

# Made in God's Image (Sanctity of Life – Part 1)

God loves and values life. He took the care – before we were even born – to ordain our days and then “knit” us together in the womb. “Made in God’s Image,” is the first lesson of a mini-series dedicated to teaching children about the Sanctity of Life. Children will learn that even though all people are made in God’s image, he deliberately made them individually unique as wonderful and beautiful displays of his power and glory.

**OBJECTIVE:** To learn what “Sanctity of Life” means and understand that being created in God’s image shows how much he loves and values us.

**MAIN IDEA:** We know God values human life because he made us in his image, gave us unique qualities, and sent Jesus to die for our sins.

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:** *Genesis 1:26-27, Psalm 139:13-14 & 15-16, John 3:16-17*

## **Introduction**

**OPENING PRAYER:** “Lord, help us understand why you value human life. Please prepare our hearts to accept your truth regarding our importance to you. Amen.”

**ICE BREAKER ACTIVITY:** Say, “Before we begin today’s lesson we are going to talk about things we admire in other people. Think of someone you know and tell the class what you admire about that person.” Start the discussion by giving your own example and then allow students to volunteer sharing. Then comment, “Now we are going to state something we like about *ourselves*. It’s often easy for us to see good things in other people but only see bad qualities in ourselves. After your example say, ‘I am made in God’s image.’” Again, lead the discussion and allow students to chime in as they feel comfortable. Explain to the class that God cares so much about us that he created us as reflections of him. Say, “Today we are going to learn what it really means to be made in God’s image.”

## **Lesson**

1. Start the lesson by explaining the phrase, "Sanctity of Life" (the God-ordained value, or sacredness, of all human life because every person is created in God's image). Say, "Over the next few weeks, we are going to learn why life is important to God and what we can do to help protect, and value, his most precious creation."
2. Reiterate to the class that every person on earth is created in God's image. Read *Genesis 1:26-27*. <sup>26</sup>Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all<sup>[a]</sup> the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." <sup>27</sup>So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Say, "An easy way to understand how we all share God's image is by considering who we look and act like in our family." Give the class an example of someone you resemble physically and mentally/spiritually. Say, "Sharing the image of [a family member] involves more than our physical appearances and includes spiritual qualities as well. The same is true for being made in God's image." List five to ten qualities of God on the board and ask for volunteers to comment on which qualities they share with God.
3. Ask, "So if everyone is created in God's image, then why are we unique (to fulfill his purposes and represent his power and glory)?" Read *Psalms 139:13-14*. <sup>13</sup>For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. <sup>14</sup>I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made;<sup>[a]</sup> Marvelous are Your works, And *that* my soul knows very well." Point out that the author of these verses (David) praised God for making him unique. Say, "So let's also praise God for our unique qualities! Think of something about your appearance or personality that makes you special and share it with the class." Give an example for yourself and then ask for volunteers to share how they are unique. Consider saying, "Thank you God for making [the child's name] unique," after each comment.
4. Lastly, read *Psalms 139:15-16*. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. <sup>16</sup>Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When *as yet there were* none of them." Comment, "We know God places great value on human life because we were, '*made in the secret place*' and, '*all [our] days were written in [his] book before one of them came to be.*' God wouldn't take such care in creating us if we weren't incredibly valuable to him." Furthermore, read *John 3:16-17* as evidence of God's love for us. <sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have

everlasting life.<sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Say, "If human life wasn't important to God then he wouldn't have sent his perfect son, Jesus, to die for our sins. We are all very special to God, so we can trust that he has a good plan for each of our lives." Outline how to believe in Jesus and assure the children that they can always come to you with any questions regarding God, the bible, or salvation.

## **Conclusion**

RECAP: We know human life is important to God because he made us in his image, gave each of us unique qualities to glorify him, and sent Jesus to die for our sins so we could spend eternity with him.

CLOSING PRAYER: "God, thank you for making us special. We love you and thank you for creating us and providing a way to be with you through Jesus Christ. Amen."

# Actions that Honor Life (Sanctify of Life – Part 2)

Is it enough to only say we value others? Or do our actions need to match what we say? In "Actions that Honor Life" (the second part of the "Sanctity of Life" series), children will learn that their responses to others is a reflection of their love for God and his valued importance on life.

OBJECTIVE: Children will learn how their life-honoring actions toward others reflect their belief in Jesus Christ.

MAIN IDEA: To honor life, we must treat others with kindness and respect. We need to respond to others according to how we would like to be treated.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES: *Matthew 22:36-40, Matthew 5:21-24, James 3:9-10 & 17-18*

## **Introduction**

OPENING PRAYER: "Lord, help us honor life through what we say and how we act toward others. Amen."

ICE BREAKER DISCUSSION: Say, "Today our entire lesson will be about problems and solutions." Give the class an example of a problem (e.g. a flat tire) and possible solutions (using the spare tire or calling for help). Ask the class to give examples of problems and help them identify biblical solutions. Comment, "We all have a big problem – we don't always treat others the way God intends. So, to truly honor life, we are going to identify solutions that will help us treat others appropriately."

## Lesson

1. To prepare, write each scripture passage on the board followed by columns that say, "Problem," and "Solution." Throughout the lesson, write the problem being addressed and the biblical solution.

Comment, "To honor life, our actions toward others must match what the God's word says." Read *Matthew 22:36-40*. <sup>36</sup>"Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?"

<sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>38</sup>This is *the* first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup>And *the* second *is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Ask the class to identify the greatest commandment ("*...love the Lord your God...*"). Say, "This means our love for God motivates our love and kindness toward others. When we '*love [our] neighbor as [ourselves]*,' we will treat others the way we want to be treated." Help the class identify the problem (we don't treat others well) and the solution (love God first, love others second) and write the answers on the board.

2. Next, ask the class to find *Matthew 5:21-22*. <sup>21</sup>"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder,<sup>[a]</sup> and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'<sup>22</sup> But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause<sup>[b]</sup> shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire." After reading the passage ask, "What is the problem that Jesus identifies (our anger/sin toward others)? What warnings does he give us (we will be judged, our anger could cost us something, we will be in danger of hell)?" Brainstorm as a class how anger toward others can be prevented, such as taking a moment to think before reacting or removing one's self from a tempting

situation. Then read the solution in *verses 23-24*. <sup>23</sup>Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." Say, "When we act poorly toward someone, God wants us to ask for forgiveness and do what we can to be reconciled with that person. We must ask the Lord to help us be humble and accept responsibility for our faults." Write the problem and solution to the passage on the board. Also, emphasize that it's impossible to honor God if we allow hatred for others to fill our hearts.

3. Lastly, discuss what it means to be a hypocrite. Ask, "If a doctor doesn't work toward saving lives is he really a doctor? Or if a teacher never teaches is he really a teacher? Likewise, the bible is very clear that if we say we are believers in Christ then we are supposed to *act* like believers." Read *James 3:9-10* <sup>9</sup>With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. <sup>10</sup>Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so." to identify the problem (praising God/cursing others) and write it on the board. Then read *verses 17-18* to identify the solution (being pure, peace-loving, submissive, merciful, etc) <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup>Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." Help the class understand that no one is a perfect follower of Jesus, but what matters to God is that we have the desire to live and act according to his word. Say, "When we are peaceful and humble among conflict, others will want to know Christ. Our actions have an extremely important role in professing our beliefs, so we need to be quick to ask for forgiveness when we make mistakes and remember that God values all life."

## **Conclusion**

RECAP: We must first love God to love and value others. Also, we should strive to be humble peacemakers who reflect the love of Christ through our actions.

CLOSING PRAYER: "God, we want to show others that we value life. Please help us respond in a loving and biblical manner toward others. Amen."

# Service that Honors Life (Sanctity of Life – Part 3)

When our beliefs and daily actions already show that we agree with God concerning the value of life, it's time to add intentional life-honoring service. In this final lesson, "Service that Honors Life (Sanctity of Life – Part 3)," children will learn how they can help the Sanctity of Life cause and then apply what they have learned through a service project.

**OBJECTIVE:** To teach the children how to combine their beliefs with actions that honor life

**MAIN IDEA:** Believing that all life is important is the first step in honoring life, but we must also serve in life-honoring ways to make the biggest impact.

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:** *James 4:17, Isaiah 1:17, 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, James 2:26*

**OPENING PRAYER:** "Lord, show us how to serve in life-honoring ways that lead others to you. Amen."

**PREVIOUS LESSON REVIEW:** Ask the following questions to review the first two lessons of the series.

1. What does, "Sanctity of Life" mean (that all life is important and valuable to God)?
2. How do we know that all life is important to God (because every person is a unique creation and God sent Jesus to die for our sins)?
3. What biblical actions can be used to honor life (treating others the way we want to be treated, asking forgiveness for wrongdoing, loving God, practicing humility toward others)?
4. What kinds of words should we use toward others in view of honoring life (kind, peaceful, merciful, submissive, etc)?

## **Lesson**

1. Say, "Today's lesson is the last part of our discussion concerning 'Sanctity of Life.' It's important to agree with God that life is important, and for our daily actions to match that belief, but we must also serve in

life-honoring ways to make the biggest impact.” Read *James 4:17*. <sup>17</sup>Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.” Ask a class member to give an example that matches the verse’s message. Explain that knowing we can help with life-honoring activities and choosing to ignore the need is a sin. Comment, “This verse tells us that knowing the right thing to do – whatever it is – and ignoring or turning away from it is a sin. We should always strive to choose right over wrong because each decision has the power to either draw someone to Christ or push them away.”

2. Next, read *Isaiah 1:17*. Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor;<sup>[a]</sup> Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.” Talk about the words that involve active service (e.g. seek, defend, take up, plead) and explain their meaning. Say, “It takes serious effort to serve others, especially when we are so busy with our own lives. But God wants us to make sacrifices so we have the time and energy to participate in life-honoring activities.” Furthermore, discuss from the verse that it takes time to “learn” how to serve in this way, but the Lord will help us if we commit to helping the cause of Sanctity of Life.
3. Comment, “When we feel like we aren’t able to serve (for whatever reason), then remember this simple thing we can always do from 2 *Thessalonians 1:11-12*.”<sup>11</sup>Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of *His* goodness and the work of faith with power, <sup>12</sup>that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Ask for prayer. Say, “Prayer changes things! We can always pray for the life-honoring efforts being made across the world to support the importance of life. Our prayers bring glory to God through those who obediently serve him.” Add that praying should already be a habitual part of our lives, and encourage the children to use a prayer list to help them remember requests.
4. Lastly, read *James 2:26*.<sup>26</sup>For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” Emphasize that the bible tells us we are spiritually dead if we do not act on our beliefs. Comment, “This is why your church teachers, leaders, and family give you opportunities to serve. We want you to experience the joy in serving for causes that matter to God, and help you explore his unique plan for your life.”

## Conclusion

RECAP: It's our job as believers to serve according to our belief that all life is important to God. Through prayer and active service, people around us can be drawn into a relationship with Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER: "God, use us to show the world that all life is important and valuable. Amen."

## 5 Ways Childrens Can Take Action

Because all life is important to God, it's never too early to introduce [Sanctity of Life](#) to children. This is core value of the Christian faith – that all people matter because they reflect God's image. Here are five ways children can be involved in Sanctity of Life.

### **1. Host a clothing drive for foster children.**

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18

There are over 400,000 children within the US' foster care system, so helping children within the local community is a great way to reinforce the value of life. Search for a local foster care ministry in your area to find out how to help. An easy way to help is by hosting a clothing drive to collect new or gently used clothing that can then be donated to a foster care clothes closet. One of our local ministries sponsors such a closet and is a wonderful blessing to the community. Because we are especially called to help the needy, this opportunity safely exposes children to the reality of hardships while enforcing every believer's responsibility to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

### **2. Establish a long-term commitment to foreign orphan care.**

"In my distress I called out to the Lord; I called out to my God." 2 Samuel 22:7

While some aspects of foreign orphan care are out of reach for children, there are simple ways God can use them to minister to and help provide for the needs of orphans. One idea is to make birthday cards with personal messages to encourage the orphans on their special day. Another idea is to



become pen pals with an orphan. Lastly, sending small monthly gifts such as handmade jewelry can do wonders for an orphan's sense of belonging. By taking the time to deliberately reach out to children in other countries, our own children will begin to resonate with God's love for orphans. If you are unaware of any reputable, gospel-preaching orphanages then ask your pastor, other church leaders, or even friends if they have any contacts who could point you in the right direction. Keep in mind that each orphanage has specific needs and protective rules, so consistent communication and understanding is the key. Then make the commitment to continually provide opportunities for children inside your sphere of influence to help the cause.

### **3. Dedicate spare change to save babies.**

"From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you." Psalm 71:6

Across our nation there are hundreds of pregnancy resource centers who advocate for preborn life. By offering love, compassion, and truth these centers are a shining light for Christ and have saved thousands of babies simply by supporting families who face unplanned pregnancies. Each January our church partakes in a "Baby Bottle" fundraising campaign where members are asked to fill the bottles with spare change as a donation to our local crisis pregnancy center. This is a great activity for even young children because they will take pride in "helping the babies." So consider starting a similar campaign to not only raise money but to provide awareness for the life-saving work of crisis pregnancy centers.

### **4. "Shout" for the needy and Christians who face persecution.**

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

I recently noticed on my favorite social media website that people are quick to "like" or comment on something silly, sarcastic, or even downright rude yet seem to ignore posts that advocate for life. And this bothers me as a Christ-follower. One of the ways we can support Sanctity of Life is by aligning ourselves – privately and publically – to causes that *matter*. This is a little easier for adults, but children can be involved too. For example, there's an organization in our area called [The Great Need](#) that specifically ministers to the refugees (who are mostly orphans) displaced by terrorist regimes. They supply resources and endless amounts of prayer for the children, as well as the Iraqi Christians facing persecution. The Great Need,

consistently requests "shouts" for the orphans. In other words, one of the greatest needs is for people to care enough about what is happening to enlighten and motivate others to action. So, how can children "shout" for those facing persecution? One way is to create artwork or jewelry that signifies the persecuted and telling others the reason behind their design(s). Another way would be creating a play or drama that explores what it would be like for the children to lose their homes and/or family because of persecution and then sharing it with others. Taking the time to identify with fellow Christians who suffer for their faith will give children a sincere desire to carry one another's burdens in view of the love Christ gave to us all.

## **5. Pray for God to change hearts.**

"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." Isaiah 1:18

The initial efforts are aimed by prayer for God to change hearts and then followed up through the provision of resources. While children could certainly fundraise for such an endeavor, perhaps a more age-appropriate method would be focusing on prayer. It's important for the children we disciple to know that prayer not only works but that it has power. Teaching them to pray for people who face the daily pressure of ending life will bring legitimacy to the biblical command to protect life. Also, repetitive prayer will solidify their ownership to positive change and responsibility to lift others up to the Lord. Additionally, children can create and decorate prayer cards to keep in their bibles as a reminder to pray for Christ's saving grace to revive hearts.

We have the distinct opportunity to educate children concerning the Sanctity of Life. Giving them ample opportunities to act on God's truths will help them cultivate a deep desire to be leaders who fight for the sacredness of life.