

Lesson Plan:

Campaigning for Human Dignity: Enlarging the Moral Imagination

Grades: 9-12

Overview of Lesson Plan: Students are invited to look at a matrix of campaign issues in this election cycle and explore the connection between the issues and the central value of Catholic Social Teaching: human dignity. They will consult a variety of resources to research the issues and become familiar with the details and the position of each candidate on the issue. Students will also engage the U.S. Bishops document, “*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*” and reflect on the Church’s statement relative to the issues.

Suggest time allowed: One week – or a long range assignment

Objectives:

1. Students will explore several campaign issues through news sources, web sites, video clips and campaign information.
2. Students will learn about the basics of the issues and summarize the key points.
3. Students will research each candidate’s position on the issues and summarize their findings.
4. Students will become familiar with the Bishops’ document, “*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*,” and summarize their understanding in a chart.
5. Students will formulate their understanding of the issues and the connection to human dignity.

Resources:

- **Web site: USCCB Faithful Citizenship** The USCCB website contains resources and materials for promoting the Bishops’ document, “*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*.” The site contains a variety of materials and resources for use in the classroom, parish, youth group, etc. Download the Bishops’ document here.
<http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/>
- **Multimedia:** PowerPoint on Faithful Citizenship 2008 - <http://www.educationforjustice.org/node/3450>
- **Resource:** Catholic Social Teaching and the Election - Reflection Questions -
- **Handout:** Quote Sheet on Citizenship and Catholic Social Teaching
- **Worksheet:** Issues Matrix (included here)
- **Handout:** Human Dignity & Moral Imagination Diagram (included here)
- pens/notebooks(paper or computer) for note-taking

Activities / Procedures:

1. Begin with the following written on the board: “Separation of Church and State means...”
2. Ask questions about what students think is the Church’s appropriate role in the public square. Assess their level of knowledge.
3. Identify their questions about this role. Discuss and fill in missing information.

4. Show the PowerPoint Presentation available on the Education for Justice Web site: “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship” available at: <http://www.educationforjustice.org/node/3450> (**Note:** teachers may wish to shorten the PowerPoint presentation or use only select slides depending on the needs of your students or time constraints.)
5. After viewing the PowerPoint students have students break into groups and discuss the following:
 - What is meant by the term “faithful citizenship” in the Catholic tradition?
 - Why is participating in political life an important part of what it means to be Catholic?
 - What is the role of the Church in public life?
 - What do you agree or disagree with, and why?
6. Assign students to read or refer to “*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship.*” The full text of the document is available: <http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/>
7. Distribute the Issue Matrix and explain that students will be creating summary statements after gathering research on the issues. They will also do the following:
 - Indicate where each candidate stands on the issue
 - Determine whether the principles of Catholic Social Teaching support or challenge the candidates’ position? Why? How? (be detailed and specific)
 - Take a stand on the issue presenting their personal position and explain their reasons.
8. Distribute the Moral Imagination handout. Instruct students to refer to the questions raised in light of the principles of Catholic Social teaching in the Issue Matrix and have students summarize where they see a connection between the issues and candidate positions and human dignity. Have students note their conclusions in the circle.

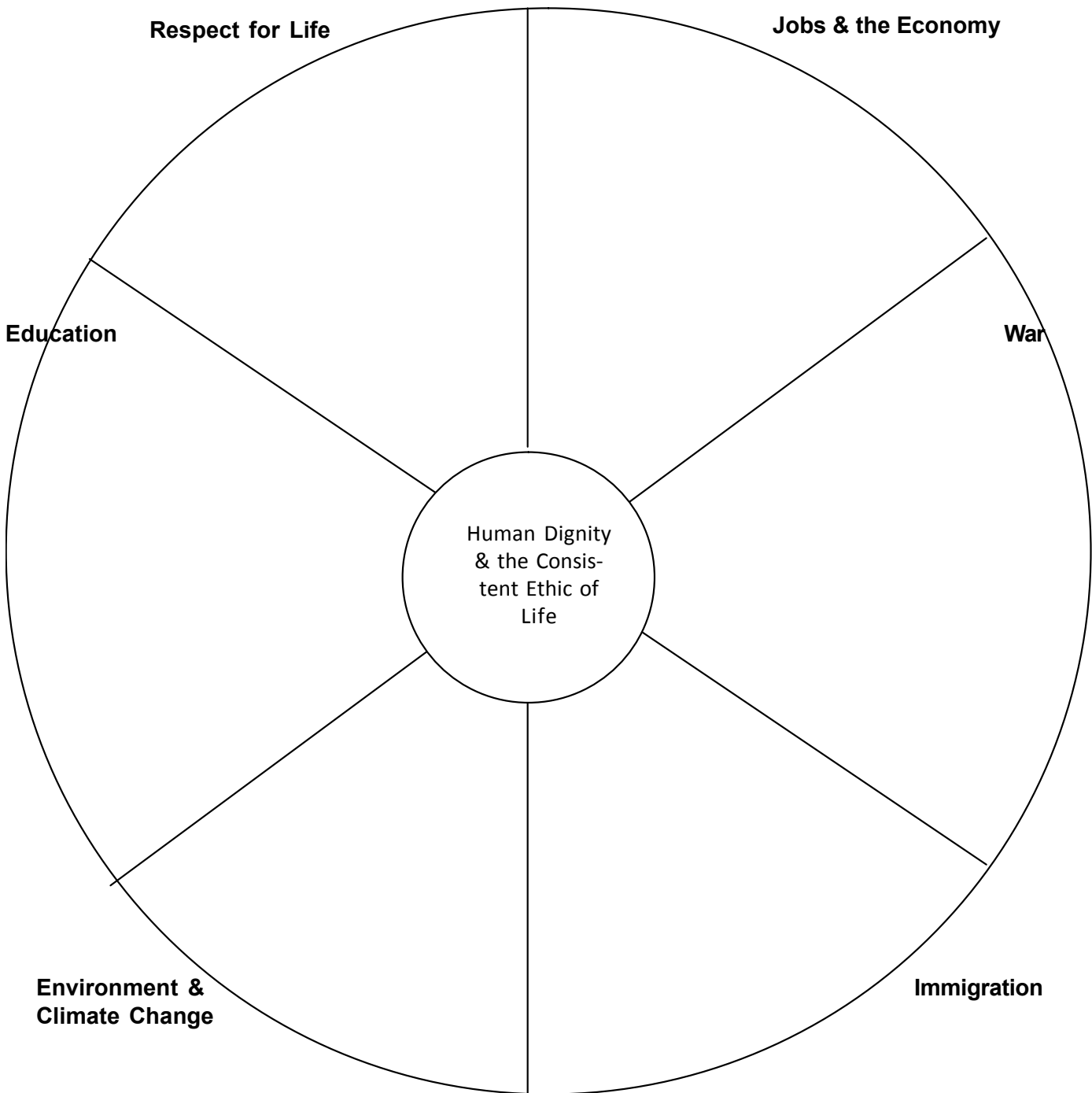
“Adopting a consistent ethic of life, the Catholic Church promotes a broad spectrum of issues . . . Opposition to abortion and euthanasia does not excuse indifference to those who suffer from poverty, violence and injustice. Any politics of human life must work to resist the violence of war and the scandal of capital punishment. Any politics of human dignity must seriously address issues of racism, poverty, hunger, employment, education, housing and health care. Therefore, Catholics should eagerly involve themselves as advocates for the weak and marginalized in all these areas. Catholic public officials are obliged to address each of these issues as they seek to build consistent policies which promote respect for the human person in all stages of life.”

-U. S. Catholic Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 1998



Human Dignity & the Issues

Directions: In the chart below, summarize how each issue is connected, at its center, to human dignity and where you see a connection between the issues, the candidates' positions and human dignity. Note your conclusions in the spaces provided.



Conclusions:

