



Secretariat of
Catholic Education



Office of the President

September 2, 2008

Dear Colleagues in Catholic Educational Ministries,

The recent publication of the guidance document, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, by the Catholic Bishops of the United States, sends out a strong call to all of us to participate in public life guided by the values of our faith. In addition to our personal efforts to meet this goal, we can also engage in helping children and youth, through our educational ministries, to form faith-filled consciences that will guide their future decisions and help them become informed and engaged citizens in their daily lives.

With that privileged position in mind, *we encourage you to make full use of the web site, www.faithfulcitizenship.org, by incorporating its ideas and lesson plans into your programs and activities. The web site and its interactive, multimedia materials are helpful for:*

- religious education programs
- elementary and secondary Catholic school classes
- independent research and study projects
- youth ministry programs
- intergenerational family settings
- Boards and Parent Associations

Below are some specific suggestions for the pre-November weeks of the new school year, and beyond:

- to acquaint you with the web site's content and format
- to give you a jump start on selecting the most promising and age-appropriate materials for your educational setting.

A. For children in the middle grades, use the Elementary lesson plans at http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/teachers/lesson_plans/elementary

Each of the **six Lesson Plans** develops a specific theme through an opening prayer experience, a reading from Scripture, questions to generate discussion, opportunities to correlate the discussion with real life situations, suggested action/behavior points and a closing prayer. For example:

- Lesson Plan B – Forming Consciences (St. Paul and the law written in our hearts)
- Lesson Plan E – Solidarity, One Human Family (Parable of the Good Samaritan)
- Lesson Plan F – Option for the Poor and Vulnerable (Corporal works of mercy)

B. For older students and young adults, Junior-senior high lesson plans and Ideas for HS or Ideas for youth are available, as well as a **Young Catholics** web site!

-The six **Junior-Senior High Lesson Plans**

[\[http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/teachers/lesson_plans/jr_sr\]](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/teachers/lesson_plans/jr_sr) follow the same themes and format as the Elementary section, but provide additional quotes from Church documents and more complex questions for discussion.

-**Ideas for High Schools** [\[http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/teachers/highschool\]](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/teachers/highschool) lend themselves to a variety of disciplines within a school or religious education curriculum. For example: Extended Response Essay (Writing/English), Investigative Reporter (Journalism), Voting Project and Class Debate (Social Studies), Champion of Human Life and Dignity (Religion).

-The **Young Catholics** [\[http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/youth\]](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/youth) link includes hands-on activities, a coffee discussion guide, three exciting videos that encourage young Catholics to consider how they can make a difference, as well as independent projects such as Going Deeper (activities for discussion, research, and prayer) and a Take Action section (photo submission page and e-postcards).

C. For families and adult groups, see All Catholics [\[http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/all\]](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/all).

In addition to age-appropriate material from the other sections of the web site, this link includes The **Family Guide** for Faithful Citizenship

[\[http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/all/family_guide\]](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/all/family_guide):

- Discussion guides, media-based activities and action steps
- Prayer and reflection resources
- What the Church teaches

Adult Formation Sessions [\[http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/teachers/adult_formation\]](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/teachers/adult_formation) are also available, as well as several **Videos** [\[http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/resources/videos\]](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/resources/videos) and **Podcasts** [\[http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/resources/podcasts\]](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/resources/podcasts).

We hope that this brief and partial introduction will inspire you to examine the full range of support material available at www.faithfulcitizenship.org for use with several age groups in parish, family and school-based programs.

The document, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, and its accompanying web site, are not meant to be used solely during this election year. Political responsibility is an ongoing obligation to participate in public life guided by the values of our faith. We are confident that you will continue to find helpful moral guidance in the Bishops' call to faithful citizenship for months and years after November 4, 2008.



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