

CELEBRATING SPECIAL NEEDS

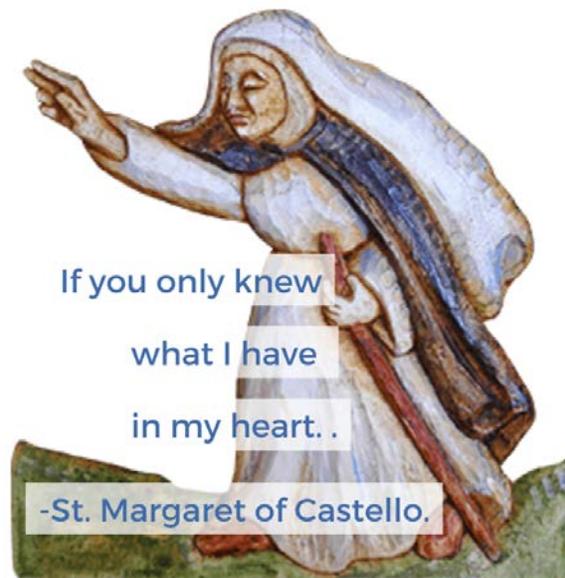
GRADES 7-9 – Lesson 2

GOAL: Students will learn about the importance of respecting those who are different from us. Students will learn about recognizing that every person is unique and made in the image of God, loved for who they are, and their physical appearance or abilities cannot change that.

Lesson:

God makes each person special—a unique creation whom He planned from the beginning of time. God does not make mistakes. God has a special plan for every single person, no matter what our abilities are.

As Christians, it is important that we learn to respect the dignity of every human person, as made in the image and likeness of God. Unfortunately, people with disabilities are often treated poorly by others, and may experience discrimination and bullying. God invites each of us to recognize the incredible gift and dignity of every person, no matter their abilities. Rather than rejecting or being mean to those who are different than us, we can with love and support. We all have unique gifts and struggles, which offer opportunities to help each other.



Bible Story: Read [Genesis 1:27-30](#)

Discuss: *Focus on Verse 27*

- On the sixth day of creation, God created humans, the greatest of his creations. Why were humans the greatest? *Answer: Made in His image and likeness*

- God creates each one of us uniquely and perfectly as He wants us. God doesn't make mistakes!
- Being made in the image of God means that each one of us has dignity. Does anyone know what dignity means? *Answer: Dignity is about understanding that each of us is made in God's image. Every person has an innate human dignity no one can take away. Human dignity is given freely to all human beings: whether saint or sinner, imprisoned or freed, powerful or weak.*
- Do you know someone with a disability? If so, what are they?
- Disabilities can come in different forms: physical or mental. Physical disabilities include missing an arm or leg, having a crippled limb, being in a wheelchair, etc. Mental disabilities are in the mind like autism, depression, or Asperger's Syndrome.

Watch: [Disabilities: How to Cope With Them & Support Others](#)
or [Things people with disabilities wish you knew](#)

Discussion:

- What are some polite ways to ask someone about their disability?
 - If you ask make sure it is a person who you are getting to know or you are friends with, not a stranger.
 - When you find out you should ask if there are any ways you can help them.
- When you talk with someone about their disability make sure it's in a neutral tone.
 - Don't get too excited and ask invasive, inappropriate questions.
 - Also, don't act disgusted or say something like "I'm glad I don't have that."
- Why is it better to say that "she has a disability" rather than "she is disabled"?
 - A person's identity is more fundamental than their abilities, they are first and foremost a human person.

Watch: [Dear Future Mom](#)

Activity:

In countries around the world children with Down's Syndrome are being targeted for abortion. This ad was for French television because in France over 77% of babies with Down's Syndrome are aborted.

Ask students to get in groups and discuss what they thought of the video and then research which countries have the highest abortion rates for Down's Syndrome or disabled babies.

Most up-to-date stats: United States (67%), Denmark (98%), UK (90%), France (77%), Iceland (virtually 100%)

After, have students write a pretend letter to an expecting mom whose child has Down's Syndrome. The students should write about her and the baby being made in the image of God, how ability should not define worth, how we are all made for love, and that the mother is going to be a great mom!

Prayer:

Most Holy Trinity,

We bring before you today all of your children suffering from a disability.

We ask that you shower them with Your love

And bless them with good health.

We bring before you today all of our false conceptions about disability.

We ask that you heal our minds so that we may see every person equal in dignity.

We pray for the world that it might recognize all people as children of God.

We pray that each country learns the value of disabled lives

and puts an end to their killing through abortion.

Amen.

Lesson adapted from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Office of Life, Justice and Peace