



HOME/SCHOOL/PARISH CONNECTION

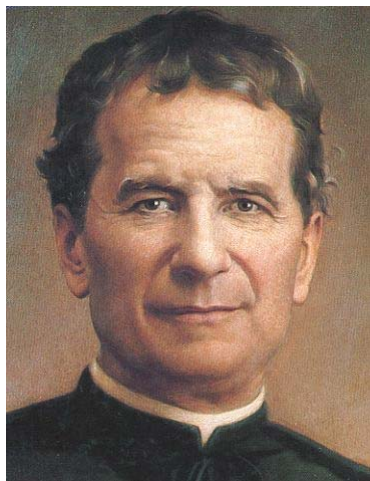
Respect

Virtue of the Month:

Respect

Saintly Exemplar:

St. John Bosco



1815-1888

Sacred Scripture: (Respect for self and others)

“Do you not realize that you are a temple of God with the Spirit of God living in you?”

1 *Corinthians* 3:16

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

“Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains in a special relationship with the Creator, Who is its sole end” (CCC 2258). “Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception” (CCC 1814). “Respect for life” is directly related to “respect for the dignity of persons” (CCC 2259, 2284). “The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God...If man exists, it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his Creator” (CCC 27).

What is the virtue of respect?

Each person is unique, unrepeatable, and has inherent dignity from God. Further, each person has a unique role in God’s plan. Therefore, each person is to be shown respect, even if the individual is impaired in some way. Having respect toward another person means that we show him honor and esteem because he is a child of God who deserves consideration and regard.

- The virtue of respect has a hierarchy. Complete respect is to begin in our relationship with God in obeying His commands and responding to His desire that we spend time with Him in prayer each day.
- Secondly, we are to respect ourselves with a proper balance in all matters.
- God has given us our parents and so we are to respect them. This is followed by a special respect for priests, religious, teachers, law enforcement officers, elders, siblings, relatives, bosses, fellow employees, neighbors and those in authority.
- We are to show respect for our neighbor and his conscience. Everyone should look upon his neighbor (without any exception) as ‘another self’ above all protecting his like and keeping in mind what is necessary for living it with dignity (CCC 1931).
- Respecting others will always pertain to respecting their feelings and should involve meekness, benevolence, courtesy and tact toward them.

Why do we need the virtue of respect?

- Due to the effects of Original Sin, we are inclined toward selfishness and pride. Therefore, we have to develop the virtue of respect. If a child is not taught how to respect parents and those in authority, he will neither respect God, himself, nor anyone else.
- We must respect the soul and body of each person, thereby avoiding the possibility of inducing others to do evil. If we sin against someone or cause him to sin, we wound his conscience and we sin against Christ because we are created in God’s image. (cf. 1 *Corinthians* 8:12).
- The virtue of respect insists that people have a right to the truth.
- We respect ourselves and others by taking care of *physical health* and avoiding every kind of excess. Also to be avoided are the use of illicit drugs which cause very serious damage, as well as the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco and medicine (*Compendium*, question 474).

Suggestions for teaching the virtue of respect at home:

Common principles for the practice of respect within the family:

- Parents are to teach children respect which begins with the spouses supporting and honoring each other. Children need to be reminded that Mom and Dad love each other. Therefore, never belittle your spouse in front of your children. If children see respect modeled by their parents, they will unconsciously imitate them.
- It is important to present a unified front to your children even if you disagree with your spouse on an issue, especially those involving family disciplinary matters. Resolve conflicts and disagreements privately, especially when not age appropriate for the children; resolution of other matters with the family can be a model of respect for them. Never take your child's side in opposition to your spouse.
- Exercise your authority consistently. Do not permit your children to yell or talk back to you, to use vulgar coarse language or swear, bully, manipulate, or pressure you to make decisions.
- Parents can be tempted to believe that it is better for a child to "like" them rather than "respect" them. Allowing this behavior leads the child to selfishness, an excessive desire to seek attention, cowardliness, and pride.
- The virtue of respect is associated with the feelings of others. Make others feel valued by acknowledging and listening to them. Treat everyone with kindness. Be courteous and considerate. Think about how it will affect others before you speak or act.

Aspects in teaching the virtue of respect for children:

- Begin the foundation of this virtue by teaching your child that everyone is different and uniqueness is good; teach them not to upset anyone by being unkind; not to criticize others; to look for the good in people; to act positively toward others; to show gratitude when others help you; and to treat everyone politely.
- Teach respect for adults by looking at the person (making eye contact) with whom they are speaking,
- Teach children to ask permission to use the possessions of other family members, treating family items, such as toys, clothing, furniture with care, and returning items in the same condition and to the proper place.

Aspects in teaching the virtue of respect for teens:

- Guide your teens to exercise self-respect through timely self-awareness, that is checking interior feelings before responding to a situation, not overreacting but responding in a responsible way without regret.
- Self respect includes setting firm personal boundaries and asserting oneself by expressing what we need and what we believe by defending the truth with the resolve that makes others take notice.
- Respect for others involves courtesy by holding doors, greeting people with a smile, offering seats, answering letters and calls promptly, writing thank you notes, being kind and thoughtful to everyone.
- We respect others when we accept responsibility for a mistake and not shift blame. We are to respect other's time by learning to value it as much as our own by being punctual and respecting deadlines.
- We respect another's space by being considerate of privacy.
- Respect for the truth obliges us to clarify a mistaken opinion—not without prayerful consideration—and provide information a person may need in order to improve, rather than remaining silent and uninvolved.

Adapted from *Raise Happy Children Teach Them Joy*, Mary Ann Budnick, R.B. Media.

Respect

St. John Bosco

Steps in learning and developing the virtue of respect are:

1. The child is guided to respect God.
2. The person is taught to recognize his dignity as a child of God and deserving of respect.
3. The child is to practice respect toward others, especially those in proper authority.
4. Respect is tied to the virtue of charity. We are never to look down on or speak ill of anyone, never to judge or give up on a soul. We are to speak with consideration and kindness, acknowledging each person.
5. Respecting another person will allow the person to become their best, that is who God created him to be.

Virtues are developed through practice.



Prayer to St. John Bosco

O Saint John Bosco, father and teacher, you labored so much for the salvation of souls. Help us to respect ourselves and each person as a child of God. Be our guide in seeking the good of our souls and the salvation of our neighbor. Teach us to love Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, Mary Mother of Jesus, and our Holy Father the Pope. Obtain for us from God the grace of a happy death, so that we may all be gathered together with you in Heaven.