

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
The Human Person, Society, and Social Justice

Catechist Preparation

Clarifying the Essentials

Society functions best when certain persons are given authority as they work for the common good.

- ◆ A well-ordered society requires a legitimate authority to govern it. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] 1897.)
- ◆ Governing for the common good is founded in human nature and derives its morality from God. (See CCC 1899.)

Obedience is due to authorities, inasmuch as they deserve it as they work for the common good through morally accepted means.

- ◆ Authorities must not act despotically or enact unjust laws. (See CCC 1902.)
- ◆ One's conscience is not bound by morally unjust laws enacted by authority. (See CCC 1903.)

Why is This Important?

Human beings have a social, or communal, side to their nature. Our vocation to blessedness can only be exercised within the network of relationships represented by society.

Wherever sin has perverted the social fabric, the clarion call for conversion must be sounded. The Church prays and works for those social changes that will uphold the human person and serve all members of society. Above all, charity is the binding virtue that informs and enlivens our efforts to establish justice and pursue human solidarity.

*But rulers who esteem opinion
more than truth
have only so much power,
just like the robbers have in a desert.*

SAINT JUSTIN MARTYR

Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. Display a candle, an open Bible, and an icon of the Trinity. Supply name tags and refreshments.

Welcome

Greet people as they arrive, and take time for introductions as the session begins.

Engage

1. Brainstorm a list of rules that most people follow such as: rules of the road for driving, voting regulations, rules of common courtesy, drinking age, etc. Discuss the purpose of such rules and the consequences of not following these rules.
2. Continue with the Insight section of the participant handout and discuss the For Reflection questions.

Teach

Summarize Church Teaching. Then discuss the following:

- ◆ The Trinity shows us the premier example of community. As members of the human community we are called to mirror the life of the Trinity.
- ◆ We are called to be in right relationship with others, and to seek the common good. The common good is a barometer to use in making choices about how we use all our resources: money, time, talent.
- ◆ We are called to act responsibly.

Apply

Encourage the participants to summarize what they have learned in this session. After some time for reflection, have them share their thoughts. Then ask the participants to name how this teaching will affect their daily living.

Pray

Invite everyone in silence to consider the effect of their choices on the common good. Have them ask God to deepen their desire to be a faithful disciple.