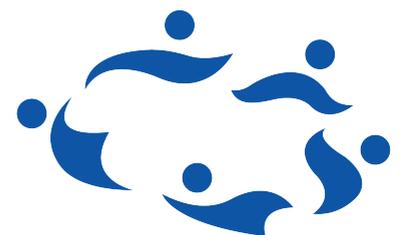




Human  
Dignity  
Curriculum

# HUMAN DIGNITY CURRICULUM

GRADE 8



World **Youth** Alliance

The **Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC)** is a project of the World Youth Alliance.

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**To prepare for the Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC), the following two things should be done:**

1. Students should bring in a photo or a drawing of themselves. The photo/drawing will be used for a later class activity.
2. The teacher should call for a letter from parents, guardians, family members or friends for each student; this *Dear You* letter should explain to the student the reasons why the parent, guardian, family member, etc., loves the student and finds him special. The alternative here would be for the teacher or teachers to write the letters.

**Sample Request Letter:**

Dear Parents,

For our Human Dignity Curriculum project in Grade 8, we are asking that all families provide us with a letter written to your child. You can email this letter to me [email], or mail it to me [address], or send it with your child in a sealed envelope.

Your letter should answer the following questions: Why do you love this student? Why is he valuable to you? How is he special?

This letter will help start our project! The deadline for providing this letter is [date]. Please take the time to provide a letter, and let me know of any questions.

[teacher]

The purpose of this activity is to help reveal to students the dignity they possess and the ways in which it has already been revealed to them.

3. Students should prepare an HDC binder or folder. Ideally, students will be able to collect their worksheets and notes into this binder or folder over the duration of the HDC. A solid archive should be kept to help students contribute to the final HDC project.

The teacher should make note of this suggested final HDC project: a class newspaper that can be shared with families and/or the grade/school, drawing on students' different homework assignments and activities, that paints a portrait of lessons learned about human dignity.



## PURPOSE

To introduce human dignity as our unique value as human persons.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Explain that they are persons with human dignity.
2. Experience their own dignity.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- **Dear You** letters (see Materials [for Preparatory Work])
- lined paper for letter-writing
- Supplementary materials:
  - **Life without limb-its, Daily Mail** article (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1196755/The-astonishing-story-man-born-arms-legs--world-famous-swimmer-surfer-footballer.html>)
  - **Motivational speaker Nick Vujicic on the power of staying positive, Channel NewsAsia** video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=707VD48BuOs>)
  - **Mix & Match** worksheet (see Materials)

## VOCABULARY

- **experience**: an awareness of presence or value
- **human dignity**: the universal, intrinsic, and inalienable value of human persons
- **universal**: every one of us has dignity
- **intrinsic**: our dignity is part of who we are; it is with us our entire life
- **inalienable**: dignity cannot be given to us or taken away from us

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Introduce the course: This a course will help us answer three questions.

Write on the board:

- (i) Who are we?
- (ii) What can we do?

(iii) Who can we become?

Once we understand who we are, this understanding changes the way we think about ourselves, the way we think about others, and then the way we act! You will learn how to use this understanding to make choices about yourself and your life every day going forward.

**Step 2:** Begin with a hook. Hand each student their own *Dear You* letter—a letter from their parent, another family member, a teacher, etc., that describes to them their own value and dignity. Give students some time to read and think about the letters that they have received.

Ask:

- How do you know the letter writer? What is your relationship with him/her?
- How does your letter make you feel?

Students could journal the answers to these questions in their notes.

**Step 3:** Introduce human dignity, the core concept of the course: What we experienced in this activity is our human dignity—our value as a human person. Every single person has this value, just because he or she is human!

Write on the board:

- **experience:** an awareness of presence or value.

This is the most important way by which we come to know human dignity: we experience our own mystery, uniqueness, and value, and we can also experience the mystery of another person which is so much like our own!

When we experience another person, we experience their mystery—we experience the life that they are living, that we cannot live; the things about them that we cannot know; a mystery that we cannot ever fully understand. In some ways, every person is like his or her own world!

Teach the three prongs to dignity:

- **universal:** every person has dignity, regardless of abilities, status, etc.
- **intrinsic:** our dignity is with us our entire life; it is part of who we are
- **inalienable:** dignity cannot be given to us or taken away from us

Explain: Human dignity helps us answer the question, “Who are we?” We are human persons who each have dignity.

We have this value always because we are human. All humans share it. It is a value we each should come to know by experience, because we experience that we are not another human person—that no other human person could live our life for us, or know the things about ourselves the way we know them.

What is important also is that we can demonstrate our dignity in the ways we act and the choices we make. We can live more or less excellent lives—we can live lives of respect, or lives of disrespect, for the dignity of the person. We will learn about this in future lessons. For now, we can say that the most excellent person is the one who lives his or her life respecting human dignity in each of his or her actions.

One way that we can do this is return other's respect for us! Let's take the time to write those who wrote us a *Dear You* letter, answering for them the questions: Why do you love this person? Why is he or she valuable to you? What makes him or her special? This letter should be hand-written on lined paper.

**Step 4:** Review the concepts taught.

**Ask:**

- Do I have dignity? [yes]
- Does [student] have dignity? [yes]
- Does [other student] have dignity? [yes]
- Do I have more dignity than you? [no]
- Do you have more dignity than me? [no]
- Does my dog Fido have dignity? [no]
- Can I take your dignity away from you if you fail a test? [no]
- Can your parents take your dignity away from you if you forget to take out the trash? [no]
- Who gives you your dignity? [nobody—you have it just because you're human]
- Who are you? [a human person with dignity]

**Step 5:** Summarize: Today we have begun to answer the question, "Who are we?," the first of three important questions to us in this class. We are human persons who each have dignity, the value that makes each of us special, just because we are human. We all share it, it cannot be given to us or taken from us, and it is with us for the entirety of our lives! Understanding that we have this dignity is important to understanding what we can do and who we can become.

## FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Ask students to mail or give the dignity letter they wrote in class. (If necessary, students should complete their dignity letters at home.)

## SUPPLEMENTS

**Supplement 1:** Summarize the newspaper story about Nick Vujicic, “the man without limbs,” and explain that he shows how human dignity is a value always with us, a value not limited by look or ability; even in being physically incapable in certain ways, he is fundamentally human and his life therefore valuable. There is a mystery entirely his own; it is this mystery and personality that he has expressed in his own life. (Alternative would be to watch the *Motivational speaker Nick Vujicic on the power of staying positive*, Channel NewsAsia video.)

**Supplement 2:** Raise awareness of the dignity of the person on the level of the classroom. Hand each student a copy of the *Mix & Match* worksheet, and give them five minutes to complete it, to see which person can identify, at the fastest rate, fellow students with the listed commonalities.

Ask:

- How does this activity make you feel?
- Did anything about what you learned surprise you?

**Supplement 3:** Bring the experience of the dignity of the person to the level of the student’s self-reflection. Ask them to imagine themselves looking in a mirror, then to write down a list of things that another person couldn’t know about them just by looking at them—qualities of their own individual mystery: two experiences from their past that have made them who they are today; two things they hope/dream for; two people they love; two things they find beautiful.

Model part of your own answer to students before they begin.

Upon completion, ask:

- What are some examples of things that other people can’t know about us?
- Why do you think people can’t know these things about you unless you tell them?



## MIX & MATCH

**Directions:** Find a **different** person for each clue in the list below.

1. a person with whom you share your birthday month

\_\_\_\_\_

2. a person who's visited another country

\_\_\_\_\_

3. a person with more than two siblings

\_\_\_\_\_

4. a person whose favorite color is the same as yours

\_\_\_\_\_

5. a person who's completed a puzzle

\_\_\_\_\_

6. a person who's taken dance classes

\_\_\_\_\_

7. a person who was born in another state (or country)

\_\_\_\_\_

8. a person who speaks a second language

\_\_\_\_\_

9. a person named after a relative

\_\_\_\_\_

10. a person who's lived in more than one house/apartment

\_\_\_\_\_

11. a person who loves reading

\_\_\_\_\_

12. a person who loves pizza

\_\_\_\_\_

13. a person who eats cereal for breakfast

\_\_\_\_\_



## PURPOSE

To help students recognize their mission to respect human dignity over the duration of their lives.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Explain their mission as one of respecting their own and others' dignity.
2. Keep themselves and fellow students accountable for showing respect.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- **Sudoku Puzzle** worksheet (see Materials)
- **Sudoku Answer Key** sheet (see Materials)
- **Friends in Mission** card (see Materials)

## VOCABULARY

- **power**: the ability of a living thing to do something on its own
- **mission**: the pursuit of a desired outcome

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Explain: We encounter the dignity of a person every single time that we encounter that person—the unique, special mystery they are.

Write the following definitions on the board, and ask students to write the definition along with the correct characteristic it defines into their notes:

- \_\_\_\_\_: every person has dignity, regardless of abilities, status, etc. [universal]
- \_\_\_\_\_: our dignity is with us our entire life; it is part of who we are [intrinsic]
- \_\_\_\_\_: dignity cannot be given to us or taken away from us [inalienable]

**Step 2:** Introduce the hierarchy of being with a class exercise.

Send two students into the hallway, and have each remaining student take off one shoe and place it in the middle of the carpet. Then ask the two students in the hallway to come into the classroom, one by one, and categorize the shoes. Discuss with the remaining students the different ways in which the shoes were categorized.

Then draw the following chart on the board, with the columns labeled, and ask students to play “Around the World.”

non-living things	plants	animals	humans
-------------------	--------	---------	--------

One student should stand behind the other, and upon hearing the item, the student who places the object or living being into the accurate category the fastest moves on to the next student, until all vocabulary words are correctly listed.

non-living things	Plants	animals	humans
robot	tulip	rhinoceros	mother
cathedral	dandelion	camel	firefighter
bulldozer	algae	labrador	neurosurgeon
pharmacy	cactus	iguana	spouse
microphone	poinsettia	shellfish	barista
cavern	aspen tree	whale	babysitter

**Ask:**

- Which of these categories has human dignity? Why?

**Step 3:** Teach the powers of living beings.

Help students identify the existence of powers, which all living beings share; they distinguish living from non-living beings. Ask: What distinguishes living beings from non-living beings? Take answers, then teach the powers: What distinguishes living beings from non-living things is the presence of powers. All living beings have different powers.

Write on the board:

- **power:** the ability of a living thing to do something on its own

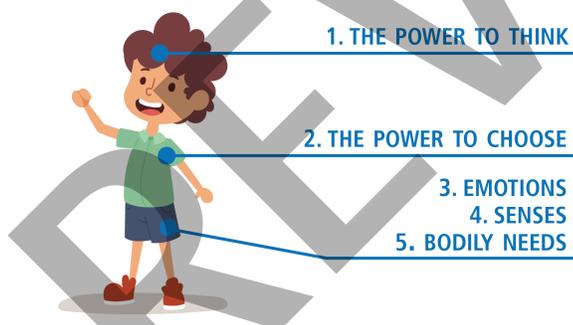
Explain: Non-living beings are unable to do anything on their own; they have no powers.

Make a table of powers per living beings on the board, and complete it as a class. Students should copy this table into their notes.

	plants	animals	humans
--	--------	---------	--------

eat	X	X	X
grow	X	X	X
reproduce	X	X	X
move from place to place on their own		X	X
use the senses		X	X
feel emotions		X	X
think			X
choose			X

**Step 4:** Introduce the mission of the human person. Explain: The human person alone has the powers to think and to choose. These powers help us begin to answer the question, “What can we do?” With these powers, the person first recognizes the presence of human dignity, that which makes us entirely unique among all living beings, and then can choose to respect it!



Explain: After human dignity, we are all different—with different birthdays, gifts, talents, grades, lives, and more! What we can all do, however, is choose to respect our individual human dignity. The power to think and then the power to choose, based on what we think and know, are the most powerful of all powers in the person. Animals and plants do not have these powers.

Our mission—or our life’s pursuit—should be to order our entire life and everything in us so that we first think about what is most excellent and choose it. This starts with knowing that we should always respect the dignity of people.

These powers to think and choose should help us express our emotions, and also take care of the needs of our bodies, such as our need to eat or sleep. We will learn more about all of this later.

**Step 5:** Demonstrate the relationship between thinking and choosing with a simple exercise.

Hand each student a copy of the **Sudoku Puzzle** worksheet, and work together as a class to fill in the blanks with the correct numbers.

**Ask:**

- How did we use our power to think with this activity?
- How did we use our power to choose with this activity?

**Step 6:** Summarize: Today we have begun to answer the question, “What can I do?” We have seen that, as persons with dignity, we also have the unique powers to think and choose—and these are the powers that drive our entire life! We will continue to learn more about these powers moving forward.

**FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK**

Each student should receive a *Friends in Mission* card, and complete it by filling in one respectful action that they can practice at school. They should then ask for 2-3 friends to sign in a commitment to keep them accountable for completing this action.

**SUPPLEMENTS**

None.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### SUDOKU PUZZLE

	3				6			7
	4		2		5	3	9	6
	5	6	7			2		
9	2	5			8	7		1
	6						2	
4		7	9			6	3	5
		2			9	4	6	
6	9	8	3		7		5	
5			8				7	

Grade 8, L1B - The Mission



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### SUDOKU PUZZLE

	3				6			7
	4		2		5	3	9	6
	5	6	7			2		
9	2	5			8	7		1
	6						2	
4		7	9			6	3	5
		2			9	4	6	
6	9	8	3		7		5	
5			8				7	

Grade 8, L1B - The Mission



## SUDOKU ANSWER KEY

2	3	9	4	1	6	5	8	7
7	4	1	2	8	5	3	9	6
8	5	6	7	9	3	2	1	4
9	2	5	6	3	8	7	4	1
1	6	3	5	7	4	8	2	9
4	8	7	9	2	1	6	3	5
3	7	2	1	5	9	4	6	8
6	9	8	3	4	7	1	5	2
5	1	4	8	6	2	9	7	3

FOR REVIEW



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## FRIENDS IN MISSION

Identify one action that shows respect for others. Explain how you will take it at school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
your signature of commitment

signatures of your friends in mission:



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## FRIENDS IN MISSION

Identify one action that shows respect for others. Explain how you will take it at school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
your signature of commitment

signatures of your friends in mission:



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## FRIENDS IN MISSION

Identify one action that shows respect for others. Explain how you will take it at school.

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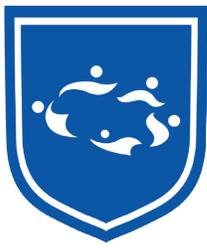
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## FRIENDS IN MISSION

Identify one action that shows respect for others. Explain how you will take it at school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
your signature of commitment

signatures of your friends in mission:



## PURPOSE

To help students understand their gift of self as the most excellent way of fulfilling their mission.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Respect their own dignity.
2. Give of their self to another in a way that respects theirs and others' dignity.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- **Review Quiz** worksheet (see Materials)
- paper lunch bags
- **My Own Dignity** worksheet (see Materials)
- **To Share** cards (see Materials)
- **Gift** postcard (see Materials)

## VOCABULARY

- **gift**: something given by choice without wanting anything in return

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Hand each student a **Review Quiz** worksheet and ask them to classify the powers according to the correct categories of living being.

- eat (plants, animals, humans)
- grow (plants, animals, humans)
- reproduce (plants, animals, humans)
- move from place to place (animals, humans)
- use the senses (animals, humans)
- feel emotions (animals, humans)
- think (humans)
- choose (humans)

**Step 2:** Introduce the concept of self-gift. Explain: One of the key things that we must learn as humans is how to relate with others, especially in a way that respects our own dignity, and the

dignity of those with whom we are in relationship. There is a very special way that we go about being in these relationships.

Tell the story of Sophie Scholl and the White Rose.

Sophie Scholl was born in Forchtenberg am Kocher, Germany, in 1921, and she grew up during the rise of Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany. Adolf Hitler implemented a policy within Germany that persecuted against particular types of people, including the disabled and those who were Jewish. As a child, Sophie was a member of Hitler Youth, but soon she realized the evil of the organization and of Hitler himself. Sophie's family—her brother and father—began to actively oppose the Nazi regime and actions in 1942, when the mass deportation of the Jews began.

Sophie's father was a strong man dedicated to living a moral and noble life, and he told his children, "What I want for you is to live in uprightness and freedom of spirit, no matter how difficult that proves to be." In accordance with her father's will and instructions, Sophie joined The White Rose, a secret student news organization that spoke out against the actions of the Nazis. The White Rose mailed pamphlets, letters, and leaflets to scholars, medics, and other members of the population, informing them of the immoral and depraved actions of Hitler and the Nazis. Sophie, and other members of The White Rose, including her brother, knew that they were putting their own lives at risk, since Hitler and his party saw any person or group that opposed them as a threat. Despite the danger they faced, the writers and distributors of The White Rose persevered and continued to spread the truth. They devoted their lives for justice and for others, but eventually, Sophie and her brother were caught and put to death in 1943. They will be remembered for their courage and sacrifice. Sophie, only 22 years old at the time, made the ultimate gift of self.

Ask the students to reflect on Sophie's actions and sacrifices in giving herself to others. Then ask the students to write a journal entry reflecting the ways they have experienced authentic friendship with someone. Students are free to keep their entries private.

**Step 3:** Teach the process of self-gift.

Hand each student a paper bag on which they should write their name, and then hand each student a collection of small pieces of paper. Give students seven minutes to speed rotate, from paper bag to bag, and write out one thing they like about the person whose bag they are in front of.

Each student should take back their own bag, and using other students' reflections about them, complete the *My Own Dignity* worksheet. They should include the photo/drawing from the last lesson; completed worksheets can become a classroom collage.

Ask: What is a gift? Take some answers, then write on the board:

**gift:** something given by choice without wanting anything in return

Then ask: How did others give to you in this activity?

Explain: We receive an understanding of our own dignity from the outside in, just like in this activity, when others gave of themselves to show us our own dignity. When people in our life don't tell us about our dignity, we may not realize that we have it! We are responsible for helping each other know our own dignity.

Write on the board:

1. see another person and his/her dignity
2. respect the person's dignity
3. give of yourself

Explain: The steps that I have listed on the board are necessary for giving of yourself, which is the ultimate form of showing respect for another person. You first have to respect another person's human dignity, something that you share with them. We show respect for dignity with our eyes, our posture, and the tone of our voice. Once you've shown respect, you can give yourself by sharing something about yourself, or by giving of your time and effort—and recognizing the dignity and worth of the person whom you are with! This is one powerful way of using our powers to think and choose.

Give each student one *To Share* cards, and ask them to gather in pairs (one with an odd-numbered and one with an even-numbered card). Students should fill out their postcard in conversation with their partner.

Gather for a discussion. Ask:

- What does it mean to share yourself?
- What did you experience when you shared yourself with your partners?
- What did you learn through this activity?

**Step 4:** Summarize: This week, we looked at what should happen if we are to show respect for our own dignity and for the dignity of others, as well as how to give ourselves away to others. Knowing how to do this will help us build healthy relationships in the future, and helps to lay the ground for growing in human excellence, which helps us respect ourselves and others around us. Giving ourselves away is one additional unique human ability, that helps make us who we are!

## FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Ask students to think of a person—at school, in their family, etc.—to whom they can give of themselves. Give each student a **Gift** postcard, and ask them to complete it, then give it away or mail it.

## SUPPLEMENTS

**Supplement 1:** Call for student volunteers to role play. Ask them to act out self-gift under each of these circumstances.

- two friends after a fight
- a new student and the teacher on the first day of class
- the doctor treating a patient
- a father when his daughter falls in the park

**Ask:**

- How was self-gift portrayed in each of these situations?
- What would you have done differently?
- What are some universal signs of respect for another human person?



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## REVIEW QUIZ

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	plants	animals	humans
	x	x	x
	x	x	x
	x	x	x
		x	x
		x	x
		x	x
			x
			x



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## REVIEW QUIZ

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	plants	animals	humans
	x	x	x
	x	x	x
	x	x	x
		x	x
		x	x
		x	x
			x
			x



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## TO SHARE (1)

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The Person I Encountered: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer the questions below.

**1. What are three things this person and I have in common?**

---

---

---

**2. Why do you like being in this class?**

---

---

**3. What is something that makes you laugh, and why?**

---

---

---

**4. If you could do one thing to make this world a better place, what would you do, and why?**

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## TO SHARE (2)

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The Person I Encountered: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer the questions below.

**1. What are three things this person and I have in common?**

---

---

---

**2. Why do you like being in this class?**

---

---

**3. What is one thing of which you are afraid, and why?**

---

---

---

**4. Who is someone that inspires you, and why?**

---

---

---

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My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## MY OWN DIGNITY

**Directions:** Paste a photograph, or draw a portrait, of yourself in the box below, then answer the questions below.

**1. Explain who you are in three sentences.**

---

---

---

---

**2. Pick three qualities that others see in/about you?\***

---

---

---

\*These qualities can come from the paper bag activity (or an alternative).



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My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## MY OWN DIGNITY

**Directions:** Paste a photograph, or draw a portrait, of yourself in the box below, then answer the questions below.

**1. Explain who you are in three sentences.**

---

---

---

---

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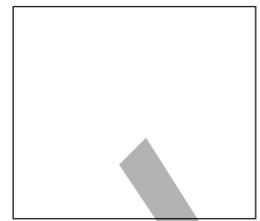
\*These qualities can come from the paper bag activity (or an alternative).

**From:**

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**To:**



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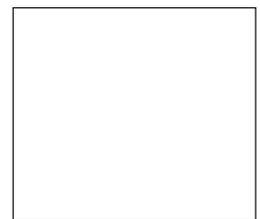
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**From:**

---

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**To:**



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Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ,

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I wanted to write you a note, to let you know how much I appreciate you!

**1. If I had to describe you in three words, they would be:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. You inspire me because:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. I am grateful to you because:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**4. One of my favorite memories with you is:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ,

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I wanted to write you a note, to let you know how much I appreciate you!

**1. If I had to describe you in three words, they would be:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. You inspire me because:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. I am grateful to you because:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**4. One of my favorite memories with you is:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_



## PURPOSE

To distinguish human persons from the remainder of living beings with their power to think.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Recognize the power to think about their lives and choices as the key to human excellence.
2. Apply this power to setting concrete goals for their life.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- **Power Structures** handout (see Materials)
- **Identity** worksheet (see Materials)

## VOCABULARY

No new vocabulary.

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Write the following definition on the board, and then ask students to write a 2-3 sentence personal life mission statement in their notebooks.

- **mission:** the pursuit of a desired outcome

**Step 2:** Introduce the power to think.

Name a few excellent historical figures, and ask students to identify two excellent actions each historical figure may have taken. [i.e., Martin Luther King, Jr.; Joan of Arc; Mohandas “Mahatma” Gandhi; Anne Frank]

Then brainstorm as a class a list of things that human persons can *be* that animals or plants can’t be. Ask each student to give a brief explanation of what is distinctly human about their answer. [i.e., teacher, doctor, researcher, football player, politician, leader]

Then brainstorm as a class a list of things that human persons can *do* that animals or plants can’t do. [i.e., write, read, compose, drive, photograph, pray]

Finally, brainstorm a list of excellent people from the students' lives who have demonstrated the power to think in excellent ways. Ask each student to give a brief explanation of what is distinctly excellent about their answer.

Give each student a *Power Structures* handout.

Explain: The reason that human persons are able to become these different kinds of people and create these things which we have listed has to do with the unique human power to think and to know—to know who we want to become and what we want to do. All the listed items require this power, which neither animals nor plants have.

The power to think helps us to know many things, including values, such as human dignity, and abstract ideas, such as love, justice, and equality.

**Step 3:** Place students on the path of personal mission.

Take one of the answers the students gave for who the human person can be, and ask them to compile a 5-step process of actions that a person needs to take in order to become this person.

[i.e., teacher:

1. Graduate high school.
2. Go to college.
3. Take classes in education.
4. Practice teaching as a student teacher.
5. Apply for a job at different schools.]

Then ask each student to complete a copy of the *Identity* worksheet, identifying their talents, values, goals, and more.

Once they complete the worksheet, students should take their answers to questions 11 and 14, and for each answer, write out in their notes five milestones to which they will need to complete before they are able to attain their goal.

Ask for student volunteers to share their goal and their five milestones.

Ask:

- What did you think about when deciding which goal you wanted to set?

Explain: With our power to think, we understand the dignity of every person, including our own, and can see that this dignity is best expressed in an excellent life—a life in which we respect our own dignity and the dignity of others with every choice taken.

We can think about who we want to become, and why we want to become that; we can know what we value; and we can think about the particular actions that we need to take in order to get there, growing in excellence along the way. We can also use this power to reflect on our past choices.

**Step 4:** Summarize: Today, we looked at the human person’s power to think, and the way that it distinguishes the human person from all other living beings. With this power, we can understand and respect our own dignity and that of others, and can think about the ways in which the decisions we make in our lives can put us on this path toward excellence. As human persons, we can thus be or do a whole range of excellent things for ourselves, for others, and for the world!

#### **FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK**

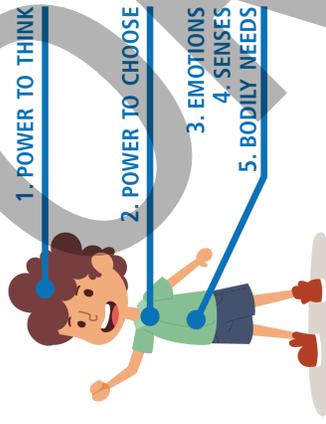
Ask students to research their ideal career, then explain their research, in a 7-10 sentence essay. The essay should indicate the steps that the student needs to take in order to achieve this career.

#### **SUPPLEMENTS**

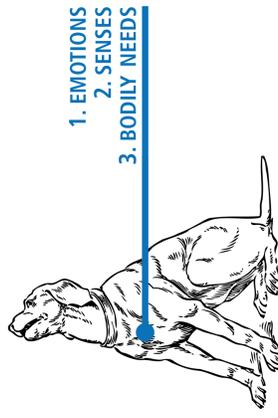
None.

## POWER STRUCTURES

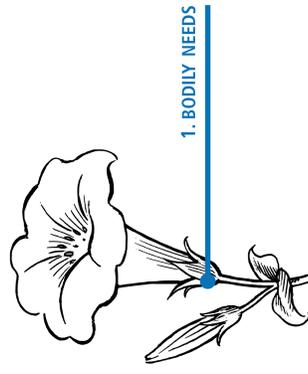
the human person



animals

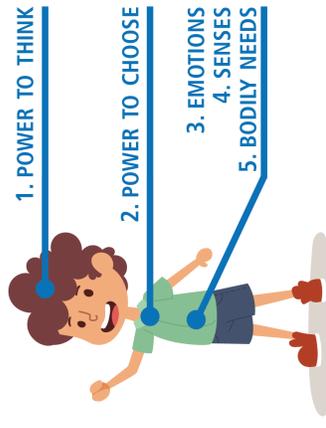


plants

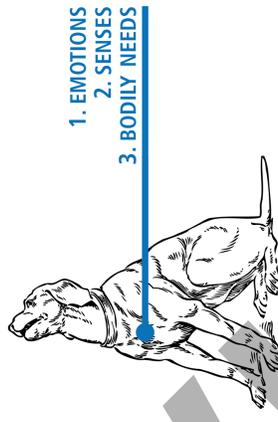


## POWER STRUCTURES

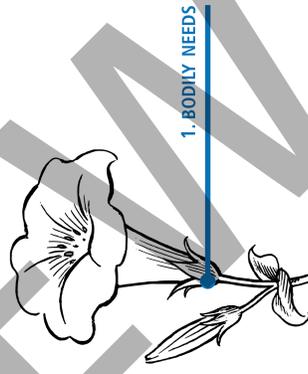
the human person



animals



plants





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## IDENTITY

**Directions:** List an answer for each prompt below.



1. one person I love:

---

---

2. my closest friendship:

---

---

3. one activity I enjoy:

---

---

4. language(s) I speak:

---

---

5. one gift I offer others:

---

---

6. one value I will hold until I die:

---

---

7. one good habit I learned from my parents/guardians:

---

---

8. something I consider beautiful:

---

---

9. the most difficult choice I've made:

---

---

10. who I think I am:

---

---

11. who I want to be:

---

---

12. two things I have to do to become that person:

---

---

13. if I could write a book, it would be about:

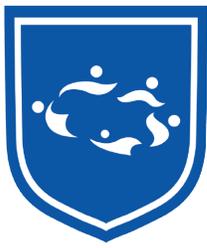
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---

14. if I could do one thing to change the world, I would:

---

---



## PURPOSE

To distinguish human persons from the remainder of living beings with their power to choose.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Recognize that intentional actions have a deliberately creative power.
2. Identify intentional actions they can take to affirm their and others' human dignity.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- *Pay It Forward* worksheet (see Materials)
- *News of Paying It Forward* worksheet (see Materials)
- Supplementary materials:
  - *Inspirational Video – Pay It Forward* video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJeWFoKZ63U>)

## VOCABULARY

- **intentional action**: an action knowingly chosen
- **non-intentional action**: an action taken without choice

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lessons. Ask:

- What are some things we can do, with our power to think, that animals or plants can't do?

Then, ask for student volunteers to share their answers to questions 11 and 14 from the *Identity* worksheet of the last lesson—how do they use their power to think to grow in excellence?

**Step 2:** Introduce the power to choose with a class brainstorm.

List the following activities on the board in two columns:

screaming at a sudden movement  
blinking as a camera flash goes off  
offending a friend with a silly joke

biting your tongue instead of criticizing  
offering to help a friend with a project  
planning a surprise party for your mom

With the first discussion question as a start, guide students to identify a difference between the first three—non-chosen—and the last three—chosen—actions.

**Discussion questions:**

- What is the difference between these two columns?
- Which of the actions in the second column are uniquely human ones?

Explain: There are certain actions and certain consequences that we do not freely choose to make happen. These actions we call non-intentional actions. Then, there are those actions we do choose—actions that begin within us, with some kind of understanding of the consequences to them that may follow. We call those intentional actions.

In their notes, students should make two identical columns, and identify three non-intentional and three intentional actions from the past 24 hours. The teacher can model an answer on the board.

spilling coffee on my blouse	selecting my work outfit
yawning when getting out of bed	driving to work
tripping over the cat	forgiving my son for breaking a vase

**Step 4:** Teach the creative power of action: The most important thing to remember about our power to choose is that, when used with intention and purpose, it has amazing power to “create” in the world in accord with what we envision as individual persons.

We can choose to make changes to our bodies, to our traits, to the way we spend our time; we can choose the way we relate to other people, and the way that we help or don’t help them; the way that we interact with the world around us. Each action that we take generates an effect in the world, and every action affects us because it contributes to developing our pattern of actions.

Tell the story of Trevor McKinney, a character from a novel titled *Pay It Forward* by Catherine Ryan Hyde, to illustrate the creative power of human actions.

Trevor McKinney is a seventh grader in Las Vegas. His social studies teacher assigns the class an assignment: to put into action a plan that will make the world a better place.

Trevor comes up with a plan he calls “Pay It Forward”: whoever receives a favor has to do a favor for three other people rather than pay back the original one. These new favors have to be major favors that the person who receives them cannot have accomplished alone. Trevor puts this plan into action by using his power to think to identify needs among the people around him. First Trevor lets Jerry, a homeless man, live in his garage.

Jerry later does car repairs for Trevor’s mother, then talks to a suicidal woman who is about to jump off the bridge.

The pay-it-forward project grows into a network of people doing good things for others, until, after a series of interactions among many, many people, a man even gives away his car to a journalist in Los Angeles who is in a car accident. In the end, Trevor defends his friend Adam against bullies who have ganged up on him, and gets inadvertently stabbed in the abdomen by one of them. At the vigil held for Trevor’s death, hundreds of recipients of pay-it-forward favors show up to pay their respects: an exponentially great effect, that started with one seventh grader!

**Discussion questions:**

- What specific actions do characters take to pay it forward?
- How do these actions show respect for the people for whom they are committed?
- How does this story demonstrate the power excellent human choices?

If time permits, show the [Inspirational Video – Pay It Forward](#) video to illustrate the story.

**Step 5:** Place students on the path of personal mission.

Ask students to complete the [Pay It Forward](#) worksheet. Students should then gather in pairs or groups of three, and share with each other their ideas for paying-it-forward, and their plans for respecting the dignity of others.

**Step 6:** Summarize: In the last lesson, we started to learn about the power to think, which is the first power that is unique to human persons. With our power to think, we know ideas, values, ourselves, and the world around us in great detail. Today we have looked at the second power in human persons that distinguishes us from all other living beings—the power to choose, with which we take actions in the world.

**FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK**

Ask students to put one of their pay-it-forward ideas into action over the next week, and document it, following instructions on the [News of Paying It Forward](#) worksheet.

This documentation may contribute to the class’ final **Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC)** newspaper project (see lesson 6B).

**SUPPLEMENTS**

No supplements.

FOR REVIEW



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

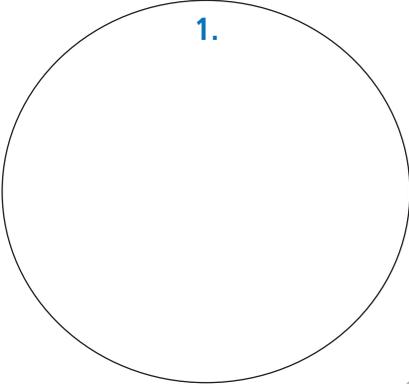
## PAY IT FORWARD

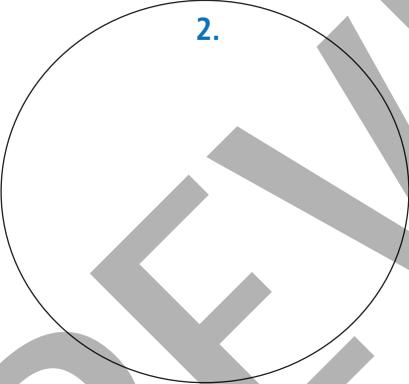
**Directions:** List an answer for each prompt below.

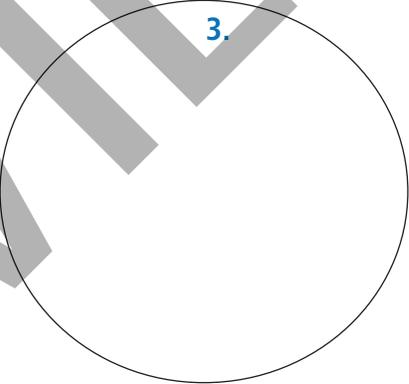
**three moments in my life in which I have felt respected:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**three people to whom I will pay it forward with an act of kindness:**

1. 

2. 

3. 

**a list of acts of kindness I could choose to do:**

**choose one person, and one act of kindness, and create a plan of action to pay it forward:**

1. Describe the last time you saw another person's dignity disrespected:
2. Explain what you should and could have done, to defend their dignity:
3. Identify one way you can practice courage in showing respect:



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## NEWS OF PAYING IT FORWARD

**Directions:** Put your pay it forward idea into action. Document what you did, either in writing with an explanation, or visually, with a photograph or drawing. Then answer the questions below.

**describe a challenge that you experienced in putting your idea into action:**

---

---

**describe the reaction of the recipient of your action:**

---

---

**describe how you felt as you paid it forward:**

---

---

Grade 8, L2B - The Power to Choose



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## NEWS OF PAYING IT FORWARD

**Directions:** Put your pay it forward idea into action. Document what you did, either in writing with an explanation, or visually, with a photograph or drawing. Then answer the questions below.

**describe a challenge that you experienced in putting your idea into action:**

---

---

**describe the reaction of the recipient of your action:**

---

---

**describe how you felt as you paid it forward:**

---

---

Grade 8, L2B - The Power to Choose



## PURPOSE

To demonstrate that the human person is always free to choose excellence.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Understand that intentional choices can be either excellent or non-excellent.
2. Direct their power to choose toward excellence.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- *The Ladder to Excellence* worksheet (see Materials)

## VOCABULARY

- **freedom for excellence**: the capacity to always desire human excellence and act to attain it
- **integrity**: the state of being whole or undivided

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lessons. Ask students to report on the success of their pay it forward actions. Depending on available time, share in small groups or as a class.

**Step 2:** Introduce freedom for excellence with a student exercise.

Write the following two statements on the board. Ask students to write out how the statements could make someone feel, and to brainstorm a list of possible consequences for the person who hears them. [i.e., the statement “You’re so ugly” could make someone cry.]

“You’re so kind.”

“You’re so ugly.”

Gather for a classroom discussion. Ask:

- How does the first statement make you feel? Why?
- How does the second statement make you feel? Why?
- Is one more excellent than another? Why or why not?

**Step 3:** Teach freedom for excellence.

Explain: There is a very important element to our power to choose. In one way, we can use our power to choose to do whatever we want—such as say mean things that can damage a person; or to do something illegal and potentially dangerous, such as run a red light at a traffic stop. This is not, however, what our power to choose is meant for. The mission of the person is to respect human dignity and to grow in excellence! This means that, with every choice we make, we should choose between all the options we have—choose that which best respects human dignity and helps us grow in excellence! This is what it means to be **free for excellence**.

Write on the board:  
cheating

**Ask:**

- How does cheating disrespect a student's human dignity?
- How does it disrespect a teacher's human dignity?
- What habit can a student develop instead? [studying]

Have students write the following three non-excellent actions in their notes, and identify their more excellent alternatives.

teasing [i.e., → complimenting]

gossiping [i.e., → remaining silent]

procrastinating [i.e., → putting in constant effort]

Ask for volunteer answers with the class.

**Step 4:** Help students prepare to grow in excellence.

Write on the board:

- **integrity:** the state of being whole or undivided

Explain: What a life of integrity requires is that we make all of our choices based on what we value, and based on what our powers allow for us—that everything that we say, do, and choose correctly reflects who we are! We don't only exercise when our friends do, or don't only study when our parents are around. We should make these choices out of a personal desire to grow in excellence.

Group students in groups of 3-4, and to each group, hand a *The Ladder to Excellence* worksheet. Groups should work together to list a series of steps that a person can take to make excellent choices to grow more excellent in the practice of the listed habits.

Once completed, work together to finalize a class step-by-step for the ladder of excellence that students should copy into their notes.

Ask:

- Do you think growing in excellence is easy or hard? Why?
- Why should we want to grow in excellence?

**Step 5:** Summarize: In the last lesson, we looked at the difference between two types of actions in the human person—intentional actions, those actions that a person chooses, or non-intentional actions, those actions that a person doesn't choose. Today we have seen that there are two types of actions that a person can choose—excellent or non-excellent actions. While we are able to choose either, our mission and the human dignity we all possess should compel us to always choose the most excellent thing, in respect of that dignity and in the pursuit of human excellence!

## FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Ask students to put into action the first step for climbing the ladder of excellence.

## SUPPLEMENTS

**Supplement 1:** Teach the importance of always wanting the excellent thing.

Write the following quote on the board:

"The one thing you can't take from me is the way I choose to respond to what you do to me. The last of one's freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given circumstance."

—Viktor Frankl

**Viktor Frankl** lived from 1905-1997. He was a Jewish psychiatrist sent to concentration camps during World War II, which he survived. Later, he wrote, among other things, *A Man's Search for Meaning*, a book in which he reflected upon his experience in the camps. He observed that, even under the most dehumanizing circumstances, man is always free and able to choose the good.

### Discussion questions:

- What is the meaning of Viktor Frankl's quote?

- Why is it important to *always want* the excellent thing? Will we act in an excellent way if we don't want to?
- What happens when we want the excellent thing but can't act to get it?

Explain: The powers to think and choose are found entirely within us—and can never be taken from us, just like our human dignity can never be given to or taken from us. Something *outside* of us may somehow restrain the use of powers in certain ways—i.e., a person in a war camp can't go to work or school, a person with certain physical disabilities can't hug his children.

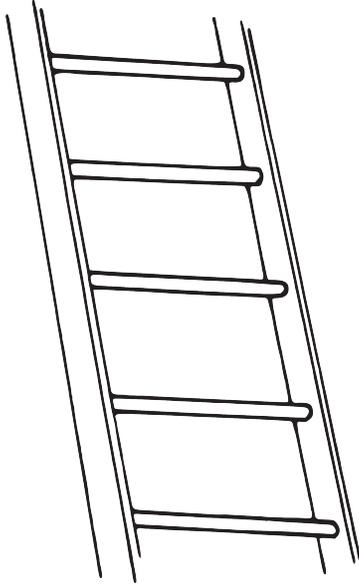
What is never taken away is our ability to desire the excellent thing: We can *want to choose* the excellent thing, can want to respect human dignity. Even when our external circumstances are restraining, our disposition in these moments can always be toward the excellent thing. In this one way we are always free. We are, thus, *always* free to be excellent.



## THE LADDER TO EXCELLENCE

**Directions:** For both of the listed habits, create three in-between steps to grow in excellence up the ladder.

### EXCELLENCE



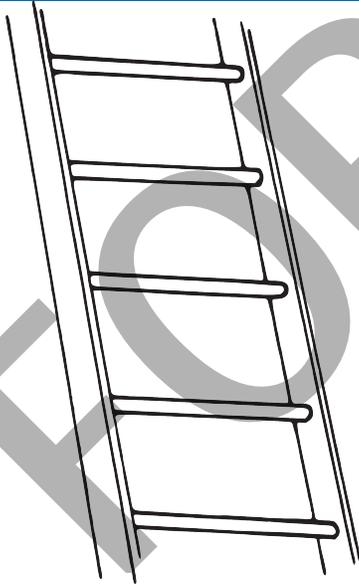
#### HABIT #1

I make every decision based on what I know to be respectful and excellent.

3. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
1. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

I make most of my decisions out of an awareness of what others will think or say about me.

### EXCELLENCE



#### HABIT #2

I make it my priority to do all my homework to the best of my abilities.

3. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
1. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

I don't have any reason to care about school, so I put almost no effort into my homework and studying.



## PURPOSE

To build on the hierarchy of living beings by distinguishing animals and humans from plants with their power to use the internal senses.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Name and explain four **internal senses** that distinguish humans and animals from plants.
2. Apply their internal senses to a growth in human excellence.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- blindfold
- **Senses in Action** worksheet (see Materials)

## VOCABULARY

- **move from place to place on one's own**: the power for motion from within the body
- **use the senses**: the power to know with the body concrete details about the world
- **internal senses**: the ways by which the body stores, develops, and adds to information gathered by its external senses (memory, imagination, instinct, and the common sense)
- **memory**: the ability to remember knowledge gained through the senses
- **imagination**: the ability to picture things in the mind that are not immediately before us
- **instinct**: the ability to recognize the appropriate response to a particular situation
- **the common sense**: the ability to organize the knowledge gained by the senses

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lessons. Write the following statement on the board, then ask students to explain in their notes what they would do if they were faced with this situation.

A baby is born blind, and the doctor suggests that she doesn't deserve the best medical care because she will suffer and be an unhelpful addition to society.

### Ask:

- Is the doctor's opinion respectful or disrespectful of human dignity? Why?
- What should happen to the baby?

Underline that the dignity of the person is inherent, which means that every single person always has it just because they are human. Our value doesn't depend on our abilities—though this baby will grow into having incredible abilities to contribute to society, as she will also have the power to think, to know, to be creative, and more.

**Step 2:** Introduce two of the three powers shared by animals and humans. Explain: Humans and animals share three powers that plants do not. Today we will talk about two of those powers.

Write on the board:

- **move from place to place on one's own:** the power for motion from within the body
- **use the senses:** the power to know with the body concrete details about the world

Explain: The way that humans use these powers is different from the way that animals use them. We express our knowledge as well as the things that we value when using these two powers, using our special power to think. Because animals don't have this power, they can't do this.

Ask students to gather in groups of 3-4. Give groups 3 minutes to brainstorm a list of all possible experiences for each of the 5 external senses that they associate with the season of winter [or another topic of the teacher's choosing], then rotate quickly per group, reading answers aloud to see which group came up with the longest list of original answers. Groups should claim repeat answers aloud, and all groups who wrote them cross them out; they do not count for points.

**Step 3:** Have students engage four internal senses.

Play "Blind Man's Bluff" with students. For safety, move any obstacles that someone could trip over. Choose one student to wear the blindfold. The student has to wander the room until they find another student. Once they touch another student, they are to guess who they think they have found. If they are correct, the child they found gets to be blindfolded next. If they are incorrect, they get to be blindfolded one more time. If they are wrong a second time, they get to choose who is to be blindfolded next.

Once students complete the game, list the four internal senses on the board, explain the sense's definition, and then have students explain how they used each internal sense in "Blind's Man Bluff" by filling out the **Senses in Action** worksheet.

- **memory:** the ability to remember knowledge gained through the senses

Our memory stores our knowledge. For example, we remember our last family reunion, and who from our family was missing. Or we remember what we ate for lunch yesterday. All of the details about our lunch – the color of our apple, the crunch of the carrots, the texture of the peanut butter – our external senses picked up first and our memory now brings back to our minds.

[memory should have served helpful in recalling the placement of obstacles in the classroom, etc.]

- **imagination:** the ability to picture things in the mind that are not immediately before us

Our imagination allows us to experience again something even when it is no longer present. We can imagine things that we have never experienced. When we learn about dinosaurs, we imagine the different dinosaurs and the way they lived based on descriptions we've read and images we've seen.

[imagination should have served helpful in figuring out how to operate within the classroom, etc.]

- **instinct:** the ability to recognize the appropriate response to a particular situation

Our instincts help control what we do in particular situations. For example, when we sense we are in danger, like when a car is driving toward us at a very quick speed, we automatically turn toward safety.

[instinct should have served helpful in avoiding obstacles in the classroom, etc.]

- **the common sense:** the ability to organize the knowledge gained by the senses

Finally, the common sense helps to organize all of this different knowledge. For example, we can distinguish between knowing that the orange fruit is both orange in color and tastes the way that oranges taste. Our common sense puts the color and the taste details together into the object they represent: the same one orange fruit.

Note: The common sense is not equivalent to "common sense" as used colloquially today, but rather the sense that perceives the actual sensations of the external senses, distinguishes between them, and combines them, as in the example given below.

The students may have a difficult time grasping what the common sense actually does. At this point, it is mainly important that they identify it as an internal sense, and perhaps describe it as the ability to organize our sense knowledge.

[the common sense should have served helpful in identifying different people, etc.]

Gather for a classroom discussion. Ask:

- How did we use each of these senses?
- How could we have used them better?

Students should then complete the second part of the *Senses in Action* worksheet, and list both excellent and non-excellent ways they've used these internal senses over the past week.

The teacher can model answers for the excellent versus non-excellent use of internal senses with a chart on the board.

	<b>excellent use</b>	<b>non-excellent use</b>
<b>memory</b>	remembering to vacuum before daughter has a sleepover	replaying an unkind comment a student made
<b>imagination</b>	imagining the final look of a dish made for dinner	imagining what to yell at my husband for forgetting to buy flour
<b>instinct</b>	moving hand away from a boiling pot of water	not avoiding the corner of a table, and hitting my knee on it
<b>the common sense</b>	thinking about what kids are in the living room playing video games	N/A

If time permits, play the game again.

**Step 4:** Teach the role of the internal senses in growing toward human excellence.

Explain: Our internal senses help guide our relationship with the world. Instinct, for example, keeps us from danger if danger is occurring. We can develop and use all of these internal senses on our path toward growing in excellence.

In their notes, students should create a 4-step plan to either (a) address a non-excellent way of using their internal senses, per their worksheet, or (b) better apply their internal senses to studying and completing their homework.

**Step 5:** Summarize: Today we learned about two of the powers that distinguish humans and animals from plants, the ability to move on their own and the ability to use the internal senses. Our senses help us to relate to the world in which we exist, while our power to think helps us to understand the world, and our power to choose helps us to act within it.

## FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Ask students to think of a person they know whose human dignity is disrespected because something about them is different than everyone else. They should write a 7-10 sentence essay that explains who this person is and all the ways they contribute to their community.

This documentation may contribute to the class' final **Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC)** newspaper project (see lesson 7A).

## SUPPLEMENTS

No supplements.

FOR REVIEW



## SENSES IN ACTION

**Directions:** Explain the way in which you used each of the four internal senses in the class game.

<b>memory</b>	
<b>imagination</b>	
<b>instinct</b>	
<b>the common sense</b>	

If you could play the game again, what would you differently?

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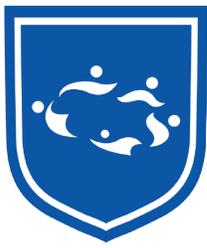
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**Directions:** For each internal sense, list two ways you used it in an excellent way, and two ways that you used it in a non-excellent way (or didn't use it when you should/could have)

	excellent use	non-excellent use
<b>memory</b>		
<b>imagination</b>		
<b>instinct</b>		
<b>the common sense</b>		



## PURPOSE

To build on the hierarchy of living beings by distinguishing animals and humans from plants with their power to feel emotions.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Understand **emotions** as automatic, bodily, temporary, and linked reactions to the world around us.
2. Explain ways of expressing emotions in a way that respects human dignity.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- **Emotions Charades** flashcards (see Materials)
- **Excellent Expressions** flashcards (see Materials)
- **Emotions Chart** worksheet (see Materials)
- Supplementary materials:
  - **Sorrow, The National** audio
  - **Star-Spangled Banner** audio

## VOCABULARY

- **emotions:** the body's automatic responses to the world
- **bodily:** emotions are physical responses; they must be fully felt to keep our bodies healthy
- **automatic:** we don't control the feeling of emotions in our bodies, so they are neither good or bad; we do, however, control the way we express them
- **temporary:** emotions last a limited amount of time
- **linked:** emotions are always connected to things experienced, so they are never random

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lessons. Explain: In the last lesson, we learned about our internal senses, with which we learn about and relate to the world.

Write the following statement on the board, then ask students to explain in their notes how they can use their powers to think and choose to resolve the situation in an excellent way.

A friend gossiped about me, and my memory keeps replaying how humiliated I felt.

**Step 2:** Introduce emotions with a class exercise. Call up student volunteers one-by-one, and ask them to portray an emotion listed on the *Emotions Charades* flashcards. If the class doesn't guess the emotion within a minute, rotate students.

With each correct guess, ask: How did you make the guess you made?

**Step 3:** Teach emotions.

Explain: We know that our external senses pick up data about the world, and learned that our internal senses help us process and use that data in different ways. In our bodies, as we gather and process sense information, we also *feel* reactions to the things we learn. These reactions are called our emotions. They guide our existence in the world, and for humans especially, they affect the choices we make and how we understand our lives.

Write on the board:

- **bodily:** emotions are physical responses; they must be fully felt to keep our bodies healthy
- **automatic:** we don't control the feeling of emotions in our bodies, so they are neither good or bad; we do, however, control the way we express them
- **temporary:** emotions last a limited amount of time
- **linked:** emotions are always connected to things experienced, so they are never random

The different emotions we feel in our bodies help us get a sense of whether something is good or bad for us. Write the emotion charts on the board:

emotions indicating a thing good for us	emotions indicating a thing bad for us
love	hate
joy	sadness

We feel emotions like love when we recognize a person is good for us, and we feel joy when we are with that person—and we feel hate and sadness in the opposite situation, or when we can't have something good for us, such as time with friends on a night we have a lot of homework.

Choose one emotion from the chart above, and run through the four qualities of emotions for the emotion:

- **bodily:** Where in your body did you feel the emotion?
- **linked:** What triggered the emotion?
- **temporary:** How long did the emotion last?

Emotions also help us to react in specific situations. Use the chart:

emotions indicating a situation that involves something good for us	emotions indicating a situation that involves something bad for us
- hope despair	anger - fear

We feel emotions like hope or despair when we recognize something good for us that we haven't yet received or reached—and hope will be the emotion that helps us reach for that thing, while despair will not believe it to be possible, finding it overwhelming. And we'll feel anger when something bad for us is involved—when we are in the presence of an injustice or something evil. We will feel fear in those situations that we find threatening and seemingly unconquerable.

Choose one emotion from the chart above, and run through three qualities of the emotions:

- bodily: Where in your body did you feel the emotion?
- linked: What triggered the emotion?
- temporary: How long did the emotion last?

**Step 5:** Tie-in the human power to think.

Explain: As we have learned, the human power to think means that the human person has the ability to know his or her own dignity, and the power to choose means we make excellent choices to show respect for that dignity. All of this applies also to our emotions. With these powers, we can think about how to and then choose to express the emotions we feel in excellent ways.

Break students into groups of four, and hand each group an *Excellent Expressions* flashcard. Student should come up with a 4-step plan for reacting and responding in an excellent way to both situations listed.

Conclude with a class discussion. Ask:

- What do we have to consider when we decide how to act in this situation?
- What are some excellent choices that we can demonstrate?

**Step 6:** Summarize: In the past lessons, we have begun to learn about the human person—who he is, and what he can do. We have seen that the human powers to think and choose help us know and respect human dignity, this being an important part of the human mission! Now we have also seen excellent ways of using our internal senses, and excellent ways of demonstrating emotions.

## FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Give students the *Emotions Chart* worksheet. Ask them to identify the positive and negative emotion they experience the most, to track when they experience it, and to reflect on whether they express it in a way that respects their own and others' human dignity.

## SUPPLEMENTS

**Supplement 1:** Prompt in the students an emotional reaction, then discuss with the following questions. Play the *Sorrow, The National* audio or the *Star-Spangled Banner* audio, asking students to close their eyes and listen.

Note: Teacher should customize music selection as necessary.

### Discussion questions:

- What do you think of the music? What emotion did you feel? How did your body react?
- What experience of value does song express? What emotions?
- Will the emotions that you're experiencing last forever?

Summarize: With the *Sorrow, The National* audio, we may have felt sadness. This sadness, like every other emotion felt, indicates something about the world. Here, the National singers are expressing their sorrow about lost love. They took their emotion and poured it out into a piece of art in order to express it. With the *Star-Spangled Banner* audio, we may have felt love for our country and our joy for being part of it. The writes of the song also took their emotion and love for their nation and poured it out into a piece of art in order to express it.

charades:

LOVE

charades:

JOY

charades:

HATE

charades:

SADNESS

charades:

ANGER

charades:

DESPAIR

charades:

HOPE

charades:

FEAR



## JOY

**You win the science project competition, while your friend doesn't even get a prize, though she worked for way more time on her project.**

Create a plan to channel the joy you feel toward your victory into actions that affirm and respect your friend's human dignity.

## ANGER

**One of your friends shared one of your secrets with a girl you don't know in one of your classes.**

Create a plan to share with you friend the anger you feel, in a way that respects your dignity and hers.

Grade 8, L3B - Emotions



## JOY

**You win the science project competition, while your friend doesn't even get a prize, though she worked for way more time on her project.**

Create a plan to channel the joy you feel toward your victory into actions that affirm and respect your friend's human dignity.

## ANGER

**One of your friends shared one of your secrets with a girl you don't know in one of your classes.**

Create a plan to share with you friend the sadness and disappointment you feel, in a way that respects your dignity and hers.

Grade 8, L3B - Emotions

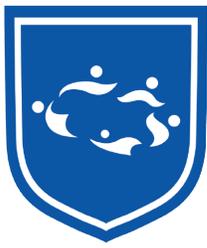


## EMOTIONS CHART

**Directions:** Circle below one "positive" and one "negative" emotion which you experience most often. Then, track the next three instances in which you feel either emotion. For each instance, explain what triggered the emotion, what you thought about, and whether you expressed your emotion in a way that respected the dignity of all the persons involved.

love joy hope • hate sadness despair anger fear

	What happened to trigger the emotion?	How did your body feel?	Did you tell anyone about what you felt? Why or why not?
1.	<i>joy: My grandma called me to wish me happy birthday.</i>	<i>I felt a lot of adrenaline, and a lot of peace. And I laughed so hard that my belly hurt!</i>	<i>I told my mom and sister after, and they were happy to hear it. I wanted them to know the joy since they love my grandma too.</i>
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			



## PURPOSE

To conclude the hierarchy of living beings by distinguishing all living beings from non-living things.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Name and explain the three powers that distinguish living beings from non-living things.
2. Choose excellent ways to use these powers, including demonstrating self-control.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- *The Body Plan* worksheet (see Materials)
- *My Habit Tracker* worksheet (see Materials)

## VOCABULARY

- **eat**: the power to take in nourishment
- **grow**: the power to increase in size from within
- **reproduce**: the power to create another being of the same kind
- **habit**: a regular practice or tendency, especially one difficult to give up
- **self-control**: the ability to restrain oneself, particularly one's emotions and desires, or the expression of them in one's behavior

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lessons. Ask students to recall all the powers of living beings that they've learned, and then to attribute them correctly to the living beings which have them.

	plants	animals	humans
<b>eat</b>	X	X	X
<b>grow</b>	X	X	X
<b>reproduce</b>	X	X	X
<b>move from place to place on their own</b>		X	X
<b>use the senses</b>		X	X
<b>feel emotions</b>		X	X

<b>think</b>			X
<b>choose</b>			X

Then, ask students:

- What distinguishes human persons from all other living beings?
- What are the three qualities of human dignity?
- Does a person who commits a wrong still keep his human dignity? Why or why not?

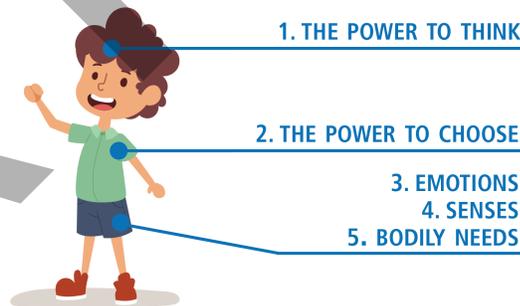
**Step 2:** Teach the three shared powers of living beings. Write on the board:

- **eat:** the power to take in nourishment
- **grow:** the power to increase in size from within
- **reproduce:** the power to create another being of the same kind

Summarize: All plants, animals, and humans have these three basic powers that make possible living and survival: the power to eat, grow, and reproduce. These three powers affect the way these living beings exist. Since plants, animals, and humans have to eat in order to live, for example, their existence is different from the existence of non-living things, such as rocks, which don't have to eat and don't have any of the powers that make life possible.

**Step 3:** Help students recognize the value in these powers.

Draw the following figure on the board:



Explain: The power to think and then the power to choose, based on what we think and know, are the most powerful of all powers in the person! Animals and plants do not have these powers.

Our mission is to order our entire life and everything in us so that we make all of our decisions based on what we know to be most excellent! This will include using our power to think to decide how to best take care of our bodies, just as we make choices to take care of our emotions and senses. The choices we make should become habits.

Write on the board:

- **habit:** a regular practice or tendency, especially one difficult to give up

Explain: What we must do is come up with a plan for taking excellent care of our bodies by forming habits with the regular making of certain excellent choices.

Write and label three columns on the board, and as a class brainstorm actions or habits that students can use, under each column, to care for their bodies in an excellent way.

eating	exercising	sleeping
--------	------------	----------

Note: “Growing” habits can and should fall under any of the three categories.

Then ask each student to complete a *The Body Plan* worksheet by choosing the the necessary habits for taking excellent care of their bodies, and then writing out a step-by-step plan to combine all of them into their life over the course of a week. Students should also identify challenges.

**Step 4:** Help students prepare to overcome their challenges.

Write on the board:

- **self-control:** the ability to restrain oneself, particularly one’s emotions and desires, or the expression of them in one’s behavior

Explain: One important piece to the plan is our ability to make choices—to actually put these steps we have identified into action, or to keep from making choices that will harm our progress.

Ask students to gather into groups of 3, and to brainstorm with each other a plan of action for each students’ biggest challenge to putting his plan into action.

If time permits, take students’ plans for overcoming their challenges with the whole class.

**Step 5:** Summarize: We learned today that the existence of powers separates non-living things from living beings. All living beings, humans included, have the three powers universal to human beings: the powers to eat, grow, and reproduce. In addition to using our powers for survival, we also use them to express the value of eating, growing, reproducing, being members of a family—all of these experiences that make us who we are as human persons.

**FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK**

Ask students to track their success in developing a habit using the *My Habit Tracker* worksheet.

This documentation may contribute to the class' final **Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC)** newspaper project (see lesson 7A). (Students could write an article regarding their success/failure in changing their habits, or the teacher could highlight the best recipes.)

## SUPPLEMENTS

None.

FOR REVIEW



## THE BODY PLAN

**Directions:** List the necessary choices you need to keep your body healthy, and then write how you will practice these choices in the table below.

### BAD HABITS I WANT TO BREAK

eating	exercising	sleeping

### GOOD HABITS I WANT TO MAKE

eating	exercising	sleeping

### DURING THE WEEK, I WILL PRACTICE:

1. this habit: \_\_\_\_\_
2. by making the following choices: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### DURING THE WEEKEND, I WILL PRACTICE:

1. this habit: \_\_\_\_\_
2. by making the following choices: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Identify two challenges that you expect to face to putting your plan for a healthy body into action.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# MY HABIT TRACKER

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Choose a habit you will work to develop. It is estimated that it takes a person approximately 66 days to develop a new habit: for the next two months, check the box if you practice the habit you have chosen.

**the habit I will work to develop:** \_\_\_\_\_

Once you decide on a habit, talk to your parents/guardians, and ask them to come up with two steps they will take to help you accomplish your goal at home.

**two steps my parents/guardians will take to help me:** \_\_\_\_\_

day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
progress											
day	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
progress											
day	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
progress											
day	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44
progress											
day	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
progress											
day	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66
progress											



## PURPOSE

To underline the human power to create.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Recognize that the power to create allows human persons to rise above their body.
2. Set concrete goals for growth in their own creativity.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- ***Creativity in Action*** worksheet (see Materials)

## VOCABULARY

- **art**: expressed imagination
- **culture**: tradition that distinguishes one from group another
- **technology**: applied scientific knowledge
- **creativity**: the ability to generate or recognize ideas and possibilities to solve problems, communicate, or entertain ourselves and others
- **rise above**: to not be limited or constrained by restrictions
- **humility**: the ability to know one's self, recognizing both one's gifts and one's limits, as well as the gifts and limits of others

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lessons. Have students list in their notes one excellent and one non-excellent choice of theirs from the past week, and to break both down, answering the questions:

- Why did I make this choice?
- Is there anything I could have done differently in this situation? Why or why not?

Then ask students to gather in pairs and update each other on their progress with developing a healthy body habit. Students should commit to keep each other accountable for the remainder of the tracker.

**Step 2:** Introduce the human power to create. Write on the board:

- **art:** expressed imagination
- **culture:** tradition that distinguishes one group from another
- **technology:** applied scientific knowledge

Ask students to write the definitions in their notes, and then to write one example of each form of creativity that they can find at home, and one example each that they can find at school.

Model your own answer on the board before they begin. [i.e., art—a copy of Leonardo da Vinci’s “Mona Lisa”; culture—Nigerian tribal wear for special occasions; technology—a toaster]

Explain: We have seen the way the human person is structured, with our unique powers to think, with which we know, and to choose, with which we act. These two powers determine our choices about our senses, our emotions, and our bodies! What we now want to be very clear about is the human power to create—our power of creativity, with which we generate ideas, solve problems, communicate, and entertain ourselves. This power of creativity, in art, culture, and technology, shows in a very powerful way how the person is more than his body—and is this way entirely distinct from animals and plants.

**Step 3:** Prepare students to use their power to create.

Divide groups into 4, and assign a leader per each group. Hand each group a copy of the *Creativity in Action* worksheet, which the leader will fill out.

Explain: You are all teammates in different groups, working on a proposal for a school grant—for money to help bring more artistic, cultural, and technological projects to the school, all to help demonstrate respect for the dignity of students and teachers. Soon you will submit your plans for the grant.

Ask groups to complete the worksheet, having individual students identify the specific creative talent they can contribute to the proposal. The group should then brainstorm projects that demonstrate respect for the dignity of students and teachers, to be implemented the three creative categories.

Model some of the answers for the students. [i.e., a proposed project for culture—an annual food fair, that showcases the food from students’ different backgrounds]

Gather for a classroom discussion. Ask:

- What are some ideas you came up with, for each of these creative categories?
- Was it easier or more difficult to work on a team for this project? Why?

- What sort of challenges did you encounter? Did you overcome them? Why or why not?

**Step 4:** Help students prepare to cooperate with each other.

Call for the gifts each student listed on the worksheets, and write the answers on the board. Try to create natural groupings or categories.

Ask:

- What are the different way these different gifts/talents can work together? Give concrete examples.
- What would happen if everyone had the same gifts?
- Do we need others' gifts?
- Do others need our gifts?

Write on the board:

- **humility:** the ability to know one's self, recognizing both one's gifts and one's limits, as well as the gifts and limits of others

Explain: One of the traits that we can work to acquire is humility, which helps us to stand in relationship to other people and to respect their dignity, without valuing them specifically for their attributes or their gifts. This is the most excellent way to use our powers—always remembering that they are meant for us and for others, and that we all contribute to our growth, the growth of our friends and the community, and the world! Our power to create is another way that we give of ourselves to others.

**Step 5:** Summarize: Today we have learned further about the way in which the human powers to think and choose operate to allow us to create. We can create in many different ways, including art, cultural traditions, and technology—for ourselves and for others. The most excellent way to use this power is to stay humble when we put our creative gifts and talents to good use, as we all have different gifts, and these gifts operate together.

### FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Ask students to choose a technological discovery that helps them live in a more excellent way, then explain the ways this discovery supports their life in a paragraph response. [i.e., the history of antibiotics, telephone signals, car motors, etc.]

See **Supplement 1** for a possible tie-in, if time permits.

## SUPPLEMENTS

**Supplement 1:** Portray the importance of the power to think with some of the world's most important discoveries, and underline the value that we attribute to them.

### Discovery #1:

The earliest archaeological evidence of a wheel exists from about 3500 B.C.E. in Mesopotamia. It was used in the making of pots. It took another 300 years before people reasoned that the wheel could also help move things. Wheels were first simple logs, used as rollers, before the development of axles. By 2000 B.C.E. there are records of wheeled chariots used for transportation throughout Egypt.

Today, many modern mechanical devices use the wheel in some way—from cars, buses, and bicycles, to factory machines, toys, wristwatches, movie reels and more.

#### Discussion question:

- Why was the discovery of the wheel of value to human persons?

### Discovery #2:

The human understanding of the brain has changed significantly over the centuries. It wasn't until the development of more complex imaging systems in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that it became possible for scientists to examine different parts of the brain in systematic, comprehensive ways.

For a long time, research on the way that our stress affects our brain focused on the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland, where receptors from the nervous and hormonal systems meet. This research suggested that significant levels of stress caused shrinkage in the hippocampus region, and that therefore stress should be considered fundamentally problematic. Research in the early 1990s suggested, however, that this damage was not permanent—because the brain has a built-in capacity to adapt to stressors and to remodel its architecture, even into old age. As a result there are healthy levels of stress that contribute to healthy changes in the brain, and there are other forms of damage that the brain can overcome. The process of remodeling in the brain is now known as “neuroplasticity.”

#### Discussion question:

- Why is this a discovery that might be of value to human persons?



Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## CREATIVITY IN ACTION

**Directions:** List the members of your group. For each group member, identify their creative talent, and explain one way they have used it.

group member	his/her creative talent	one way this person has used it

**Directions:** For each creative category, explain the project that your team proposes, to build respect for the dignity of students and teachers at your school; why you propose it; and how it demonstrates respect for the dignity of the human person.

project proposal	project details	how the project demonstrates respect for human dignity
art		
culture		
technology		

Identify two possible challenges to completing your proposed projects:

Identify what additional help you might need in order to complete the projects:



## PURPOSE

To aspire to become a hero.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Understand that a hero is one who makes excellent choices.
2. Imitate a personal hero's traits.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- ***Who Do I Want to Be?*** worksheet (see Materials)
- Supplemental materials:
  - ***Unbroken*** film movie trailer (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrjJbl7kRrl>)

## VOCABULARY

- **hero:** a person who consistently makes excellent choices
- **patience:** the ability to endure present difficulty despite sadness or resentment

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lessons. Ask small groups for the ***Creativity in Action*** project to choose and summarize for the class one of their three projects.

Then explain: We have spent this class learning who we are as human persons. We have learned that we each possess human dignity, our unique value as persons, alongside our powers to think and choose.

Ask the following questions:

- What does it mean for a person to be excellent?
- What does it mean to be free for excellence?

**Step 2:** Teach the three markers of heroes, writing the definition and then the markers on the board:

- **hero:** a person who consistently makes excellent choices
1. Heroes live lives set apart from others.  
Heroes are rare—because it is rare to find someone who has never stopped trying to live in an excellent way. Because heroes are rare, we consider them extraordinary people: those who have lived their lives beyond ordinary ways.
  2. Heroes don't settle or make exceptions when it comes to excellent choices.  
The key to becoming a hero lies in never settling for something less than excellent choices in all our choices and relationships—to choose to always be kind, generous, patient; to keep in mind the consequences our actions will have on our bodies, on our whole selves, on others, and on the world around us.
  3. Heroes inspire others to live excellent lives.  
Since they are so out-of-the-ordinary, and since they never stop trying to make excellent choices, they stand out by their goodness and excellence—and inspire others to strive for a greater excellence in their own lives.

**Step 3:** Introduce a hero. Tell the story of Louis Zamperini, and ask students to think about three questions:

- What are Louis' excellent choices?
- What are his non-excellent choices?
- How does Louis live the life of a hero?

The year is 1932, and the place is Torrance, California.

Louis Zamperini is a teenager—and a hopeless delinquent, in trouble over and over again, addicted to beating up the bullies at his high school, to alcohol and to smoking. To channel Louis' fiery nature, his older brother Pete challenges him to run on the track team, even taking him on training runs and flogging him when he slacks off. Day by day over the course of a summer, Louis builds a habit of practicing and prioritizing his training over other activities, then begins to run races: and wins, with an undefeated pattern in high school, even setting an interscholastic record for the mile-long run. He qualifies for the 1936 Berlin Olympics, and places 8<sup>th</sup> in the 5,000-meter run.

In 1941, Louis enlists in the U.S. Army Air Corps—and, in 1943, during World War II, he is sent on a bombing mission. His bomber crashes into the ocean, and eight of the eleven aboard die. Louis survives 47 days adrift, eating raw fish, fending off sharks, and avoiding

capsizing during a storm. He is captured by the Japanese Navy, held in captivity, severely beaten, and mistreated. One guard, later listed among the most wanted war criminals in Japan, tortures him: first by having every prisoner in the camp “teach him a lesson” by punching him, then forcing him to hold a weight for an extended period of time at risk of being shot if he drops it. As his endurance is tested, he fights desperate circumstances with cleverness, hope, and humor. In the midst of brutality, he rebels because he recognizes that his captors can violate his dignity but cannot take it away. He chooses to try to survive.

He survives until the end of the war in 1945. In the United States, he had been declared KIA (killed in action), but receives a hero’s welcome upon his return. He battles nightmares and begins to drink heavily, until, at his wife’s encouragement, he returns to his previous habits of working toward the good and spends the remainder of his life as a motivational speaker, even returning to Japan to extend forgiveness to the guards who tortured him. He died in 2014 at the age of 97.

#### **Supplemental Activity:**

- Show the movie trailer rather than tell the story.

Explain: Notice the way that Louis changes over the course of his life. By the time he is in high school, he has developed the habit of smoking, drinking, and getting into fights. It takes an incredible amount of effort and patience to overcome these habits and translate that same energy into running daily and training hard. His effort pays off with great success as Louis runs high school races, sets records, qualifies for a college scholarship and competes in the Olympics. It is also this chosen effort that sets the foundation for his later ability to choose to live, over and over again, under the most trying and dehumanizing circumstances.

**Step 4:** Help students prepare to become heroes.

Write on the board:

- **patience:** the ability to endure present difficulty despite sadness or resentment

Explain: As we grow in human excellence, with the making of excellent choices, we will need to be prepared to be patient—to try again and again, even when we have a difficult time, even when we make wrong choices, even when it doesn’t seem as if we are growing into heroes.

Ask students to fill in the *Who Do I Want to Be?* worksheet, identifying a personal hero and the steps they will take to imitate a heroic trait of the selected hero, and making a plan to practice patience along the way.

Then ask for student volunteers to share their answers regarding a hero. The teacher should conclude the lesson by modeling his or her own answer with regards to a hero. Finally discuss common traits of all shared heroes.

**Step 5:** Summarize: We have spent much time looking at the human person’s different powers, the powers to think and choose, and our ability to express our creativity in the making of art, culture, and technology. Now we can see even more clearly the way in which the ultimate goal of the human life is to grow in excellence, as it is the most excellent of people who become heroes.

### FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Ask students to put into practice their plan of action for imitating their personal hero’s trait, from the *Who Do I Want to Be?* worksheet, and to create a visual summary of their practice—i.e., a photograph, a drawing, a video.

This documentation may contribute to the class’ final **Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC)** newspaper project (see lesson 6B).

### SUPPLEMENTS

**Supplement 1:** Underline practice as key to growing in excellence.

Explain: In 2008, reporter Malcolm Gladwell published a book called *Outliers: The Story of Success*. In it, he explains that one of the things that makes successful people is “The 10,000 Hour Rule”: successful people spend 10,000 hours practicing their craft before they become successful.

Write on the board:

2 hours/week	4 hours/week	7 hours/week
8 hours/month	16 hours/month	28 hours/month
96 hours/year	192 hours/year	336 hours/year
<u>104 years</u>	<u>52 years</u>	<u>28 years</u>

Research shows that practice isn’t everything when it comes to success—different talents, personal histories, and given opportunities all make a difference. Becoming a hero, however, isn’t about success: it’s about making the most excellent choices, which include practicing those tasks that

help us grow in human excellence. Those things that are most important to us on the path to becoming heroes deserve significant time from us every single week—maybe even an hour a day!

FOR REVIEW



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## WHO DO I WANT TO BE?

**Directions:** Name and draw your hero. Around your hero, write in heroic qualities and/or draw to depict what makes him/her your hero.

a hero of mine:

\_\_\_\_\_

1. Choose one of your hero's traits to imitate.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Explain why you've chosen this trait.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Explain one challenge you face in imitating this trait.

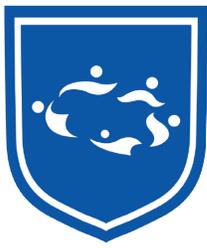
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is one way you can practice patience?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## PURPOSE

To highlight the role of good friendship on the path toward excellence.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Explain an excellent friend as one who helps his friend make excellent choices.
2. Identify concrete actions that they can take with their friends to grow in excellence.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- *Portrait of Friendship* worksheet (see Materials)

## VOCABULARY

- **friendship:** a bond of mutual affection between two people who pursue excellence for themselves and the other
- **effort:** the vigorous or determined act of trying to achieve or complete something

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson, with the following questions:

- What goals have we set for ourselves to grow in human excellence?
- Why is the trait of humility important to human excellence?

Then ask students to share their stories of family heroes. Depending on available time, share in small groups or as a class.

**Step 2:** Introduce friendship with a class discussion and story.

Ask the following question, and write student answers on the board:

- What makes someone a true friend?

Based on the answers, work with the class to come up with a classroom definition of friendship, and prompt classroom discussion to tend toward the definition offered here. Finally, write the definition on the board, and ask students to copy it into their notes:

- **friendship:** a bond of mutual affection between two people who pursue excellence for themselves and the other

Next tell the story of the friendship between famous authors and scholars J.R.R. Tolkien—author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*—and C.S. Lewis—author of the *Narnia* collection.

J.R.R Tolkien and C.S. Lewis met at an Oxford staff meeting in 1926, a day that marked the beginning of a long and meaningful friendship. Tolkien and Lewis are well known philosophers and writers of the 20th century, and each wrote fantasy stories that contain deep spiritual messages. Their friendship was based on shared ideas, shared writing and teaching, and included many conversations, debates, and critiques of each other's work. In addition to the intellectual companionship that they provided one another, their friendship allowed them to share with one another their own pasts. Both men had served in World War I, and endured the death of friends as well as the loss of their parents.

Their lifelong friendship helped them to encourage each other in developing their creativity, intellect, and written output. In fact, Lewis encouraged Tolkien to continue to work on and eventually publish his famous trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, by giving him advice and confidence. In a similar manner, Tolkien opened up Lewis' mind to the ways in which fantasy can convey moral lessons. For example, Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, an adventure/fantasy children's series, also teaches crucial life lessons and, within the stories, there exists a much deeper spiritual meaning.

Ask:

- What makes J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis' friendship authentic?
- Why is it important to have a person like Tolkien or Lewis in your life?
- How can you be like Tolkien or Lewis in your friends' lives?

**Step 3:** Help students prepare to be excellent friends.

Write on the board:

- **effort:** the vigorous or determined act of trying to achieve or complete something

Explain: Friendship, just like everything in our life, requires that we use our powers to think and choose in appropriate ways, and to put effort into growing in excellence. Friendships are not meant to stay the same—they are meant to be an adventure, and to support us in our mission, of respecting our own and others' dignity, and in becoming excellent as human persons. This requires effort: the constant pursuit of excellence, in the choices we make with regards to friends, and in the choices we encourage our friends to make for themselves.

As a class, brainstorm a list of six challenges or challenging moments across which students come in their friendships.

Then break students into groups of 4-5 students, and assign each a challenge listed on the board. Give groups five minutes to determine the best way that they would, in friendship resolve the presented challenge. Then give groups time to present as a skit the scenarios and suggested solution.

**Step 6:** Summarize: Today we have spent some time thinking about the way that living excellent lives is inseparable from other people. If we want to live in an excellent way, we need to make excellent choices, and we can make excellent choices more easily if we have friends willing to work with us toward being heroes. The truest friendships are those marked by a mutual desire to grow in excellence!

### FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Hand students a copy of the *Portrait of Friendship* worksheet, and ask them to remember and document an instance in their life in which they, along with a friend or group of friends, worked together to make an excellent choice or to take an excellent action.

This documentation may contribute to the class' final **Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC)** newspaper project (see below).

### SUPPLEMENTS

None.

### SUGGESTED CLASS PROJECT

The suggested final project for the **Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC)** is a class newspaper, the *Human Dignity Chronicle*. It will be the compilation of students' projects over the course of the curriculum, re-written and re-structured to fit.

The teacher should prepare students during this class to choose one piece from their archives to type up and format for the newspaper—in accord with the schools' capacities for laying out and printing one; compiling by hand and stapling is always sufficient. Articles can be written as news stories, feature stories, editorials/opinion pieces, etc.

A draft of this will be due on the last day of the HDC.

Helpful questions to structure different pieces include: What happened? Who was there? Why did it happen? When did it happen? Where did it happen?

Upon completion, the chronicle should be presented to the remainder of the classes/grade and/or the school, as fitting, in summary of the work done during the HDC.

FOR REVIEW



Human  
Dignity  
Curriculum

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PORTRAIT OF FRIENDSHIP

**Directions:** In the box below, draw an excellent action that you and a friend, or a group of friends, did together.

1. Explain the action.

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2. Explain why the action was excellent, and how it demonstrates respect for the dignity of the person.

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Human  
Dignity  
Curriculum

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PORTRAIT OF FRIENDSHIP

**Directions:** In the box below, draw an excellent action that you and a friend, or a group of friends, did together.

1. Explain the action.

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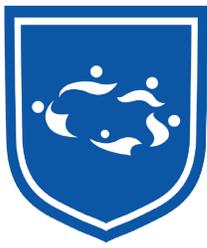
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2. Explain why the action was excellent, and how it demonstrates respect for the dignity of the person.

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## PURPOSE

To highlight the role of solidarity on the path toward excellence.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Explain solidarity as the group-wide pursuit of human excellence.
2. Identify concrete actions that express solidarity in respecting human dignity.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- *Human Dignity* sign (see Materials)
- *“The Power of the Powerless,” Vaclav Havel* essay (find in library)
- *Rally for Dignity* worksheet (see Materials)
- *Hero Preparation* worksheet (see Materials)

## VOCABULARY

- **solidarity**: unity of feeling or action among individuals with a common interest on the path to excellence
- **kindness**: being friendly or considerate
- **generosity**: being willing to give more of something, such as time or money, than is strictly necessary or expected

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lessons. Ask students to share their portraits of friendship from the previous lesson—examples of excellent actions taken with friends.

Ask:

- What prompted this decision to come about?

**Step 2:** Introduce the theme of the lesson by doing the “Crazy Caterpillar” activity with the class, then discuss with the following questions.

Ask three students to line up. The first student will symbolize human dignity by holding a sign. The other two students need to line up behind the first. The last student should try his/her best to tear or grab the paper, but can only wiggle as a caterpillar would—moving toward the first person with the second student always remaining in between. The student in the middle will try to follow the first student as much as possible and keep the distance between two. Once the students have tried, the teacher can add student after student, the group wiggling as a caterpillar always, to demonstrate the power of numbers in building solidarity.

**Discussion questions:**

- What is the effect when people come together to defend human dignity?
- Why does a group have so much power?

Explain: You just watched a group of two grow into a crowd of people successfully defending human dignity. When people come to do something excellent—like defend dignity—the result is always important because the creativity and solidarity of all people involved comes together to push forward on the trajectory toward excellence.

Write on the board:

- **solidarity:** unity of feeling or action among individuals with a common interest on the path to excellence

Solidarity, just like friendship, is key to our pursuit for human excellence. It strengthens our efforts to develop our persons, to help others, and to help the world.

**Step 3:** Illustrate solidarity with the story of the green grocer. Explain: The first story that we will look at illustrates the power that comes with solidarity—the power of many people coming together with a common interest, to pursue excellence together and, in this case, to defend the value of human dignity.

Identify and share with students an excerpt of the *“The Power of the Powerless,”* **Vaclav Havel** essay (“The manager of a fruit and vegetable shop places in his window, among the onions and carrots, the slogan: ‘Workers of the World, Unite!’...He may seek out unofficial literature, copy it and lend it to his friends”).

Ask students to answer the following prompt in their notebooks in 250-500 words: Reflect on the way the grocer complied with what was except from him, until he decided to live in the truth. If you were one of the grocer’s customers and he happened to explain why he was changing his ways, how would you respond and why? Discuss why his fellow citizens and coworkers’ treatment of him was different from the definition of authentic friendship.

**Step 4:** Help students prepare to express solidarity.

Write on the board:

- **kindness:** being friendly or considerate
- **generosity:** being willing to give more of something, such as time or money, than is strictly necessary or expected

Explain: Solidarity is driven by the underlying pursuit of excellence, as well as the underlying pursuit of the respect of the dignity of human people. Two traits that we can work to develop in order to express this solidarity, or two traits that can function as expressions of this solidarity, include kindness and generosity—the means by which we always choose what is best for others, and give more of ourselves than is expected in order to provide for their needs.

If we look around us, there are many issues in the world beyond segregation that could use our attention. Let's see if we can brainstorm some examples!

Ask students to gather in pairs, and give each pair a *Rally for Dignity* worksheet. Students should brainstorm a contemporary violation of the dignity of the person that requires solidarity. They should then imagine a Rally for Dignity, at which people will gather to discuss ways in which to protect the dignity that is being violated, and then to write out language for an invitation.

[The invites are intended as a hypothetical exercise, though if capacities permit, an actual Rally for Dignity could be held at the school.]

If time permits, discuss students' plans for overcoming their challenges with the whole class.

**Step 5:** Summarize: Today continues our journey through the understanding of the dignity of the person. In our last lesson, we looked at the important of friendship—of us gathering with our friends—as we pursue human excellence, which is the mission of the human person. When it comes to solidarity, we can see that this pursuit doesn't just end with friendship, but it continues to larger social and world issues, too, since human dignity is a universal value that we all share!

### FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Ask students to research the history behind another historical violation of the dignity of the person, then explain their research, and the ways in which it demonstrates a violation, in a 7-10 sentence essay. [i.e., the Holocaust, the one-child policy in China, etc.]

Students should also complete the *Hero Preparation* worksheet in preparation for the last class.

## SUPPLEMENTS

None.

## SUGGESTED CLASS PROJECT

The teacher should check in with students with regards to their progress on pieces for the *Human Dignity Chronicle*. A draft of this will be due on the last day of the HDC.

Helpful questions to structure different pieces include: What happened? Who was there? Why did it happen? When did it happen? Where did it happen?

Upon completion, the chronicle should be presented to the remainder of the classes/grade and/or the school, as fitting, in summary of the work done during the HDC.



Human  
Dignity  
Curriculum

# HUMAN DIGNITY

FOR REVIEW



Human  
Dignity  
Curriculum

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

## RALLY FOR DIGNITY

**Directions:** Identify a violation of human dignity, and complete an invitation for a rally in solidarity for this cause.

**YOU ARE INVITED!**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date + time)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(place)

*A Rally for Dignity*

**We invite you to join us for  
a rally for dignity, in support of**

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**We hope to have you join us.**



Human  
Dignity  
Curriculum

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

## RALLY FOR DIGNITY

**Directions:** Identify a violation of human dignity, and complete an invitation for a rally in solidarity for this cause.

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*A Rally for Dignity*

**We invite you to join us for  
a rally for dignity, in support of**

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**We hope to have you join us.**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## HERO PREPARATION

**Directions:** Fill in the blank spaces below.

### PART ONE: WHO I AM

My name: \_\_\_\_\_ Where I was born: \_\_\_\_\_

A list of my gifts and talents: \_\_\_\_\_

One way that I have used a gift or talent in an excellent way: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

One thing I struggle doing well: \_\_\_\_\_

One dream I have for my life: \_\_\_\_\_

Some excellent things that I do with my friends: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Moments in which I struggle respecting others' human dignity: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Moments in which I struggle with non-excellent habits: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### PART TWO: WHO I WANT TO BECOME

A hero from the HDC who inspires me: \_\_\_\_\_

Two traits s/he exhibits that I want to exhibit: \_\_\_\_\_

One way s/he showed respect for human dignity: \_\_\_\_\_

A personal hero I have: \_\_\_\_\_

Two traits s/he exhibits that I want to exhibit: \_\_\_\_\_

One way s/he showed respect for human dignity: \_\_\_\_\_

For each trait, one concrete way that I will practice it in my life:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

To be excellent with regards to **my body**, I will develop this good habit and avoid this bad habit:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ,
2. \_\_\_\_\_ .

To be excellent with regards to **my whole person**, I will develop this good habit and avoid this bad habit:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ,
2. \_\_\_\_\_ .

To be excellent with regards to **those around me**, I will develop this good habit and avoid this bad habit:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ,
2. \_\_\_\_\_ .

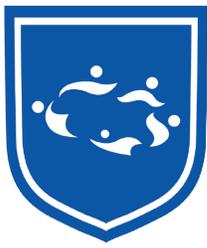
Two ways that I will contribute to **the common good** in my community and society:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ,
2. \_\_\_\_\_ .

Two challenges that I will have to overcome on the path to human excellence:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ,
2. \_\_\_\_\_ .

FOR REVIEW



## PURPOSE

To integrate the course into a personal commitment to the pursuit of human excellence.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Commit to daily practice of excellence.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- art project materials (i.e., crayons, markers, construction paper, magazines, scissors, glue)
- *Hero Preparation* worksheet (see Materials [for Lesson 6C])
- *The Hero's Charter* worksheet (see Materials)

## VOCABULARY

No new vocabulary.

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Explain the purpose of the last class: We have spent a number of weeks learning about the human person: the place that he has in the world and his unique potential to live intentionally, making choices to grow in human excellence every day of his life. We have, in other words, learned that we can live as heroes if we only want and choose to.

Today we are going to take the time to put all of the pieces together, and make a commitment to live in an excellent way.

**Step 2:** Review the concept of human dignity with the question: What do we call the value that all human beings share?

Write on the board:

- **universal**
- **intrinsic**
- **inalienable**

Ask students to review the meaning of the three prongs to human dignity with a partner. Take answers from the class before writing in the correct definitions:

- **universal:** every person has dignity
- **intrinsic:** our dignity is with us our entire life; it is part of who we are
- **inalienable:** dignity cannot be given to us or taken away from us

Explain: It is our dignity that makes possible our experience of value—both our own value, and other's value—and it is our dignity that gives us the desire to live excellent lives. To live an excellent life is the best way to showcase the dignity we each have.

**Step 3:** Hand each student a copy of *The Hero's Charter* worksheet, and give them the remainder of the class time to write and design their own charter, drawing on the brainstorming they did as homework with the *Hero Preparation* worksheet

**Step 4:** Conclude the course: Each of us is a human person, with human dignity—our value which no one can give us or take away from us, a value we always have because we are human! It is a value that can be expressed by the use of our two special powers, to think and to choose. The way to use these powers is to always intentionally choose human excellence by acting in ways that always affirm our own human dignity and the dignity of others.

If we make these excellent choices every day, by practicing effort and patience, kindness and generosity, and by never giving up, we will grow up to be heroes who can change the world. Some heroes are known, others are hidden. Regardless of the path that we will take, every day, every choice is practice for us so that we may be ready for the challenges ahead.

## FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Ask students to share their charter with their parents.

## SUGGESTED CLASS PROJECT

The teacher can take a class photo of students holding their charters, or scan individual charters, and add them to the *Human Dignity Chronicle*. This chronicle should then be presented to the remainder of the classes/grade and/or the school, as fitting, in summary of the work done during the **Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC)**.



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