

# 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

- Hidden Treasure
- Topics of the HDC
- Introductory Questionnaire
- The Class Portrait

## VOCABULARY

- No new vocabulary

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Start the lesson by introducing yourself and playing the [Hidden Treasure](#) ice breaker game with the students. Write several icebreaker questions on the sticky side of post-it notes and stick them to the board. Each student takes turns choosing 1 sticky note and answering the question on the back.

Sample questions you can write:

What is the scariest thing you've ever done?  
What is the bravest thing you've ever done?  
What country would you like to visit, and why?  
What is the best band in the world and why?  
What is your favorite school subject and why?  
What three items would you bring on a deserted island?  
What is your favorite day of the week?  
What is something that a classmate has done for you that you appreciated?

Feel free to add additional questions according to the interests of the class.

**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 are mostly 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. 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 seven 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 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. Hierarchy of being: what makes humans special compared to all other living beings
2. Human dignity: the special value of every human person
3. Subjects vs. objects: how to treat everyone (including oneself) with respect
4. Power to think: how to develop excellent critical thinking habits
5. Freedom for excellence: how to make excellent choices and become excellent
6. Creativity: learning to creatively solve even the most difficult problems
7. Friendship: developing excellent friendships
8. Habits of excellence: developing habits that make us excellent
9. Heroism: learning about persons who are excellent and learning from them
10. The Mission: how to find the purpose in everything that one does

Tell students that there will be a fun final quiz at the end of the course.

**Step 4:** Give students the [Introductory Questionnaire](#) and ask them to fill it out individually. Afterwards, ask the students to share some of their answers. Afterwards, ask the students if anyone would like to volunteer to share some of their answers with the class.

**Step 5:** Ask the students to draw [The Class Portrait](#). Each student should write down their name on a piece of paper, fold it, and place it in a box. Mix the papers and ask each student to select one. Everyone should open the paper, read the name, and write that name on a separate post-it note. They should also write one positive thing about that person on the post-it note. Next, all post-it notes should be pasted around [The Class Portrait](#) available in the materials and placed on the wall.

**Step 6:** Summarize. Review the purpose of the course and the main topics the students will learn about. Note that in the next class the topic is human dignity.