



PURPOSE

To help students understand that giving of themselves is the ultimate way to respect their own and others' human dignity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. Determine the choices that pursue the good for one's self and others.
2. Explain that solidarity is a communal pursuit of human excellence.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- ***Number the Stars*, Lois Lowry** book
- ***Thinking of You!*** worksheet (see Materials)
- Supplemental materials:
 - organization that receives cards, i.e., ***Cards for Hospitalized Kids*** (<http://www.cardsforhospitalizedkids.com/>)

VOCABULARY

- **self-gift**: sharing one's self with another without expecting anything in return
- **use**: to do something for our own purpose
- **kindness**: being friendly or considerate
- **generosity**: being willing to give more of something, such as time or money, than is expected
- **solidarity**: unity among people
- **family**: the most basic unit of society and the place where people first grow
- **friendship**: a connection between two people who choose excellence together

PROCEDURE

Step 1: Review the previous lessons. Write the three types of living beings on the board—plants, animals, humans—and ask the students to recall the powers for each of the living beings. Double-check understanding of the two unique human powers, to think and choose.

Then, depending on available time, either as a class or in groups of 4-5, ask students to share the way that they gave joy to another person this week using one of their gifts/talents/hobbies.

Explain: Last time, we talked about how the kinds of choices that we make will help us grow in excellence. This is because our human dignity, which is our special value as persons, is manifested through this kind of freedom. We also learned how values, like effort and patience, help us to make these choices. Today, we're going to talk about using our freedom to choose what is good, not only for ourselves, but for others as well.

Step 2: Introduce the difference between giving and using.

Explain: We give of ourselves when we show respect for another person's human dignity—for example, when we give a hug to our friend who fell during recess and hurt her knee. We *use* other people when we do something in order to achieve our own purpose—for example, when we try to be friends with someone only because they share their candy with us during lunch.

Divide the classroom into two sections—the "Gift" and the "Use" sections. Explain to the students that you will read a list of actions, and they should stand in the "Gift" section if the action is an example of self-gift, or in the "Use" section if the action is an example of use.

- always letting another student take the first place in line [gift]
- calling your grandma on her birthday [gift]
- pretending to be another person's friend so they choose you for their kickball team [use]
- bringing your teacher an apple [gift]
- stealing another person's pencil [use]
- apologizing for a mistake [gift]
- telling our parents how much we love them [gift]
- doing something just to get another person's attention [use]

With each action called, pause to ask students:

- Why did you choose "gift" or use"?
- Does this action show respect for your human dignity? Why or why not?
- Does this action show respect for the other person's dignity? Why or why not?

Explain: The best way to respect our own dignity, and the dignity of other people, is to give ourselves—to share ourselves without expecting anything in return. This recognizes the dignity they have.

Step 3: Teach self-gift in solidarity.

Explain: We are going to read a story about the way in which one character and her family give themselves to another character. Think about how the family *gives*—what it means for the family to *give* of themselves.

Read an excerpt from the *Number the Stars, Lois Lowry* book (“Chapter 5: Who is the Dark Haired One?”—“Annemarie eased the bedroom door open quietly, only a crack, and peeked out...She looked down, and saw that she had imprinted the Star of David into her palm.”)

Ask:

- How did the Annemarie and her family give of themselves?
- Was it hard for them to give? Why?
- Do we each have something to give?
- What are the different things we can give?

Explain: Because each person has human dignity (including ourselves!), we are worthy of being loved and are gifts for each other. When we start being in relationship with other people for the sake of some kind of purpose, rather than being in relationship with them out of a respect for their dignity, we use them. This is a fundamental disrespect of our own dignity, their dignity, and the excellence to be found in living in communion with others.

Write the three types of solidarity on the board:

- family
- friends
- classmates & teachers

Explain: A human person cannot become fully himself, cannot fully grow, without being in relationship with other people. In our families we can learn the basics of human existing and human living. With our friends, we learn how to share and how to be kind, and it is through these relationships—and those we have with others—that we become truly excellent and happy. Our family is also a place where we live in solidarity, and learn to live as self-gift for each other.

Write on the board:

- **kindness**
- **generosity**

Ask: What do these two words mean?

Explain: Two traits that we can develop, in practicing how to show respect, are the traits of kindness and generosity: being friendly to others, being considerate of them, and giving others what

they need, even if it is more than what might be expected of us. Committing to these two traits are ways of growing in solidarity. Solidarity is an expression of our self-gift for others. When we live in such a way to give ourselves, and to receive others as a gift, we live in solidarity.

If time permits, ask students to complete the *Thinking of You!* worksheet.

Step 4: Summarize: Today we have taken the next step in understanding what respect for human dignity actually looks like in our relationships and encounters with others. This respect is always a gift given and received in our encounters, and one way by which we give it ourselves is by giving of ourselves while showing others in our life generosity and kindness. Self-gift is a way we can grow more in solidarity with others in our life.

FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Ask students to complete the *Thinking of You!* worksheet, and mail students' cards to an organization that receives cards, i.e., *Cards for Hospitalized Kids*.

SUPPLEMENTS

None.

(date)

THINKING OF YOU!

Dear _____,

Today I wanted to write you a note to let you know that I'm thinking about you!

With love,

(date)

THINKING OF YOU!

Dear _____,

Today I wanted to write you a note to let you know that I'm thinking about you!

With love,
