

Life Sunday Catechesis for Young Adults
“The Joy of Life, in the Face of Death”

Expected Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials: PDF document (provided) and Bible

Media: Youtube (TV/Projector)

Prayer: Our Father, Hail Mary, Hymn of Resurrection, Glory Be.

Initial Thought: Is there any point to living, when you feel death is near?

Bible Verse:

“For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (2 Cor 5:1)

Points for Discussion:

We know death is an evil, but sometimes it is awaited as a liberation from the suffering of this life. **What do you think is the answer to suffering?**

- For Christ does not answer directly or in the abstract the human question about the meaning of suffering.
- Man hears Christ's saving answer as he himself gradually becomes a sharer in the sufferings of Christ.
- It is then that man finds in his suffering interior peace and even spiritual joy. The truth of love is proven through the truth of suffering. Suffering can only be conquered by love, and love alone can prove suffering.
- The ultimate love is that shown by Christ on the Cross. “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

Life only finds meaning, when it is given up for others. Compassion is a universal value and the root meaning of “compassion” means to “suffer with” another person. **Do you think the Church’s teaching about voluntary suicide show compassion? Why or why not?**

- Today’s world is marked by an excessive preoccupation with efficiency and sees the elderly and disabled as intolerable and too burdensome.
- These people are isolated by families and society, according to which a hopelessly impaired life no longer has any value.

How do you think we should treat our elderly and disabled? Is there any point to their life?

Listen to these inspiring stories:

- John (Beyond Independence): <https://goo.gl/bR7Lj4> (Duration: 4:08)
- Maggie Karner (Terminal Brain Cancer): <https://goo.gl/FzjDTR> (Duration: 3:14)

Attitudes to promote among those despairing of life:

- Creating meaning
- Reconciliation
- Acceptance of Humanity
- Surrender
- Hope
- Physical comfort
- Authentic presence
- Promoting normalcy
- Fruitfulness
- Light-heartedness



Finally, we know that death comes for all, only that it may be coming sooner for the elderly or terminally ill. However, we do have hope in the truth of the Resurrection. *“For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”* (2 Cor 5:1)

Application:

- How can you respond to those who have given up hope for life? What are some concrete actions you can take to implement the attitudes listed above?
- Read the story of David Goodall (<https://goo.gl/LCNryk>)
 - Will this be you or your parents? A loved one?
 - Are you prepared for your death? How are you inspiring hope in those you encounter, spreading the joy of life?

Additional Resources:

- Catholic Catechism 2276-2279
- St. JP II’s Apostolic Letter on the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering (<https://goo.gl/VUfJe4>)
- St. JP II’s Papal Encyclical on the Gospel of Life (<https://goo.gl/Yqviw2>)

Activity and discussion questions: (You may begin the session with this activity)

Death With Dignity vs. “Redemptive Suffering”

- The Brittany Maynard story - Death by Choice? <https://goo.gl/zW3xA5> (Duration: 6:21)
- Bishop Ignacio Carrasco de Paula, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life responds to the Brittany Maynard assisted suicide: <https://goo.gl/S1en8Y>
- An open letter to Brittany Maynard from Maggie Karner, who also has glioblastoma multiforme brain cancer. <https://goo.gl/3bkHxN>
- "My life isn't mine to take, it's mine to give.": <https://goo.gl/EvxofA>
- USCCB’s resources on the issue: <https://goo.gl/g439sU>

Discussion questions:

- How did this video make you feel?
- Why do you think this woman ended her own life at the age of 29 is against the teaching of the Catholic Church?

(Helpful Thoughts:

It was such a relief to have control, and not let the tumor terrorize her.

Fear! It is about attempting to exercise one’s own choice and control over the impossible.)



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