

## Lesson 3: Human Dignity

### PURPOSE

To help students understand and respect human dignity in their everyday lives.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. Understand human dignity as the special value of every human person.
2. Distinguish between internal and external qualities.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Game: Group Yourselfs
- True/False Statements
- Cases of Dis/Respecting Dignity worksheet
- Internal vs External Qualities worksheet
- "Dear You" Letter

### VOCABULARY

Human Dignity: the special value of every human person

- » Universal: every person has dignity
- » Intrinsic: it is within us, we have it just by being humans
- » Inalienable: dignity cannot be given to us or taken away from us

### PREPARATORY MATERIAL

In preparation for the ["Dear You" Letter](#) (Step 3 of this lesson), place all letters in the same kind of envelope so that the contents are concealed at first glance.

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the topic of the previous lesson, by asking students to name the powers that humans and animals share (move, use their senses, feel emotions) and the two powers that are unique to humans (think and choose). Review the answers from the [THINK YOU CAN](#) worksheet.

**Step 2:** Begin the lesson by playing the [Group Yourselves Game](#) with students. Have students stand up and arrange themselves in groups, according to the subject you say. Teacher says "group yourselves" according to:

- Birth month
- Hair color
- Shoe size
- Favorite subject
- Favorite singer
- How courageous you are (not very – moderately – highly)
- How well you treat your best friends (not very – moderately – highly)
- How self-confident you are (not very – moderately – highly)
- How much you care about others (not very – moderately – highly)

After finishing the game, ask students the following questions:

- How did it feel to learn that someone shares common traits with yourself?
- Did some categories mean more to you than others?
- Which category was the hardest, in terms of knowing how to "group yourself"?

After hearing students' comments, note that it was probably harder to group themselves according to characteristics such as courage, self-confidence, how much they care, etc. It was probably easier for students to group themselves by shoe size, birth month or hair color. Why?

This is because **external qualities** (like hair color and shoe size) are often visible to the eye or can be assessed with a quick question (like the birth month). Whereas **internal qualities** (courageous or caring) are often harder to recognize. Nevertheless, they are equally real. These characteristics we can recognize by being friends and spending time with another person.

For example, to know if another person cares about others, we would need to know that person for some time, in order to see how they treat people in different situations and settings.

**Step 3:** Explain that the deepest quality that each person possesses is human dignity. Human dignity is the special value of every human person.

\*Suggested time to give students their "Dear You" Letter to read.\*

Give students some time to read their letters, and offer to help anyone who may have difficulty. Afterwards, ask students how they felt when reading their letter? Did it make them realize how special and valuable they are?

Highlight that what they have experienced is called human dignity. Human dignity is the special value of every human being.

Write the definition of Human Dignity on the board:

Human Dignity: the special value of every human person

It is important to recognize that even though we do not see this value in another person or in ourselves, in the same way that we recognize someone's hair color, it is still there. Human dignity is within each person and it is a part of who we are. We have it just by being human and it is within us our entire life. Also, dignity cannot be given to us or taken away from us - not by our family situation, our school, or the state, etc.

Write the three characteristics of human dignity on the board:

Universal: every person has dignity  
Intrinsic: it is within us, we have it just by being humans  
Inalienable: dignity cannot be given to us or taken away from us

**Step 4:** To reinforce the concept of human dignity and the difference between external and internal qualities, pair off students and have them fill in the [Internal vs External Qualities](#) worksheet for their partner.

While the students are working in pairs, write the [True/False Statements](#) on the board or on a large piece of paper to hang in the classroom:

TRUE	FALSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» You absolutely matter.</li> <li>» You are valuable even when you don't see it.</li> <li>» It is so good that you exist.</li> <li>» You are lovable and worthy of being loved.</li> <li>» You are so precious.</li> <li>» You have an infinite worth.</li> <li>» You are irreplaceable.</li> <li>» No matter what happens, you have an immense value.</li> <li>» You are unique and special.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» You will never amount to anything.</li> <li>» You are damaged and not worthy of respect.</li> <li>» You will never be good enough.</li> <li>» You are nothing.</li> <li>» You don't deserve to be loved.</li> <li>» You are not worthy, you don't count.</li> <li>» You will always be a failure.</li> </ul>

Once all groups are finished filling in their [Internal vs External Qualities](#) worksheets, ask students to volunteer to share some of the internal qualities they discovered while talking to their partner. Remind students that the most important quality to know about every human person is their human dignity.

Next, read the True/False statements aloud as a class and highlight that the sentences on the right are always false since they do not correspond to the reality that each person has human dignity.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Ask the class to recall once more the definition of human dignity (the special value of every human person) and its three characteristics (universal, intrinsic, inalienable). Emphasize that all people have human dignity and that no matter what, no one and nothing can take away that special value within each person. Remind students of the experience of value they felt while reading their "Dear You" letter. Encourage students to think about how they can choose to use their powers to think and to choose to affirm human dignity in their lives.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL**

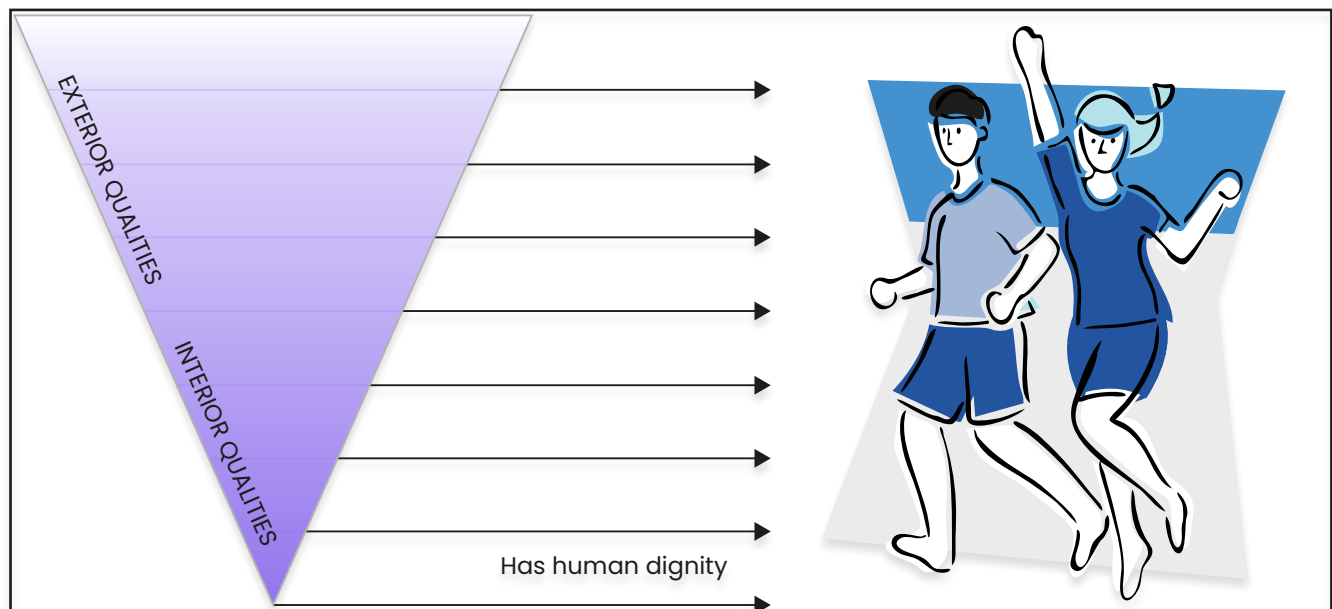
To help students recognize when human dignity is being respected or disrespected, have students complete the worksheet [Cases of Dis/Respecting Dignity](#) for homework.

**INTERNAL VS EXTERNAL QUALITIES**

Write down at least five external and internal qualities for your partner:

<b>Student's name: Jackie</b>	
<b>External qualities:</b> (what do you see just by looking at me)	<b>Internal qualities:</b> (things you can't see, but can discover by talking to them)

Write the external and internal qualities in the reverse pyramid, below.

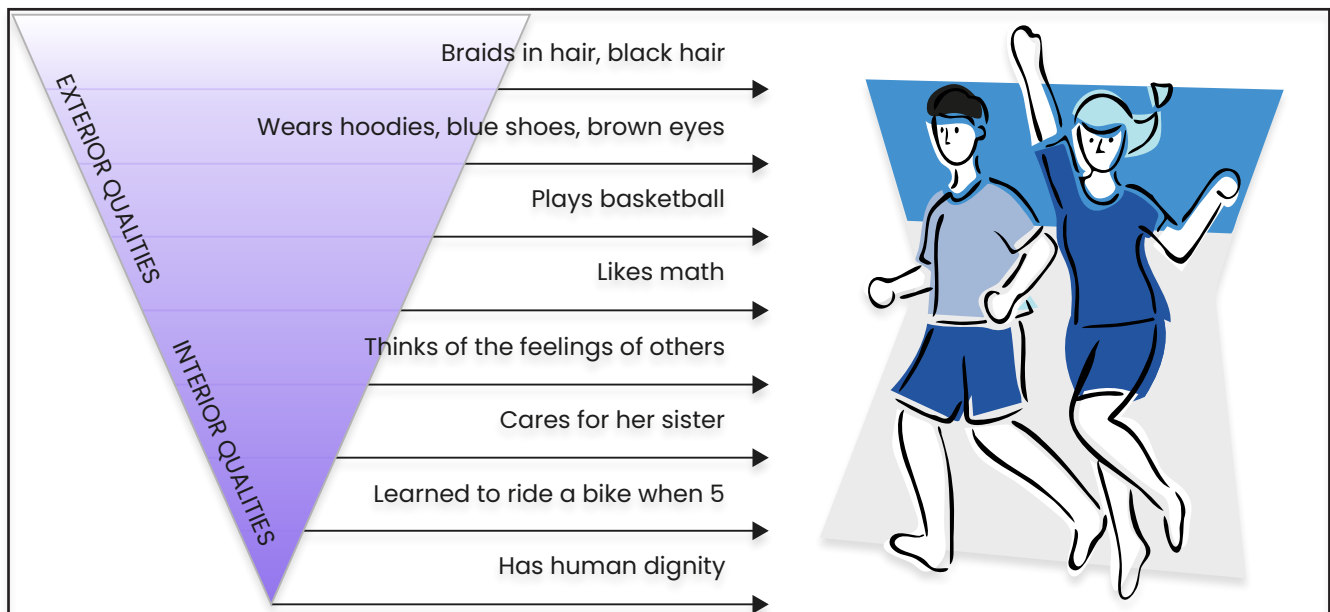


**Internal vs External Qualities - example**

Write down at least five external and internal qualities for your partner:

<b>Student's name: Jackie</b>	
<b>External qualities:</b> (what do you see just by looking at me)	<b>Internal qualities:</b> (things you can't see, but can discover by talking to them)
Braids in Hair	Plays basketball
Black Hair	Thinks of the feelings of others
Brown Eyes	Cares for their sibling
Wears Hoodies	Likes math
Blue Shoes	Learned to ride a bike when I was 5

Write the external and internal qualities in the reverse pyramid, below.



**CASES OF DIS/RESPECTING DIGNITY**

For each example, write a brief explanation of whether human dignity was respected or disrespected. Identify whose dignity was respected or disrespected.

- 1. Making jokes about people with disabilities.**
- 2. Gossiping about a student who just moved to your school.**
- 3. Saying to a friend that you can't go to their house because you have to study.**
- 4. Refusing to join other classmates in making jokes about a student who is overweight.**
- 5. Helping a classmate with homework.**

6. **Making a cake and sharing it with your siblings.**
7. **Putting an embarrassing photo of a friend on social media.**
8. **Ignoring your teacher when they ask you a question.**
9. **Encouraging a friend when they are feeling down or unmotivated.**
10. **Taking something from a friend without asking.**



**Cases of Dis/Respecting Dignity – Answer Key for the Teacher****1. Making jokes about people with disabilities.**

Making fun of people with disabilities disrespects human dignity. The human dignity of a person with disabilities is disrespected in this case. We should always affirm the value of every person, regardless of their ability.

**2. Gossiping about a student who just moved to your school.**

Gossiping is disrespectful to human dignity. The new student's dignity was disrespected by those who gossiped. They used the new student as a conversation topic rather than getting to know the new person for their good qualities.

**3. Saying to a friend that you can't go to their house because you have to study.**

This choice respects human dignity. Politely saying that you have to study respects your dignity and the dignity of your friend. Your choice may even help remind the friend that they should study, too.

**4. Refusing to join other classmates in making jokes about a student who is overweight.**

Refusing to join in when a student is being humiliated is a courageous choice that respects human dignity. The student's dignity was being disrespected by comments about their person.

**5. Helping a classmate with their schoolwork.**

This choice respects human dignity. Sharing your abilities in order to help a classmate feel confident in their abilities respects your human dignity and theirs.

**6. Posting an embarrassing photo of a friend on social media.**

This choice disrespects human dignity. The dignity of a friend is disrespected when we share something publicly that they don't want shared or that we know will embarrass them.

**7. Making a cake and sharing it with your siblings.**

This choice respects human dignity. Creating something and sharing it with those around you affirms the value of others.

**8. Ignoring a parent when they ask you to do something.**

This choice disrespects human dignity. Ignoring a parent when they are talking to you, or asking you to help them is disrespectful of their dignity.

**9. Encouraging a friend when they are feeling down or unmotivated.**

This choice respects human dignity. Encouraging a friend when they are feeling down affirms their dignity and lets them know how much they matter.

**10. Taking something from a friend without asking.**

This choice disrespects human dignity. Taking something from someone – even a friend – without asking does not respect their human dignity. We should never use a person for our needs or wants, as every person is valuable for who they are and not what they have or can do for us.