

CATECHETICAL TOOLKIT



The Challenge of Racism Today

A Pastoral Letter by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

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ADULT FAITH FORMATION DISCUSSION GUIDE

for

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM TODAY

A Pastoral Letter by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

RACISM AS SIN THE CALL TO RECONCILIATION

Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi
Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.

GUIDED DISCUSSION ON THE PASTORAL LETTER ON RACISM ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Opening Prayer: Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (sung/prayed)

“Racism is defined as a sin because it offends God by a denial of the goodness of Creation. It is a sin against our neighbor, particularly when it is manifested in support of systemic social, economic, and political structures of sin. It is also a sin against the unity of the Body of Christ by undermining that solidarity by personal sins of prejudice, discrimination and violence.”

Cardinal Donald Wuerl, *The Challenge of Racism Today*

Objectives and discussion questions:

1. To **reflect** on the Christian belief in the God-given dignity of every person and the particular responsibility of Christians to challenge and overcome racism today.

Read Genesis 1: 27 and *Catechism*, 357.

Discussion: In light of Genesis 1: 27 and the Catechism 357 discuss reasons why Christian belief in the God-given dignity of the human person is the starting point for reflection and action in response to racism.

2. To **recognize** that racism continues to manifest itself in personal, social, and institutional ways that are sinful. (quote above)

Identify ways in which racism is manifested as personal, social, and institutional sin today.

3. To **respond** to the Church’s invitation to reconciliation by recognizing the faults of the past in a spirit of prayerful repentance leading to healing and reconciliation.

Discuss the Church’s call to reconciliation, as described, in the Pastoral Letter. Why is reconciliation, rooted in participation in the Church’s sacramental life, a key dimension of the Christian response to the divisions, wounds, and disunity that racism inspires and supports?

Conclusion: Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM TODAY (EXCERPTS)

The divisions we face today that are based on the color of one's skin or ethnic background are obviously not a part of God's plan. In the first chapter of the book of Genesis we read at the beginning of the story of humanity, "God created man in his image, in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1.27).

This teaching is applied to our day with clarity in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. "Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone... called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead" (357).

This is the starting point for our reflection. The human race is rooted in the loving, creative act of God who made us and called us to be a family – all God's children – made in God's image and likeness. There is no basis to sustain that some are made more in the image of God than others.

Racism is defined as a sin because it offends God by a denial of the goodness of creation. It is a sin against our neighbor, particularly when it is manifested in support of systemic social, economic and political structures of sin. It is also a sin against the unity of the Body of Christ by undermining that solidarity by personal sins of prejudice, discrimination and violence.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION DISCUSSION GUIDE

for

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM TODAY

A Pastoral Letter by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

SOLIDARITY

PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.

GUIDED DISCUSSION ON THE PASTORAL LETTER ON RACISM ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Opening Prayer: Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (sung/prayed)

“Responding to Christ’s love calls us to action. We need to move to the level of Christian solidarity. The term, often spoken of by a succession of popes as a virtue, touches the practical implications of what it means to recognize our unity with others. There is a sense in which solidarity is our commitment to oneness at work in the practical order.”

Cardinal Donald Wuerl, *The Challenge of Racism Today*

Discussion objectives: (Leader selects objectives and corresponding discussion questions)

The references listed below should be presented, or made available, to participants so that discussions are situated within Catholic doctrine.

1. Understand that racism is a sin against the goodness of creation.
(*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1701-1708)
2. Explore the meaning of solidarity as a moral virtue.
(John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 36-38)
3. Identify solidarity as constitutive to the order of society.
(John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 36-38)
4. Understand that the unity of the Body of Christ calls for and stimulates charity among faithful.
(*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 790-791)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CORRELATED TO EACH OF THE OBJECTIVES:

1. On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the lowest) how comfortable are you in talking about race/racism? Allow time for participants to share responses.

How does racism undermine the dignity of the human person created in God's image and likeness?

Does seeing racism as a sin challenge you to think/act/speak differently, how so?

2. How do you understand the term solidarity?

Do you see solidarity as a moral virtue? How can solidarity, understood as a virtue address the sin of racism?

3. How do we develop a mindset of solidarity that leads to a just community?

What actions must be taken personally, within our parish, within our community to promote solidarity?

4. What images spring to mind when you hear the phrase: unity in diversity?

Pope Francis has used the term "reconciled diversity," (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 23).how can the Catholic understanding of reconciliation promote such a culture?

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in this reconciliation?

Conclusion: Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM TODAY (EXCERPTS)

This is the starting point for our reflection. The human race is rooted in the loving, creative act of God, who made us and called us to be a family – all God’s children – made in God’s image and likeness. There is no basis to sustain that some are made more in the image of God than others.

The call to a unity that transcends ethnic ties and racial differences is a hard one for some people to accept. We can become comfortable in the enclave of our own familiar world and even view others who are different from us, ethnically or because of the color of their skin, with suspicion. Nonetheless, to be truly faithful to Christ we must respond to his teaching that we are one in him and, therefore, one with each other. “Through Christ we are one family” (*Lumen Gentium* 28).

Intolerance and racism will not go away without a concerted awareness and effort on everyone’s part.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For all our limitations, gestures of generosity, solidarity, and care cannot but well up within us, since we were made for love. (Pope Francis, *Laudato Sí*, 58).

The family is thus an agent of pastoral activity through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel and its legacy of varied forms of witness, namely solidarity with the poor, openness to a diversity of people, the protection of creation, moral and material solidarity with other families, including those most in need, commitment to the promotion of the common good and the transformation of unjust social structures (Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 290; *Relatio Finalis*, 2015, 89).

ADULT FAITH FORMATION DISCUSSION GUIDE

for

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM TODAY

A Pastoral Letter by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

CALL TO ACTION

PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
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to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.

GUIDED DISCUSSION ON THE PASTORAL LETTER ON RACISM ADULT FAITH FORMATION

"Among Christians the call to unity is greater because it is rooted in grace and, therefore, racism merits even stronger condemnation. Everyone who is baptized into Christ Jesus is called to new life in the Lord. Baptism unites us with the Risen Lord and through him with every person who sacramentally has died and risen to new life in Christ. This unity, sacramental and real, brings us together on a level above and beyond the purely physical. It carries that oneness we all share through the natural reality of creation to a higher level -- the realm of grace."

Cardinal Donald Wuerl, *The Challenge of Racism Today*

Opening Prayer: Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (sung/prayed)

Objectives and discussion questions:

1. To **prayerfully seek** God’s grace to become instruments of healing and reconciliation, rooted in our common Baptism and our sharing at the one table of the Eucharist. To **reflect** on the Christian conviction that those wounded by the sin of racism should never be forgotten.

Identify ways in which your parish’s sacramental life, spiritual programs, and social outreach activities may inspire, create and support ongoing encounter and dialogue with people from all cultures and ethnic communities. What are concrete ways the parish is and can become more welcoming to people of every race and culture?

2. To **learn** about, **support**, or **join** in efforts and initiatives to make the fight against racism a priority across the Archdiocese of Washington.

Identify concrete steps, initiatives, programs that your parish and/or adult faith formation group can initiate or support to provide opportunities for ongoing dialogue, conversion of heart and mind to the dignity of all persons, and moments of reconciliation and unity.

3. **Share** how your reading and discussion of *The Challenge of Racism Today* has deepened your awareness of racism, and strengthened your commitment to respond to racism today.

Conclusion: Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM TODAY (EXCERPTS)

Among Christians the call to unity is greater because it is rooted in grace and, therefore, racism merits even stronger condemnation. Everyone who is baptized into Christ Jesus is called to new life in the Lord. Baptism unites us with the Risen Lord and through him with every person who sacramentally has died and risen to new life in Christ. This unity, sacramental and real, brings us together on a level above and beyond the purely physical. It carries that oneness we all share through the natural reality of creation to a higher level -- the realm of grace.

In Christ we live in the same Spirit, we share the same new life and are members of one spiritual body. As members of the Church we are called to be witnesses to the unity of God's family and, therefore, to be a living testimony to the inclusiveness that is a graced sign of our oneness.

The call to a unity that transcends ethnic ties and racial differences is a hard one for some people to accept. We can become comfortable in the enclave of our own familiar world and even view others who are different from us, ethnically or because of the color of their skin, with suspicion. Nonetheless, to be truly faithful to Christ we must respond to his teaching that we are one in him and, therefore, one with each other. "Through Christ we are one family" (*Lumen Gentium* 28).

Intolerance and racism will not go away without a concerted awareness and effort on everyone's part. Regularly we must renew the commitment to drive it out of our hearts, our lives and our community. While we may devise all types of politically correct statements to proclaim racial equality, without a change in the basic attitude of the human heart we will never move to that level of oneness that accepts each other for who we are and the likeness we share as images of God.

ADULT REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

for

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM TODAY

A Pastoral Letter by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

INTRODUCTION

The following reflection and discussion guide utilizes the pastoral process of **See, Judge, Act** as a way of reading and responding to the signs of the time. This methodology allows us to engage the reality we are facing, and grounded in our rich tradition, we are invited into transformative action as individuals and community.

RULES FOR DISCUSSION

The goal is to allow all people in the group to join in the conversation in a very respectful atmosphere. To achieve the goal, please keep the following in mind:

R: take **RESPONSIBILITY** for what you say and feel, and speak with words others can hear and understand

E: use **EMPATHETIC** listening, not just words but also feelings being expressed, and non-verbal language including silence

S: be **SENSITIVE** to differences in communication styles

P: **PONDER** on what you hear and feel before you speak

E: **EXAMINE** your own assumptions and perceptions

C: keep **CONFIDENTIALITY**

T: **TRUST** the process because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong but to experience true dialogue

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BUILDING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY

The invitation is for all to engage in active listening, allowing a person to finish his or her thoughts without interruption. No one has more authority than the other, as each person is invited to share, and after sharing, that person will have the privilege of inviting someone else in the group share next. A suggested guideline for discussion is as follows:

1. The leader provides the guidelines and clarifies what group members are being invited to share.
2. The leader may share first or invite someone by name to share.
3. After the person has spoken, that person has the privilege of inviting someone else to share.
4. If a person chooses not to share, the person may simply say "pass" and proceed to invite someone else to share. No explanation is needed or given for passing.
5. The process will continue until everyone has been invited to speak.

6. At that time, any person who passed will be invited again to share.
Persons are still free to pass.
7. The main activity of the group is to listen.

OPENING PRAYER

Wake me up Lord, so that the evil of racism finds no home within me.
 Keep watch over my heart Lord, and remove from me any barriers to your grace that might oppress and offend my brothers and sisters.
 Fill my voice Lord, with the strength to cry freedom.
 Free my spirit, Lord, so that I may contribute to the work of justice and peace.
 Clear my mind Lord, and use it for your glory.
 And finally, remind us Lord that you said "Blessed are the peacemakers,
 for they shall be called Children of God."

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SEE - seeing, hearing, and experiencing the lived reality of individuals and communities

- What are some of the recent incidents referenced in the Pastoral Letter?
- Racism is experienced by individuals, communities, and institutions; and they can present themselves in obvious and subtle forms. In the chart below, think of your own encounters with personal, communal, and institutional racism. Try to make a distinction between the obvious and subtle forms of racism.

RACISM	Personal	Communal	Institutional
Obvious			
Subtle			

JUDGE – analyzing the situation and making an informed judgement about it.

- What does the Pastoral Letter call us to?
- What does Sacred Scripture say about the issue?
- What does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* say about racism?
- What have our bishops and other leaders called us to?
- What are the root causes of racism in our communities today?
- Why is the call to unity a hard one for some people to accept? What do we have to lose? To gain?

ACT - planning and carrying out actions aimed at transforming the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice.

Based on what we have learned so far, let us discuss the following:

- What am I, personally and as a member of the Body of Christ, being called to do in order to eradicate racism?
- What are we, as a small group and as members of the Body of Christ, being called to do in order to eradicate racism?
- What are we, as the body of Christ and a parish, called to do in order to eradicate racism?
- Let us discuss, identify, and commit to a first step.

CLOSING PRAYER

Eternal and loving God, You are the Creator of all that exists.
You sent your Son into our world, born within a human culture and family.

Open our eyes to your blessings in the world;
inspire us to use them for your good and for the good of all.

Help us to appreciate and encourage one another as members of your Holy Church and citizens of your Kingdom.

Heal the wounds that separate us from one another and from your love,
and bind us together as one family in Christ Jesus, Your Son.

We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

Amen.

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GUIDED PRAYER REFLECTION

for

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM TODAY

A Pastoral Letter by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

"The elimination of racism may seem too great a task for anyone of us or even for the whole Church. Yet we place our confidence in the Lord. In Christ, we are brothers and sisters to one another. With Christ, we have received the Spirit of justice, love and peace. Through Christ, we are called to envision the new city of God, not built by human hands, but by the love of God poured out in Jesus Christ. On the journey to that "new heaven and new earth," we make our way with faith in God's grace, with hope in our own determination, and above all with love for each other as children of God."

Cardinal Donald Wuerl, *The Challenge of Racism Today*.

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Read: Genesis 1: 27; 31

God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God looked at everything he made, and he found it very good.

Reflect:

The human race is rooted in the loving, creative act of God...made in God's image.

How does racism and intolerance, subtle or overt, reside in my heart and discount the God given human dignity of others?

Pray:

Open my eyes and my heart that I can see that we are all equal before God and with each other.

Act:

Identify one person whom you have made assumptions about based on their race, nationality or religion. Pray that you may see them through God's eyes.

As the opportunity presents itself, reach out to them, smile, offer a handshake, offer a kind word.

"Racism is a sin." It is a sin because "it divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father...It is also a sin against the unity of the Body of Christ by undermining that solidarity by personal sins of prejudice, discrimination and violence."

Cardinal Donald Wuerl, *The Challenge of Racism Today*.

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Reflect:

Today we need to acknowledge and, in a spirit of reconciliation, move towards a Church and society where the wounds of racism are healed...at the same time, we acknowledge the witness of African-American Catholics who through eras of enslavement, segregation and societal racism have kept the faith.

What attitudes and actions, personal and social, must I work to remove in myself and in my community that inhibit a culture of encounter, respect, understanding and mutual forgiveness?

Pray:

Expand my horizon to the duty and blessing of building up the Body of Christ. May I see the diversity and uniqueness of each person as a reflection of the glory of God.

Act:

In a spirit of reconciliation, how am I being called, in a particular relationship or in my parish community, to promote unity and understanding? What are the gifts that I have to offer the development of Christian solidarity?

What one step in promoting justice, solidarity or unity will I make today?

CONFIRMATION LESSON PLAN

for

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM TODAY

A Pastoral Letter by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

A Spirit of Justice, Love and Peace: Moved by Grace to Confront Racism

The following *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization* indicators are addressed in this lesson:

8.03.06	State and describe the <u>gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.</u>
8.05.01	Give evidence of being made in God's image and likeness.
8.06.05	Identify the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching principles.
8.12.01	Realize that the protection of life and the dignity of every person is rooted in Scripture. (Genesis 1:26-27, Dt 30:19, 1 Corinthians 15:22).
8.12.04	Recognize that our conscience guides us to resist unjust laws and or laws opposing moral order as taught in the Gospels.

- 1) Introduce the topic of the lesson indicating that our faith calls us to confront racism.
 - i) If necessary, have the student identify their comfort in discussing the topic.
 - ii) Set parameters for discussion, one person speaks at a time, respect is key, you may critique statements but not persons.
- 2) Have the students brainstorm words they associate with Confirmation – encourage them to list the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - i) The PowerPoint offers a word cloud as a suggestion, you may provide your own – word cloud will not appear until slide is clicked again.
 - ii) You may want to record the student responses on a side board.
- 3) Have the students brainstorm words they associate with racism.
 - i) The PowerPoint offers a word cloud as a suggestion, you may provide your own – word cloud will not appear until slide is clicked again
 - ii) You may want to record the student responses on a side board.

- 4) Review and discuss the statements from the Pastoral Letter: The Challenge of Racism Today
 - i) Use **CCC 1701 – 1708** to unpack this learning.
- 5) Have the students brainstorm words for racism again with the addition of faith and human dignity in the vision.
 - i) The PowerPoint offers a word cloud as a suggestion, you may provide your own – word cloud will not appear until slide is clicked again.
 - ii) You may want to record the student responses on a side board.
- 6) Discuss that the Sacrament of Confirmation empowers us to live as disciples in the Church and in the world.
 - i) When we receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, we have the responsibility to live our life as a disciple of Christ.
 - ii) Identify that Catholic Social Teaching presents seven themes which strive to create a more just world and help people to live lives of holiness. The seven themes focus on the social and economic rights of every individual and community.
 - iii) The rights and responsibilities of the human person are one of the themes of Catholic Social Teaching.
 - iv) Watch the short Catholic Relief Services video on Solidarity – a right and responsibility for all.
 - v) Ask the student for their observations, how does this relate to our theme of racism?
- 7) In Confirmation we will be refreshed in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit – review with the students the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- 8) Think/Pair/Share: Working with a partner, think about the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - i) Identify which gift you think your partner most embodies.
 - ii) Tell them which gift and why.
- 9) Small Group Activity: Have the students arrange themselves into 7 groups according the Holy Spirit gift they were identified as exhibiting
 - i) Have the groups address the discussion questions on slide 9.
 - ii) Have one student from each group present one action item.
- 10) Review and close with Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi.

EARLY ELEMENTARY GRADE LESSON PLAN

for

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM TODAY

A Pastoral Letter by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

God loves Me, God loves all Children

The following *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization* indicators are addressed in this lesson:

K.06.02	Describe ways we can respond to Jesus' call to love God and love our neighbor (See John 13: 34-35.)
1.05.03	Recall that God created us to love – to do what is right and good in response to his love for us.
2.05.01	Recall that we love God because God first loves us.

1. Recall with the students that God created the world and everything in it
 - a. Using a children's Bible, review the Creation story (Gen 1:1-30)
 - b. Ask the student what God thought about his creation – IT WAS GOOD
2. Ask the students: "what are things that are the same about all people"
 - a. Reflect back their responses, reflect back differences within similarities
 - i. i.e., is hair the same even if it is a different color?
3. Read: "Whoever You Are" by Mem Fox
4. If we are all people even though we do not look alike, how can we all be made in God's image?
 - a. Image doesn't mean we look alike, it means that we were all made by God who loves us and that we are supposed to love everyone else just like God loves them
5. Have the students illustrate a picture showing that God loves all children
 - a. You may use the attached as a template for the students' art.

GOD LOVES ME

GOD LOVES ALL CHILDREN

MIDDLE ELEMENTARY GRADE LESSON PLAN

for

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM TODAY

A Pastoral Letter by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

#Blessed: God Bless You

The following *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization* indicators are addressed in this lesson:

4.05.09	Name the Beatitudes and their origin. (Mt 5:3-12)
4.06.02	Identify the most important social teaching of the Church: dignity of the human person.
5.05.05	Explain that when we live the Beatitudes, we are helping to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth.
5.06.01	Acknowledge that all people are created by God and that we must respect the human dignity of every person no matter how different they are from us.
5.06.06	State that the dignity of every human person is at the heart of Catholic social teaching.

- 1) Did you know that blessing is both something we receive from God and something we give/do for God and others?
 - i) God blesses us with so many gifts we can't name them all
 - ii) One of the best ways to show our gratitude is to offer his love back to God by loving others
- 2) Has anyone here heard or seen the hashtag – #Blessed
 - i) Complete the #Blessed with a blessing in your life
- 3) Review that the Beatitudes describe the eight attitudes/characteristics of thinking and acting as a disciple of Christ

- i) Beatitude is another word for happiness – when we live the Beatitudes we bring happiness to ourselves by loving God and to others by loving them as God loves them
 - (a) That means sometimes our happiness comes from helping to make others happy
 - ii) When we look at the Beatitudes, we see the words “Kingdom of God” – this means that even though we live on the earth, we can change the world to make it more like heaven when we love God, our family, our neighbors, our classmates, our teammates, and sometimes even people we don’t know by name
 - iii) Another important thing we see in the Beatitudes is that all of these begin with the word blessed is
 - (a) Blessed is the word we use when we talk about all the good things that come to us from God
 - (b) We also say blessed when we talk about how we show our love for God when we treat others as God wants us to do, in a loving and respectful way
- 4) God does not love some people more than others. He loves us all the same. He loves each of us as if we were the only person in the world
- i) It is important when we try to love everyone the way God loves them.
 - (a) Sometimes this is hard – especially when someone is very different than we are
 - ii) Think about times you showed love to someone, even when it was hard
- 5) Do you think it fair or unfair to judge someone based on the way they look? Some examples to flesh this question out could be: Is it fair or unfair to judge someone based on how good they are at sports? Is it fair or unfair to judge someone based on where they live? How about where they go to school?
- i) We know that God loves everyone. He created them in love so that they could love him in return
- 6) God wants us to work for justice – that means that everyone is treated fairly regardless of how they look, where they live, what religion they are

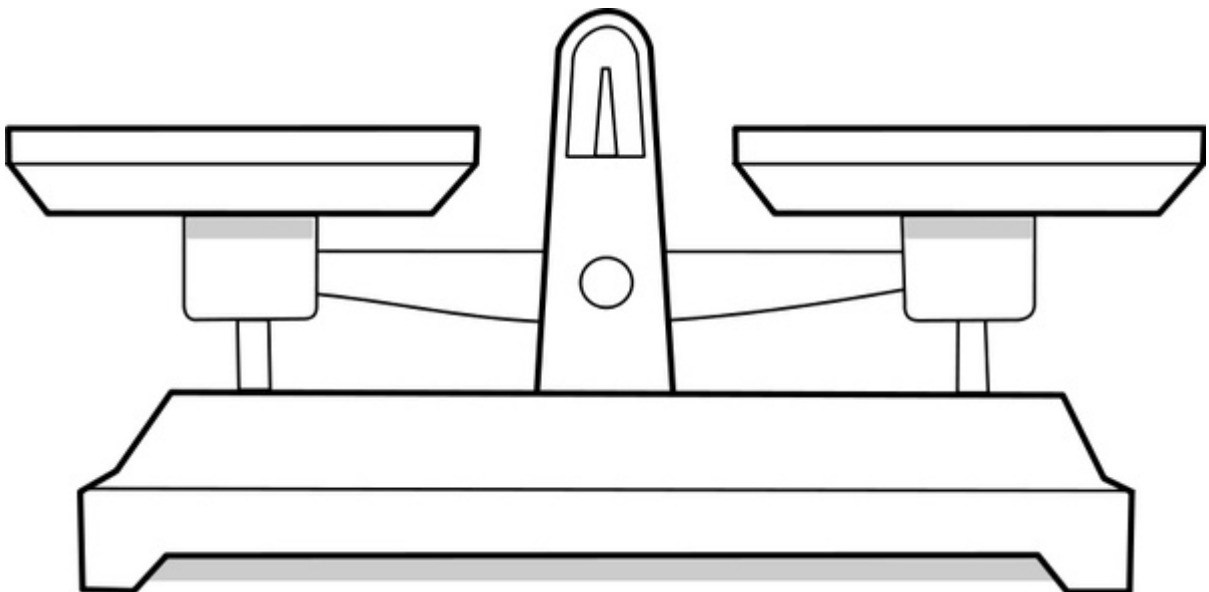
- i) One of the Beatitudes says we are blessed when we hunger and thirst for righteousness – this is a fancy way of saying we are blessed when we want fairness for everyone.
 - ii) Have the students complete the “Share your Blessings” portion of the worksheet
- 7) Display the students work and encourage the class to pray for each other as they try to build a more fair and just world.

#Blessed

Share your blessings

On this side of the scale write one way you think people are treated unfairly.

On this side of the scale write one thing you can do to help.



HIGH SCHOOL LESSON PLAN

for

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM TODAY

A Pastoral Letter by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

The Pastoral Letter: *The Challenge of Racism Today* presents many themes that can, and should, be explored with students of high school age. This lesson will focus on the two things, highlighted in the letter, that each of us must recognize to address racism:

- It exists in a variety of forms
- There is something we can do about it

Students will consider what constitutes racism, our personal biases and the call for a Christian response to the sin of racism

The following themes from the *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*, are incorporated into this lesson:

Living as a Disciple of Jesus Christ in Society

- I. God's plan for his people
 - B.2 The unity of the whole human race
- III. Major Themes of Catholic Social Teaching
 - A.1-3 The dignity of human life
 - B.1-4 Call to family, community and participation
 - C.1-3 Responsibilities and rights
 - F. Solidarity
- IV. Sin and Its Social Dimension
 - A.1ab Concept of social sin
 - A.2abc Foundations for social sin
- V. Challenges
 - D.3-4 A perfect world cannot be built by human effort for justice
Perfect justice will be realized only in eternal life

Lesson Plan Outline

- 1) Solicit responses from students to fill in the blank for each prompt – record responses for group activity later
 - i) Racism is...
 - ii) Racism is not...
- 2) Racism is not part of God's plan
 - i) Introduce the dignity of the human person
 - ii) Unity as brothers and sisters made in the image of God
- 3) Clarify that not only is racism a persistent evil in society, it is a sin
- 4) With this foundational discussion we move to address racism, building on two components of the pastoral letter
 - i) It exists in a variety of forms
 - ii) There is something we can do about it
- 5) Introduce concepts of personal, social and institutional sin
- 6) Invite students to personal reflection on bias they may have – identify that this reflection is a component in developing a spirit of reconciliation
- 7) Transition to creating a Christian mindset which empowers a spirit of conviction that in some personal and communal ways we can help to confront and resolve racism
- 8) Have students complete small group activity on solidarity - in this activity the students will work in small groups as they address adjectives they applied to racism at the beginning of the lesson and use those negative aspects as springboard for envisioning a world without that particular aspect of racism, and what practical steps need to be taken to make this vision of unity a reality
 - i) Share responses with the group
 - ii) Create a visual representation of responses to display in the classroom – in putting all the responses together, students will have a visual representation of the multifaceted aspects of racism that need to be addressed
- 9) Conclude with the importance of the work of God's grace and prayer in our efforts for reconciliation and solidarity

Grace gives us the power to be living witnesses of the celebrate every human person and strive for the unity within God's family