



HOW TO USE

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE 2016-2017 RESPECT LIFE PROGRAM MATERIALS

These suggestions are meant to provide some ideas for ministry, parish, school, or personal use. Be sure to know and follow all local policies and procedures, particularly safe environment and parental rights policies, and to obtain the appropriate permissions before moving forward. If you have any questions about applicable policies, contact your parish, school, diocese, and/or other relevant authoritative entities.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly all materials are available to order or download for free* at [www.usccb.org/respectlife!](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife)

**Folder not available for download.*

Folder: The folder can be used for more than just holding the 2016-2017 Respect Life Program materials! For example, put a label with customized information for your organization (ministry, parish, school, diocese, etc.) on the right inside pocket, and use the folder to hold participant materials for local conferences, retreats, and gatherings.

Catalog: Make others aware of the variety of materials available to order from the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, ranging from prayer cards to posters and more. Because of the wide array available, people serving in various capacities can find helpful resources for their job or ministry. Give them copies of the catalog, or direct them to www.usccb.org/respectlife, where they can access it online.

Resource Guide: The Respect Life Program, and therefore this resource guide, is meant to help leaders integrate the Church's vision of the human person into their various ministries. It is not intended to be prescriptive, nor is it comprehensive. Although suggestions are given for using various elements of the program, **leaders are encouraged to use the materials in innovative ways.**

Additionally, we would be like to know how you creatively put the materials to use in order to continue improving the resources we provide. So please let us know how you use the materials by emailing us at [prolife@usccb.org!](mailto:prolife@usccb.org)

POSTER:

CLERGY

Deliver a homily on the theme, "Moved by Mercy," tying it together with respect for each person and his or her life. Encourage parishioners to take home copies of the image, make a related resolution for the week, and post the image somewhere in their home to remind them of their resolution.

PARISHES

- Put up the poster in the back of church, on the inside of the front door, and/or in the parish office. Leave it up all year, or put it up during Respect Life Month (October) and January (the month in which the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children occurs).
- Print the poster from www.usccb.org/respectlife on 8.5" x 11" paper. Use it as a bulletin insert, or make copies available for parishioners to take home.

RESPECT LIFE MINISTRY

Hold a contest or raffle (following local laws and policies regarding such events). Place a receptacle, entry forms, and an explanatory sign beneath the poster during the month of October. Other than contact information, require that each entry include a concrete suggestion* for cherishing the gift of human life. The winning entry/entries could be drawn at random, or a prize could be given for the best idea(s)—for example, printing them in the parish bulletin and implementing them.

**Example: Parishioners could sign an oversized card made out of poster board with a specific prayer commitment for women facing unexpected pregnancies; the card could then be given to a local pregnancy care center.*

FAITH FORMATION

Print the poster from www.usccb.org/respectlife, make copies and hand them out to participants in faith formation programs. Incorporate the message of “Moved by Mercy,” as it pertains to respect for each person’s life, into regular programming.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Hang the poster in the classroom. Explain the theme within the context of respecting each other’s God-given dignity, which nothing can take away, and the consequential importance of cherishing each person’s life.

Provide a sticky note to each student, and instruct them to each write down an example of living out mercy in a way that respects others’ dignity. (Give examples from the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.)

Post their ideas next to the poster, and invite the students to take down a sticky note (not their own), do the action, and write a one-paragraph reflection on the experience for extra credit.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Hang the poster in the meeting space, and plan an event based on the message of “Moved by Mercy” within the context of life issues. Highlight ways in which the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy can help us cherish the gift of every person’s life. (This would be a natural follow-up to the experience of World Youth Day, but need not be limited to such events.)

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Coordinate a service event based on the message of “Moved by Mercy” within the context of life issues. Ask a few of the young adults who attend to speak about their experiences in light of the theme at a regularly scheduled upcoming event, or hold an event specifically for this purpose.

ARTICLES:

CLERGY

- Incorporate points from the articles into homilies throughout the year, and coordinate with parish staff to make the relevant article or other information available for parishioners at that time.

For example, in a homily on mercy, mention that help is available for those who suffer after abortion, include the web address www.hopeafterabortion.org in that week’s bulletin, and refer to it in the homily or announcements.

Or in a homily on love for neighbor, refer to articles such as “Caring for Loved One’s at Life’s End” and “Accompanying Expectant Mothers Considering Adoption,” which offer concrete suggestions.

- Feature a new article each month in the literature rack. The week the new article is available, alert the congregation in the pulpit announcements and incorporate it into the weekly homily or bulletin reflection from the pastor.

PARISHES

Feature a different article each month. Include a quote with a link to the full article in the bulletin, highlight and link to the article on the parish website, and share the article on social media.*

**See also: Free social media training webinar. (<http://goo.gl/xfjhNe>). Although this one-hour webinar took place during the 2015-2016 Respect Life Program, the principles covered remain pertinent, and continued use of the shareable graphics is encouraged.*

RESPECT LIFE MINISTRY

Distribute the articles (in print or online) among other participants in Respect Life ministry to read by a certain time. Schedule a casual get-together with light refreshments or at a local café or restaurant. Discuss the articles and what was most helpful. Together, brainstorm ideas for how to use the articles as tools for reaching others compassionately with the merciful message of respect for life.

FAITH FORMATION

Incorporate the articles into regular programming, and make parishioners and fellow religious educators aware of them as resources.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

- Bring the articles (and Simple Supplements) to the attention of school counselors, teachers, and other professional staff. Make school counselors, teachers, and other professional staff aware of the articles as reference resources.
- Incorporate information from the articles into classroom curriculums.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Split the young people into small groups. Give each group an age-appropriate article to read and discuss. Have each group present a summary of the article and the fruits of their discussion (based on reflection questions written by the youth minister ahead of time). Provide markers and easel pads, and give extra points if the teens are able to tastefully and respectfully incorporate hand-drawn renditions of emojis* into their presentations.

**Emoji: Small image typically used in text messages or online media to convey emotion, action, or other meaning.*

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Use the articles as inspiration for the structure of presentations or simply as reference.

REFLECTION FLYER:

CLERGY

- Use the reflection (in whole or in part) in the pastor's reflection in the bulletin.
- Use as inspiration for a homily.

PARISH

- Use as a bulletin insert.
- Hang the flyer up on parish doors, bulletin boards, and other high-traffic areas.

RESPECT LIFE MINISTRY

Gather with other members of Respect Life ministry to reflect upon the theme together—both for personal enrichment and to consider the ministry's activities in light of the theme for the year.

FAITH FORMATION

Incorporate the reflection into regular programming to highlight the Church's vision of the human person and how it relates to our daily lives. It may be helpful to draw upon the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy* for examples relevant both to individual life and to life as a member of the Church, the Body of Christ.

**Listed in section of resource guide entitled "Simple Supplements."*

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

- Use as a reflection before beginning class.
- Assign students to read the flyer and then write a brief reflection of their own.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Use the reflection as inspiration for a special talk or event during October and/or January.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

- Send the reflection out in e-newsletters, and share on social media.
- Use as a reflection before regularly scheduled events, especially during the months of October (Respect Life Month) and January (the month of the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children).
- Use the reflection as inspiration for a special talk or event during October and/or January.