being of the same kind
- **self-mastery:** the ability to build habits that allow you to make good choices about your emotions and actions.

PROCEDURE

Step 1: Explain: Every single time that we encounter a person, no matter how mundane or unpleasant the interaction, we are encountering someone with human dignity, that is, with immeasurable worth and value.

Ask the students to come up with the three characteristics of human dignity and write what they come up with on the board. If they struggle, direct them towards the correct answers given below:

- universal: every person has dignity, regardless of abilities, status, etc.
- intrinsic: our dignity is with us our entire life; it is part of who we are
- unalienable: dignity cannot be given to us or taken away from us

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Step 2: Introduce the hierarchy of being with a class exercise.

Give students three minutes to gather into groups based on the number of siblings each has, from 0-x. Then ask: Does your number of siblings affect how much value you have? (No, it doesn't, because our value as persons is intrinsic.)

Then give students another three minutes to categorize themselves by birthday month, and again ask: Does your birthday month affect how much value you have? (No, it doesn't, because our value as persons is intrinsic.)

Explain that there are many ways to categorize the person, but none of them affect our value as persons. Human beings are all categorized differently from everything else in the world because of the special value they possess: the value of human dignity.

Step 3: Teach the powers of living beings.

Help students identify the existence of powers, which all living beings share; they distinguish living from non-living beings. Ask: What distinguishes living beings from non-living beings? Take answers, then teach the powers: What distinguishes living beings from non-living things is the presence of powers. All living beings have different powers.

Write on the board:

- **power:** the ability of a living thing to do something on its own

Explain: Non-living beings are unable to do anything on their own; they have no powers.

Make a table of powers per living being on the board and complete it as a class. Students should copy this table into their notes. It will be a helpful guide as we continue to explore the hierarchy of beings in depth.

	plants	animals	humans
POWERS			
eat	X	x	x
grow	X	x	x
reproduce	X	x	x
move from place to place on their own		x	x
use the senses		x	x
feel emotions		x	x
think			x
choose			x

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Step 4: Teach the three shared powers of living beings. Write on the board:

- **eat:** the power to take in nourishment
- **grow:** the power to increase in size from within
- **reproduce:** the power to create another being of the same kind

Summarize: All plants, animals, and humans have these three basic powers that make living and survival possible: the power to eat, grow, and reproduce. These three powers affect the way these living beings exist. Since plants, animals, and humans have to eat in order to live, for example, their existence is different from the existence of non-living things, such as rocks, which don't have to eat and don't have any of the powers that make life possible.

Step 5: Show how these powers manifest in the student's lives

Explain: Just like plants and animals, human beings eat, grow, and reproduce. You have been eating and growing ever since you were a baby! However, human beings exercise these powers a little differently than they do. When an animal sees something to eat, it will eat it no matter what as long as it is hungry. Human beings, on the other hand, can decide what and how to eat. For lunch you can decide to eat a sandwich or ice cream. Eating one of these foods is more excellent, because it is the healthier option.

Activity: Write and label three columns on the board, and as a class brainstorm actions that students can do, under each column, to care for their bodies in an excellent way.

eating	exercising	sleeping

Note: "Growing" habits can and should fall under any of the three categories.

Then ask each student to complete a *The Body Plan* worksheet by choosing the necessary habits for taking excellent care of their bodies, and then writing out a step-by-step plan to combine all of them into their life over the course of a week. Students should also identify challenges.

Write on the board:

- **self-mastery:** the ability to build habits that allow you to make good choices about your emotions and actions.

Explain: Eating is a power that human beings have, and it is good. Without the ability to eat we would be unable to grow and survive. However, this power can be abused. We can for example make an unhealthy decision and eat a bowl of ice cream instead of our dinner. This is where self-mastery comes in. Self-mastery allows us to engage in the power to eat in the right way, to the right extent, in the right place, and at the right time. Exerting self-mastery is a major component to achieving human excellence.

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Ask students to gather into groups of 3, and to brainstorm with each other a plan of action for each students' biggest challenge to putting his plan into action.

If time permits, take students' plans for overcoming their challenges with the whole class.

Step 5: Summarize: We learned today that the existence of powers separates non-living things from living beings. All living beings, humans included, have the three powers characteristic to them: the powers to eat, grow, and reproduce. In addition to using our powers for survival, we also use them to express the value of eating, growing, reproducing—all of these experiences that make us who we are as human persons.

FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Ask students to track their success in developing a habit using the *My Habit Tracker* worksheet.

This documentation may contribute to the class' final **Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC)** newspaper project (see lesson 7). (Students could write an article regarding their success/failure in changing their habits to submit to the final project or individual evaluation).

SUPPLEMENTS

None.



Name: _____

The Body Plan

Directions: List the necessary choices you need to keep your body healthy, and then write how you will practice these choices in the table below.

Bad habits I want to break

eating	exercising	sleeping
_____	_____	_____

Good habits I want to make

eating	exercising	sleeping
_____	_____	_____

During the week, I will practice:

1. this habit: _____

2. by making the following choices: _____

During the weekend, I will practice:

1. this habit: _____

2. by making the following choices: _____

Directions: Identify two challenges that you expect to face in putting your plan for a healthy body into action.

1. _____

2. _____



My Habit Tracker

Name: _____

Directions: Choose a habit you will work to develop. It is estimated that it takes a person approximately 66 days to develop a new habit: for the next two months, check the box if you practice the habit you have chosen.

The habit I will work to develop: _____

Once you decide on a habit, talk to your parents/guardians, and ask them to come up with two steps they will take to help you accomplish your goal at home.

**Two steps my parents/guardians
will take to help me:**

day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
progress											
day	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
progress											
day	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
progress											
day	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44
progress											
day	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
progress											
day	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66
progress											