

Lesson 15 – The Two Great Commandments

Grades 6-8

Lesson Preparation:

Read Lesson 15 in the Baltimore Catechism. You will need to have a Bible for this session. Also, be sure to print and copy, or be able to project, the activity sheets.

Opening Prayer:

Scripture: “Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.”
Matthew 25:34-36

Leader: Jesus, You have so united yourself to your people that an act of love toward any of your brothers or sisters is an act of love to You. Inspire us to see You when we encounter those in need. Amen.

Together: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Opening:

Today’s session will be focused on love of God and love of neighbor, and specifically on the works of mercy. To get the class focused, read Mark 12:28-34. Discuss – what is Jesus saying here and why is it important?

Watch the Lesson 15 Video on Catholic Brain

Comprehension Questions: *Note: These questions are asked after the video, just to check student comprehension. They are not discussion questions, but be sure students understand the answers to these questions before moving on*

1) What are the two great commandments?

Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself.

2) What are the corporal works of mercy?

Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, shelter the homeless, care for the sick, bury the dead. The corporal works of mercy address people's physical needs.

3) What are the spiritual works of mercy?

Admonish the sinner, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the sorrowful, bear wrongs patiently, forgive all injuries, pray for the living and the dead. The spiritual works of mercy address people's spiritual needs.

Discussion Questions: *Note: These questions are for student discussion. The students should consider these questions and comment on them. There are some key points included in this lesson, after each question, that you can use to help guide their discussion toward truth. It's important that the students think about and discuss these things, but that they don't leave the discussion with false impressions about what is true.*

1) Why must love of God come before love of neighbor?

God is our creator and He is perfectly good and worthy of love. He is also the source of love. The more we love God, the more we will be able to love others.

2) Read 1John 4:20-21. Why can we not love God if we don't love our neighbor?

Every person is made in the Image of God, and is beloved by God. We can not love God if we despise those He loves, and are made in His Image.

3) What are some specific examples of ways you can perform the works of mercy?

Answers will vary.

Go Deeper:

We all have a common vocation – to love. We also have a particular vocation, the state of life in which God calls us to love. A very special vocation is to the religious life, as a priest, sister, or religious brother. We do not decide our vocation, we discern it. This means that we recognize that God has a plan for us, and our job is to understand that plan, and say “yes” to it.

Look at “Signs of God’s Call” in the catechism. Three are mentioned. Discuss other things we can do to discern our vocations. Students may have many answers; a few important steps follow:

- 1) Have the proper attitude of trust – recognize that God’s plan for us is best. He wants us to be happy, and He wants us to be holy. Our particular vocation is the way He knows we can best attain that. We must trust Him.
- 2) Prayer – To hear God’s call, we need to spend lots of time in prayer and receive the sacraments often. Daily Mass is a powerful practice.
- 3) Spiritual Direction – Some priests and sisters, and even lay people, are specially trained as spiritual directors and can help us discern our vocation
- 4) Make a retreat – Most monasteries, convents, and seminaries have retreats for people discerning a religious vocation. You can go and experience a community and learn a lot about a vocation by making these retreats.

Activity:

Look at the attached activity sheets, with art depicting the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Look closely at the art and identify how each piece represents a work of mercy.

Closing Prayer:

Leader: Thank You, God, for giving us the vocation to love, and for teaching us how to love. May our hearts constantly expand, so we can love more and more like You love. Amen.

Together: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.