

Where Does Human Dignity Come From?

PRO TIP
Download other grades for alternate activities!

CONNECTIONS TO THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

CCC 355-357
CCC 362-366

MATERIALS

- ▶ [Powers of Our Soul](#)
- ▶ [Where Does Our Dignity Come From?](#)

SUGGESTED TIME

40 minutes

Teacher Background

Humanity's place in creation is unique: we are made in the image of God, our natures are body and spirit tied to the material world, we are made male and female, and we are made for friendship with God. Humans are the only creatures able to know and love God, and the only creature God made for Himself. We are called into a relationship with God, and we have dignity because of this special relationship.



HOW DOES THIS LESSON HELP INOCULATE STUDENTS AGAINST GENDER IDEOLOGY?

According to gender ideology, our dignity and even our very identity comes to us externally, from the “affirmation” of others. But in truth, our dignity comes from being made in God’s image and likeness, and being deeply loved by Him. Our dignity comes to us by nature; it does not require “affirmation,” and can never be taken away. Further, our identity as baptized Christians is that of a son or daughter of God, and the indelible mark on our souls marks us as His, forever.

Activity

- A. Explain to your class that all living things—plants, animals, and humans, have souls. This may come as a surprise, because some students may think that only human beings have souls! But given that a soul is what gives life to something material, all living things have souls.
- B. Continue to explain that according to St. Thomas Aquinas, there are vegetative souls, sensitive (animal) souls and rational, immortal (human) souls. Plants and vegetation can only eat, grow, and reproduce. Animals and humans also do that, and they have mobility, inner and outer senses, and appetitive powers (they can seek things that are good for them).
- C. Distribute [Powers of Our Soul](#) and read it over together.
- D. Then, with students working individually or in pairs, have them give examples of how they can observe each power of the soul. Refer to the Answer Key for suggested responses.
- E. Share responses as a large group, explaining that these can help us begin to better know human beings as distinct from all other life on earth!

Powers of Our Soul

There is an order—a hierarchy—of creation. Each level gets more complex as we go up the levels. Plants are more complex than rocks and minerals because they can move. Animals are more complex than plants because they have the power to move freely and use consciousness.

Humans are more complex than animals because we have the power of self-consciousness on top of every other similarity. We can discern many things about the invisible soul by observing the effects of its powers. An animal can hear, of course. But how does our human soul's power of self-consciousness help us make greater use of the power of hearing?



Directions: Read to each, give one example of using the power of self-consciousness in a distinctly human way.

- 1 **Hearing**

- 2 **Seeing**

- 3 **Memory**

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F. Next, distribute [Where Does Our Dignity Come From?](#)

Read the information aloud, and then have students look up the given paragraphs in their copies of the *Catechism*, and/or read them aloud. They can make notes on their worksheets. You could have students work to read all the *Catechism* paragraphs, or you could put students into three groups (one on human uniqueness above plants, animals, and all material things, one on the unity of body and soul, and one on the effects of Baptism) and have each group work on the paragraphs for their section.

G. Now, add qualities that are distinctly human (in other words, belonging only to human beings), to your list that you began a few moments ago.

H. Use the Answer Key to help make the list, and to guide discussion.

I. Help students understand that it is essential that we recognize that the image and likeness of God imprinted on each human person are what separate us from the animals: the intellect and free will. This is the source of our uniquely human powers and dignity: not affirmation from others, not approval or celebration of our actions, but our being made in God's image, and deeply loved by Him.

Where Does Our Dignity Come From?

Directions: Read the information. Then, look up your assigned paragraphs in the *Catechism*, and/or read them with your teacher and/or take notes about the main ideas. Then, as a class, add qualities that are **UNIQUELY** human to the list of powers you began in the last activity.

Animals and humans share many powers in common, including many we just looked at. Animals can hear, see, and seek out things that are good for them (called appetitive power). But there are two powers which belong to humans alone, and those are intellect and free will. Our being made in God's image and likeness is the source of these uniquely "human" powers and dignity.

Humanity's place in creation is unique: we are made in the image of God, as we have learned. Further, we are a unity of body and soul; we are made made and

formable, and we are made for friendship with God. Humans are the only creature able to know and love God, and the only creature God made for Himself. We are called into a relationship with God, and we have dignity because of this special relationship.

In other words, our dignity comes to us by nature. It does not require "affirmation," and can never be taken away. Further, our identity as baptized Christians is that of a son or daughter of God, and the indelible mark on our souls marks us as His, forever.



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Powers of Our Soul

There is an order—a hierarchy—of creation. Each level gets more complex as we up the levels. Plants are more complex than rocks and minerals because they are alive. Animals are more complex than plants because they have the power to move freely, and are conscious.

Humans are more complex than animals because we have the power of self-consciousness on top of every other similarity. We can discover many things about the invisible soul by observing the effects of its powers. An animal can hear, of course. But how does our human soul's power of self-consciousness help us make greater use of the power of hearing?



Directions: Next to each, give one example of using the power of self-consciousness in a distinctly human way.

- 1 Hearing**
We listen to music and listen to others speak.

- 2 Seeing**
We gaze at beauty, look at art.

- 3 Memory**
We know who we are; we know we are the same person we were when we were young. We know those people around us.

STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

- 4 **Imagination**
We can construct things in our minds with the stuff of prior observation and experiences.
- 5 **Fear**
We may cower or worry for our safety if we think we hear a bear or see a ghost.
- 6 **Anger**
We may feel moved to action when we believe someone has done an injustice.
- 7 **Love**
We are capable of freely giving of ourselves for the good of another.
- 8 **Regret**
We can feel guilt or shame when we know we have done something we wish we had not.
- 9 **Thinking**
We can learn about things, use logic and reason, and reflect on possibilities.
- 10 **Will**
When we decide to do something (or not to do something) we have exercised our will.

Where Does Our Dignity Come From?

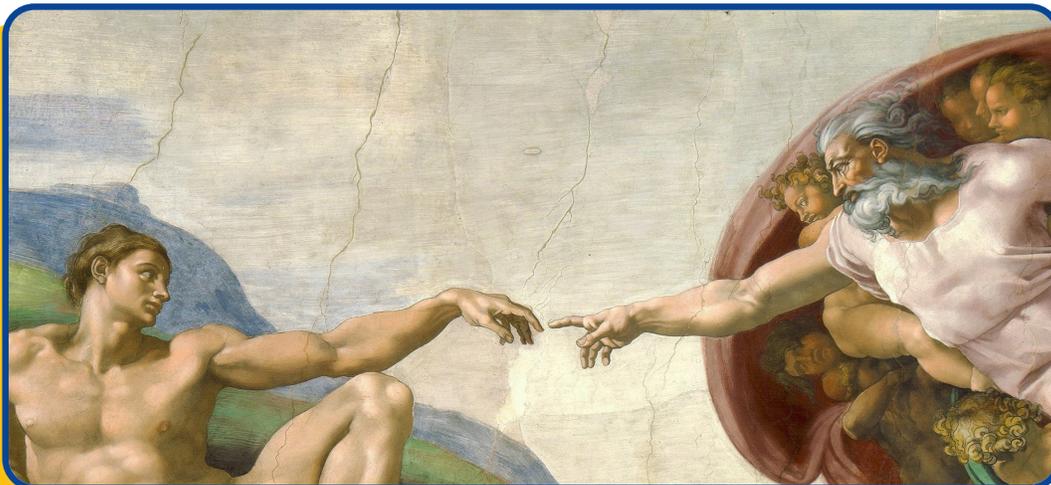
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Humanity's place in creation is unique: we are made in the image of God, as we have learned. Further, we are a unity of body and soul, we are made male and

female, and we are made for friendship with God. Humans are the only creatures able to know and love God, and the only creature God made for Himself. We are called into a relationship with God, and we have dignity because of this special relationship.

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STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

Human uniqueness above plants, animals, and all material things:

- ▶ Paragraph 355, Paragraph 356, Paragraph 357

Paragraph 355:

Man's place in creation is unique; we are made in the image of God; our natures are body and spirit tied to the material world; we are made male and female; we are made for friendship with God

Paragraph 356:

Humans are the only creatures able to know and love God; humans are the only creature God made for Himself; we are called into a relationship with God. Humans have dignity because of this special relationship

Paragraph 357:

The image of God imprinted on every human soul makes us dignified; we are a "someone" not a "something;" we are capable of self-knowledge and self-possession; we can make gifts of our selves; we are called by grace into a relationship with God and this is a quality of relationship not possible between humans.

The body and soul are one:

- ▶ Paragraph 362, Paragraph 363, Paragraph 364, Paragraph 365, Paragraph 366

Paragraph 362:

The human person is both corporeal and spiritual; the symbolic language in the Bible is man is formed of dust and God breathed life into him; the human person is whole and entire, body, and soul.

Paragraph 363:

In the Bible, the word "soul" refers to human life or the entire human person. But soul is also the innermost aspect of humans and that which is the most important, and that which most represents the image of God: the soul is the spiritual principle of the human.

Paragraph 364:

Human bodies share in the dignity of the "image of God," it is the spiritual soul; body and soul are a unity; because the body is good, man must not despise it, and know it will be raised on the last day.

Paragraph 365:

The unity of soul and body is so profound that the soul is the form of the body; spirit and body in man do not have two different natures, but together are one nature.

Paragraph 366:

Every human soul is created immediately by God, not just produced by parents, and every human soul is immortal, the soul does not die when it is separated from the body at death.

Baptism makes us adopted sons or daughters of the Father:

- ▶ Paragraph 1279, 1280

Paragraph 1279:

Baptism forgives sins, including original Sin, and makes us an adopted son or daughter of the Father, a member of the Body of Christ, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Paragraph 1280:

Baptism puts an indelible (permanent) mark on the soul which sets the baptized person apart for Christ forever.

**Where
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10 Will

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