

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Fifth Commandment: You Shall Not Kill

Catechist Preparation

Clarifying the Essentials

Deliberately hating one's neighbor subverts the cultivation of charity and is therefore a grave sin.

- ◆ We are taught by Jesus to pray for those we consider our enemies (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2303).
- ◆ Peace of heart is a stance for which Christians are to strive; anger which moves one to violence against another is a grave sin (see CCC 2302).

Because each human life is sacred, this Commandment forbids abortion, euthanasia, and suicide.

- ◆ Human life begins at and must be respected from the moment of conception (see CCC 2270).
- ◆ Psychological impairment, fear, or suffering lessens the responsibility of those committing suicide; we pray for them. Indeed, God is capable of working out their eternal Salvation (see CCC 2283).

Why Is This Important?

The dignity of human life is an absolute value. It is the first gift we receive from God. It is the basis for God's many other gifts, which we receive from his love and goodness. Nothing and no one should contravene this first gift.

Jesus takes the Commandment not to kill and extends it by adding a warning about anger. He explains to his followers that even unreconciled anger can make them liable to judgment (see Matthew 5:21–26).

*One single nature
is mother of all humanity.
Therefore we are all . . .
united by the same kinship.*

SAINT AMBROSE

Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Prepare the space with chairs in a circle and a focal point with a candle and an open Bible. Supply name tags and refreshments.

Welcome

Invite the group to ponder the quote of Saint Ambrose. Read it slowly and reflectively several times.

Engage

1. Initiate discussion concerning the participants' understanding of the Fifth Commandment. Make sure to include the points that physical killing, verbal and emotional violence, hatred, bigotry, and genocide are all included in this Commandment.
2. Continue with the Insight section of the participant handout. Invite the participants to read this section and answer the For Reflection questions.

Teach

Summarize the Church Teaching section. Then discuss the following:

- ◆ The Church holds the dignity of all life from womb to tomb.
- ◆ Life is the gift we receive from God, who is the source of all living beings.
- ◆ Any action that erodes peace is contrary to God's Law of Love.
- ◆ The Fifth Commandment challenges us to work to eliminate hatred and violence. It challenges us to look for ways to respect all life, all nationalities, all creeds, all peoples.

Apply

Encourage the participants to share what insights they have gained about the Fifth Commandment, and how they might be challenged to live this Commandment more fully.

Pray

Pray a litany for victims of killing (use the response: Lord, hear our prayer): *For those who die in war, we pray . . . For innocent children killed by violence in our streets, we pray . . . For all who have been killed by guns, we pray . . .* Invite participants to add other petitions.