

Saint Katharine Drexel Youth Group
Lesson Plan for September 6th, 2015
Labor Day Weekend

Overview

Through a small service activity and large group discussions, the teens will explore the concept of work and labor from a Catholic perspective. We will discuss the benefits of and obligation to work, including its contribution to the dignity of man and to our call to be imitators of God.

Objectives

Mind – Teens will explore the concept of work from a Christian perspective and gain a new understanding of how labor benefits us, our relationships with others, and our relationships with God.

Body – Teens will perform a small service act for the church by cleaning chalkboards and will engage in several fun games.

Soul – Teens will see that work is a way of growing in communion with each other and with God and that labor can provide us with health, esteem, and purpose in life.

Growth

This is primarily a **FAITH** lesson.

Esteem – Teens will recognize that they can efficaciously unite their labors with the Lord's suffering, and understand how work shows us our dignity.

Community – Teens will work together to clean chalkboards for the religious education classrooms as an act of service to the church.

Faith – Teens will learn about the church's understanding of the importance of work in our lives and re-imagine their own relationship with work as a sign of faith.

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Agenda

5:00 – 6:00: SET-UP (*prior to arrival of teens*)

6:00 – 6:30: FREE TIME – Unstructured socializing time.

6:30 – 6:40: ICEBREAKER – Silent Arrangement

Teens privately choose a number and the leader will secretly write it down on a list. The teens will then have to arrange themselves in numerical order but may not talk or hold up fingers.

The leader will determine if they are correct and either end the game or make them rearrange.

Write YOUR name at the top of the board

Move to the right, write your name randomly somewhere on the board. Repeat for all boards. Return to your board

Beginning with your name, connect all the names together in alphabetical order but you cannot cross any lines you have already drawn. Then finish back at your own name.

6:40 – 6:50: ACTIVITY – Chalkboard Chaos

Teens will each be given a chalkboard and piece of chalk. They will write their names on the top of their board. We will then do introductions.

Next, each teen moves to the board to their left and writes their name randomly on the board. They repeat this process for all of the boards and return to their own. We will then race to see who can connect all of the names on their board, in alphabetical order (beginning with your own) and without crossing any lines that you've drawn.

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6:50 – 7:00: LARGE GROUP – Talk about laboring

What does this quote from the Catechism mean?

2428 Work is for man, not man for work.

Work is a good thing that is given to us by God so that we can create in imitation of Him and so that we can overcome sinful tendencies that will push us away from God and each other.

“ . . . not man for work ”

- We must keep God first in our life and not our work.
- It is important to rest on Sunday and Holy Days.

“Work is for man . . .”

- God has given us work and it is good for us
- Work in The Garden was not difficult until man sinned
- We can gain benefits from working
- What are some benefits we can get from work?
- Money – Esteem – Progress – Community

On this Labor Day weekend, we have some laboring to do in service to the Church.

7:00 – 7:30: SERVICE – Cleaning chalkboards

As an act of service for the church, the teens will clean the chalkboards used in the classrooms. We will provide gloves, buckets, towels, water, and sponges. Time permitting, we will also try to clean the erasers. Each chalkboard will be put back in its room with two fresh pieces of chalk.

7:30 – 8:00: LARGE GROUP – Further explore the benefits of work

We heard from the Catechism that “work is for man”. Work gives us many good attributes and benefits.

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Why do we work or what do we gain from work?

- We work to **imitate** God's creation of the universe
- We work to create progress and **prosperity** for ourselves and for society
- We work to strengthen our **families** and our **communities**
- Work builds our **self-esteem** by giving us a sense of **accomplishment**
- Work gives us **dignity** by showing us our value and giving us purpose
- Work increases our **humility** by making us toil for gains and appreciate the effort necessary for good things and respect for the work others do.

CC 1609 In his mercy God has not forsaken sinful man. The punishments consequent upon sin, "pain in childbearing" and toil "in the sweat of your brow," also embody remedies that limit the damaging effects of sin.

- Work teaches us to **respect** God's creation because we understand how much work is necessary to create
- Work cultivates **virtues** such as justice, charity, and generosity
- Being able to work is a sign of **health** and **happiness** ("I've been keeping busy"). It keeps our minds and our bodies active and engaged.

Work should strengthen our self-worth and dignity, draw us closer to one another, and keep us focused on serving God every day.

In addition to being good for us, the Lord expects us to work. Why do people not want to do work?

- It is tiring
- It is not fun and boring
- It stops us from doing other things we want to do
- It can be messy and dirty

Laziness is a sin. The Lord himself studied and practiced as a carpenter. The apostles were fishermen before following the Lord. Saint Paul speaks of how he worked in the communities he visited, and decreed that *"if anyone is unwilling to work, neither should that one eat."* (2 Thessalonians 10)

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What happens to us when we do not work?

- When we do not have work to do, we lose **dignity**. We cannot see our value and purpose in life.

2436 Unemployment almost always wounds its victim's dignity and threatens the equilibrium of his life. Besides the harm done to him personally, it entails many risks for his family.

- We do not make any **progress** and are not **productive** for our families and society
- We **take for granted** all the things that are given to us.

*"Young people are threatened... by the evil use of advertising techniques that stimulate the natural inclination to avoid hard work by promising the immediate satisfaction of every desire."
– John Paul II*

- **Someone else** will have to do our work for us, which can **tear apart** friendships and relationships and make us undesirable, envied, or hated.

"The real argument against aristocracy is that it always means the rule of the ignorant. For the most dangerous of all forms of ignorance is ignorance of work." – GK Chesterton

- If we are not busy cultivating virtues and humility, we expose ourselves to the **temptations** of the devil ("*Idle hands are the devil's playthings*")
- When we do not have work to do, we lose **self-esteem** and **motivation**

"Most modern freedom is at root fear. It is not so much that we are too bold to endure rules; it is rather that we are too timid to endure responsibilities." – GK Chesterton

- We cannot be satisfied in this world. Work keeps us balanced and reminds us that only God can complete us. If we become **immersed in pleasure** all the time, we might foolishly begin to believe that earthly things can satisfy us.

"Faced with today's problems and disappointments, many people will try to escape from their responsibility. Escape in selfishness, escape in sexual pleasure, escape in drugs, escape in violence, escape in indifference and cynical attitudes. I propose to you the option of love, which is the opposite of escape." – John Paul II

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How do we make work holy?

We know now that we are commanded to work and that working is good for us (both in body and soul)

- Do work and do it well
 - Get a job or volunteer
 - Make a schedule and stick to it
 - Do not just work to finish but work to accomplish

What use is it telling me that so and so is a good son of mine — a good Christian — but a bad shoemaker? If he doesn't try to learn his trade well, or doesn't give his full attention to it, he won't be able to sanctify it or offer it to Our Lord. — Saint Josemaria Escriva

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- Be cheerful while working
- Recognize that all work is dignified
 - Mike Rowe's "Dirty Jobs" television show
- Unite our work and suffering to the work and suffering of Christ

2427 By enduring the hardship of work in union with Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth and the one crucified on Calvary, man collaborates in a certain fashion with the Son of God in his redemptive work. He shows himself to be a disciple of Christ by carrying the cross, daily, in the work he is called to accomplish. Work can be a means of sanctification and a way of animating earthly realities with the Spirit of Christ.

- Work can make us holy

Sanctifying one's work is no fantastic dream, but the mission of every Christian — yours and mine. — That is what that lathe-worker had discovered, when he said: "I am overwhelmed with happiness when I think how true it is that while I am working at the lathe and singing — singing all the time, on the outside and on the inside — I can become a saint. How good God is!" — Saint Josemaria Escriva

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The importance of rest on Sunday

Just as we imitate God in work, we also imitate God in rest. The Lord made the heavens and earth in 6 days and rested on the 7th, so we follow that same rhythm and set aside Sunday as a day of rest.

What does it mean to make Sunday a day of rest?

- Do not engage in trivial or laborious work
- Spend time with family and friends
- Spend time in joy with the Lord
- Attend mass and spend time in prayer
- Engage in recreational activities and enjoy the good things from God
- Do homework and chores ahead of time, on Friday or Saturday
- Go for a Sunday walk or run or play sports with friends and family

Work is for man, but man is not for work. We cannot let ourselves become so consumed by working that we forget about God. All of our work should be for him, and taking breaks and relaxing are healthy for our mind, our body, and our soul.

8:00 – 8:30: ACTIVITY – Concluding Game

Four Corners: Four corners are marked in the room. Everyone stands in a corner. A leader (with back to the playing field) calls out one of the corners. Everyone in that corner is eliminated. The remaining players then choose another corner and the leader calls another number. The game is repeated until there is only one winner.

OR

Human Tic Tac Toe: Two teams and nine chairs. The teens arrange themselves in order and are assigned a number (1 to X). The leader then selects a number and calls it out. The person from each team with that number then runs to one of the chairs and sits down. The objective is for a team to make tic-tac-toe before the other team.

8:30 – 9:00: FREE TIME – Unstructured socializing time, if applicable.

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Announcements

1. All teens are encouraged to join our Facebook group and follow our Twitter account. We will post upcoming events, photos, and other bits of news and information.
2. We will be meeting September 13th but not on September 20th.
3. There is a call for volunteers for the Care Event on Friday September 11th and Saturday September 12th.
4. Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton is having an overnight retreat at the end of September, beginning Saturday the 26th and ending Sunday the 27th. Are any of our teens interested in attending? Depending on the turn out for that event will determine whether we have a Sunday night event.