

# Lesson 1: Introductory Lesson

## PURPOSE

To prepare students to successfully participate in the curriculum.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. Understand the purpose of the Human Dignity Curriculum.
2. Get to know each other and share their expectations.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Game: Two Truths and a Lie
- Topics of the HDC worksheet
- Introductory Questionnaire
- Game: Self Portrait
- "Dear You" Letter: Sample Request Letter to parent/guardian

## VOCABULARY

- No new vocabulary

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Start the lesson by introducing yourself and playing the [Two Truths and a Lie](#) ice breaker game with the students. Each student should write two things about him or herself that are true and one thing that is false. Then the students take turns and say to the whole class their three things, without clarifying which of them are true and which are false. Then the class needs to guess which of three things is a lie and explain their choices.

**Step 2:** Introduce the purpose of the course.

Ask students what they expect to learn in the course and what they think the Human Dignity Curriculum is all about.

After listening to students' comments, explain that the course primarily deals with the following questions:

- a) Who am I?
- b) What am I capable of?
- c) What can I become?

In other courses, the students are learning about the world around them. In this course, they have the opportunity to learn about themselves. Knowing oneself is the first step in determining how to live a good life, how to have authentic friendships, how to deal with problems, and how to give and receive respect.

Knowing oneself is the basis of understanding what one is capable of and what one can become. It provides people with a basis by which to answer the question of what one is capable of and what one can become. If someone can truly live excellence in everything they do, they can become excellent as a person. One purpose of this class is to learn how to become excellent. During the course of the following lessons, the students will learn what this means.

**Step 3:** Divide the students into groups and give each student the [Topics of the HDC](#) worksheet. Ask the groups to choose up to five topics that they would like to discuss in the course of the curriculum. The groups should agree on the final list of topics. After all of the groups finish working, ask them to share their results with the rest of the class.

Explain that the curriculum will deal with the following topics:

1. Human dignity: the special value of every human person
2. Hierarchy of being: what is special and unique about human beings and how to use the power of memory in an excellent way
3. Power to feel emotions: how to overcome despair and be hopeful
4. Power to think: how to think in an excellent way
5. Freedom for excellence: how to use our freedom responsibly
6. Creativity: learn how to creatively solve problems
7. Subject vs. objects: how to receive respect and treat others with respect
8. Solidarity: pursuing excellence on a social level
9. Habits of excellence: developing habits which would make us excellent, with the focus on fairness
10. Heroism: learning about persons who developed excellent habit and learning from them

**Step 4:** Share the [Introductory Questionnaire](#) with students and ask them to fill it out individually. Afterwards, ask the students to share some of their answers and discuss any questions together as a class.

**Step 5:** Finish the class by playing the following game:

## **SELF-PORTRAIT**

Have students get out a piece of paper and a pencil or colored pencil crayon. Instruct the students that they are to draw a self-portrait. The catch: with their eyes closed. Set a timer for three minutes and before the time is up, collect their portraits (before they can see them). Finally, try to see if students can find their own portraits!

**Step 6:** Summarize. Review the purpose of the course and note that the topic of the next class is human dignity.

## **FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK**

Request a parent/guardian, or family member of each student to write a "Dear You" Letter; the letter should explain to the student the reasons why the parent, guardian, family member, etc., loves the student and why they are special to them. (Please note: in certain cases it may be necessary for the teacher to write the letter for a student, if the family is unresponsive, explaining why that student is valuable and special.) The purpose of this activity is to help reveal to students the dignity they possess.

**Sample Request Letter:**

Dear Parents,

For our Human Dignity Curriculum project, we are asking that all families provide us with one letter written to your student. You can email this letter to me [email] or send it with your student in a sealed envelope.

Your letter should answer the following questions:

Why do you love this student?

Why is this student valuable to you?

How is this student special?

This letter will help start our project! The deadline for providing this letter is [date]. Please take the time to provide a letter and let me know of any questions.

[Teacher]

**TOPICS OF THE HDC**

Appreciating myself for who I am	Freedom and responsibility	Making good choices
How to be happy	Practicing creativity	Being nice
How to make friends	Respecting others	Being decent
Becoming excellent	Building solidarity with classmates	Developing good habits
Learning about different cultures	Being treated with respect	Learn how to study better
Dealing with emotions	Learning how to be polite	Improving relationships with colleagues
What makes me unique	How to improve in school	Heroism