

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

- Ice Breaker Games
- Interests Tic Tac Toe worksheet
- Topics of the HDC
- Introductory Questionnaire
- Game: Plow/Wow

VOCABULARY

- No new vocabulary

PROCEDURE

Step 1: Start the lesson by introducing yourself and playing one of the following [Ice breaker games](#) with the class.

INTERESTS TIC TAC TOE

Provide the students with the [Interests Tic Tac Toe](#) worksheet. To begin the game, ask each student to write down one thing that interests them or to share something they are passionate about in each of the squares in the worksheet provided. Once they fill in their worksheet, have them mingle amongst their peers with their worksheets. When they find a student who has the same passion or interest as they do, they can ask the student to sign their name in or next to one square on the worksheet. The first student to get signatures on three vertical, horizontal, or diagonal squares is the winner.

GIANT KNOT

Create a shoulder-to-shoulder circle, and then have each student grab two other hands from two different people across the circle. Now the entire circle must figure out how to untangle the giant knot of arms and people without letting go.

SIGHTLESS SELF-PORTRAITS

Have students take out a plain piece of paper and a pencil. Next, ask students to close their eyes and draw a self-portrait. Set the timer for 2 minutes. Before the timer goes off and the students have seen their own drawings, gather the student portraits. Hang up the portraits in the class and see if students can find their portrait!

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, students learn 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. One purpose of this class is to examine what it is to be excellent as a person. If someone can truly live excellence in everything they do, they can become excellent as a person. During the course of the following lessons, the curriculum will explore what this means.

Step 3: Give each student the [Topics of the HDC](#) worksheet. Ask students to choose up to seven topics that they would like to discuss in the course of the curriculum. Have students share their choices with the rest of the class.

Explain that the curriculum will deal with the following topics:

1. Hierarchy of being: what is special and unique about human beings
2. Human dignity: the special value of every human person
3. Subjects vs. objects: how to receive respect and treat others with respect
4. Power to think: how to distinguish fact from opinion
5. Freedom for excellence: how to make excellent choices and become excellent
6. Creativity: experiencing human dignity through art
7. Friendship: distinguishing between different types of friendship
8. Habits of excellence: developing habits which make us excellent, with a focus on resilience
9. Heroism: learning about persons who achieved excellence and learning from them
10. The Mission: how to find the purpose in everything that one does

Step 4: Share the [Introductory Questionnaire](#) with students and ask them to fill it out individually. Afterwards, ask students if they'd like to share some of their answers or discuss them as a class.

Step 5: Play [Plow / Wow](#). This is a great game to help a classroom build camaraderie. Have each person share one challenging thing - that they had to "plow" through - and one good thing from their day - a "wow". It's a simple, but effective closing game for the class.

Step 6: Summarize. Review the purpose of the course and the main topics the course will cover. Note that the topic of the next class is Hierarchy of Being.

INTERESTS TIC TAC TOE

Write one thing that interests you or something that you are passionate about in each of the squares.

TOPICS OF THE HDC

Appreciating myself for who I am	Learning a foreign language	How to be free
How to be happy	Practicing creativity	Making great choices
How to form good friendships	Treating others with respect	Being kind
Becoming excellent	How to be successful in life	Developing good manners
Forming excellent habits	Obeying rules	Improving critical thinking
Talking about celebrities	Learning how to be polite	Improving relationships with colleagues
What makes me special	Improving grammar	Focus on good things in life
How to improve in school	Studying algebra	Finding my purpose in life