

RESPECT LIFE PROGRAM

Explanation of Materials

What is the Respect Life Program?

The annual Respect Life Program is a year-round, nationwide effort to help Catholics understand, value, and become engaged with building a culture that cherishes every human life.

Although sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Respect Life Program is essentially comprised of the efforts of leaders throughout the Church like you—parish priests, staff, and volunteers; teachers and school administrators; diocesan leaders; and so many others.

How do I use these materials?

The Respect Life Program materials are intended to help leaders integrate respect for human life into their respective work and/or ministries. You are encouraged to adapt and build off the provided resources to fit your specific needs.

The annual cycle of the Respect Life Program runs from Respect Life Sunday (the first Sunday of October) through the following September. Specific dates are sometimes suggested, but any of the materials can be used at any time. We also recommend that you build off the 2019-2020 theme, **“Christ Our Hope: In Every Season of Life.”** A reflection unpacking the theme is provided in this resource guide.

“To be truly a people at the service of life we must propose these truths constantly and courageously from the very first proclamation of the Gospel, and thereafter in catechesis, in the various forms of preaching, in personal dialogue and in all educational activity.”

POPE JOHN PAUL II (EV 82)

“The Gospel of life is at the heart of Jesus’ message.”

POPE JOHN PAUL II (EV 1)

What’s new this year?

As Pope John Paul II wrote, “We need to bring the Gospel of life to the heart of every man and woman and to make it penetrate every part of society” (*Evangelium vitae* 80). Our goal is therefore to help you integrate the Respect Life message into the very life of your parish, school, or ministry. Based on feedback from parishes and dioceses, this year’s approach focuses less on developing new materials and much more on using existing resources to build a culture of life.

The **poster** features a bulletin board filled with photos, flyers, and prayer requests that illustrate Christ’s presence throughout our lives, especially when human life is most vulnerable. It is designed to serve as a springboard for an interactive parish or school activity, and instructions for doing so are included in the action guide for Respect Life Month.

Five new **action guides** help leaders make connections to Respect Life themes throughout the year by highlighting related annual liturgical celebrations and other calendar observances. The action guides feature sample timelines, activities, announcements, intercessions, homily notes, and more. Further information is provided in the introduction to the action guides on page 9.

Additionally, ten new **bulletin boxes** are provided for use in bulletins, newsletters, social media, and wherever else they would be helpful. These are summaries of longer articles published in previous years and cover a range of topics. Digital files of these bulletin boxes are provided online, and the full-length versions can be either downloaded or ordered in print.

More information: respectlifeprogram.org.