Ages 11-14: Being a Life-Giver

Materials Needed

Set of *Being a Life-Giver Scenarios* for each student.

Prepare in Advance

Print *Being a Life-Giver Scenarios* (2 pp).

New Church Concept
Teacher Background

You shall not kill means not to take away spiritual life from anyone, not to extinguish faith and charity, and also not to hold the neighbor in hatred. This is evident from the meaning of "killing," as being to deprive of spiritual life. That "killing" means this is because in this sense spiritual life, or the life of heaven with people, is dealt with; and spiritual life is the life of faith and of charity. The reason why "not to kill" is also in the internal sense not to hold the neighbor in hatred, is that those who hold others in hatred continually wish to kill, and would kill in act unless prevented by the fear of the penalty, of the loss of life, of reputation, and the like. For hatred is of evil, is contrary to charity, and breathes nothing but the murder of those whom it hates: in the world the murder of the body; in the other life the murder of the soul." See *Arcana Coelestia* 8902

While many of the commandments start with "You shall not", it is important to remember that each commandment has a positive side too. First, we need to stop doing what hurts ourselves and other people. Then we can start doing what is good.



This activity presents a dozen scenarios people might encounter. Three possible responses are offered after each situation. Students will read a situation and discuss the impact of the different possible responses.

1. In what ways might a person take someone else's life without even touching them?
2. Have you ever felt your life was being taken from you? If so, what made it feel that way?
3. Give each student a copy of *Being a Life-Giver Scenarios*. Invite a student to choose one card. Read the first statement aloud.
4. Invite students to look at the possible responses. Ask them to evaluate whether each response is 1. true, 2. kind, or 3. useful. Some responses may be true, but not kind. Or useful, but not true.
5. There may be disagreements. Some of the possible responses are ambiguous, depending on what is motivating someone. Discuss these situations. What makes something truly life-giving versus murderous?
6. Students may also come up with additional possible responses for the scenarios.

New Church Concept
Teacher Background

"'The voice of blood' means violence done to charity is clear from many places in the Word where 'voice' stands for everything that accuses, and 'blood' for all sin, especially hatred. For anyone who hates his brother murders him in his own heart. You have heard that it was said to the men of old, You shall not kill, and whoever kills will be liable to judgement. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without cause will be liable to judgement. Whoever indeed says to his brother, Raca! will be liable to the Sanhedrin. And whoever says You fool! will be liable to the Gehenna of fire. Matthew 5:21-22.

These sayings denote degrees of hatred. Hatred is contrary to charity; and though a person does not actually commit murder, the intention to do so is still there, and by whatever possible method. It is external restraints alone which prevent murder actually being committed." *Arcana Coelestia* 374

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RECYCLED CAKE

Your mom is too busy to make your sister a birthday cake. So, she re-iced cake left over from your birthday, the day before, hoping your sister won't notice.

1. Tell your sister that mom didn't love her enough to make a cake for her.
2. Appreciate your mother's creative solution and compliment your sister on her pretty cake.
3. Ask loudly, "Has anyone seen this cake before?"

MY TEACHERS ARE JERKS

I hate doing homework and often forget to do it. My teachers nag me about it. They say I'll fail my courses.

1. Next time someone asks about homework I'll tell them their assignment was stupid! Why should I do stupid assignments?
2. I'll listen to their lectures if I have to, but they won't change my mind. They're all stupid jerks.
3. I've been fooling myself. I think my teachers really care.

TELL ME ALL

I want to be connected with my friends, to know what's going on. There's nothing wrong with that. But some friends only want to criticize others, and I find myself gossiping about everyone. What can I do? If I say nothing, I am a bystander. This is as bad as saying something bad myself.

1. I could redirect the conversation.
2. I can walk away and say nothing.
3. What if the people I was talking about were right here?

ASSASSIN

At your classmate's birthday, someone gives them a gift of a sweatshirt with a huge picture of their face on it. Most people are happy for them.

1. You say, "What an awesome way to feed your great big ego!"
2. You say, "Great, who decided we have to deal with two of you?"
3. You say, "That's a nice gift."

A CHANCE IN A MILLION

You have a classmate who dreams of being an Olympic figure skating champion. Trouble is they can't even stand up on ice! You're exhausted from listening to their dreams.

1. Say, "Whatever gave you the idea that you could do that?"
2. Say, "I admire you. I can see you're doing a lot of hard work to make your dream come true!"
3. Say, "Wow! Can't wait to see you thrash the competition!"

BET YOU'LL MESS UP!

Your friend is going for an important try-out. They've been talking about nothing else for weeks. They work hard every day, but aren't sure they'll be good enough to get in.

1. You tell them, "Bet you'll mess up!"
2. Say, "Good luck! I hope things go well."
3. Say, "I hear it's really difficult to get in. I know three people who were much better than you that didn't make it!"

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A SHOT AT THE GOAL

Your soccer team has made it to the finals and your team is winning! You want the MVP award and are doing all you can to get yourself in the best position to win it.

1. Keep control of the ball for as long as you can by not passing it to other players.
2. Recognize the whole team needs to work together to win. Trust your teammates and include everyone in the game.
3. You see someone else lining up a goal shot and jump in so you get the goal.

I COULD DO IT BETTER

You have many talents. You write and draw well. You are doing a group project with people less talented than you. You think the girl who is writing the assignment is doing a terrible job.

1. Tell her that her writing is terrible but she shouldn't worry, you'll re-do it for her.
2. Stop and think about your classmate and accept that this is her best work. Acknowledge the best elements of her efforts.
3. Change what she has written without telling her.

GREEN SLIME

Your younger brother is always following you around and asking stupid questions. He listens in when you are talking to your friends and ruins your conversations.

1. Start calling him "green slime".
2. Lie to your friends. Tell them your brother still wets his bed.
3. See that your brother is lonely and wants your company. Do something with him.

MY SIBLING IS THE WORST

You are chatting on the phone with a friend. Your younger sibling is in the room. Your sibling says stupid things about you that you don't want your friends to know, e.g. you still suck your thumb.

1. Loudly tell your sibling to be quiet.
2. Leave or mute and tell your sibling what they are saying is hurting you.
3. Tell your friends mean things about your sibling so they won't believe what he/she is saying about you.

HEY, I WAS TALKING

You have a lot to say in an online conversation you started with a group of friends. After ten minutes someone else tries to say something that is unrelated to what you were saying.

1. Mute all. Tell people you have not finished and continue speaking.
2. Mute yourself and listen to what they have to say but mute them as soon as it's quiet and start talking again.
3. Apologize for talking so long and let someone start a new topic.

MY WORLD

You're great at online gaming. The best part is when others invite you to play in their world so you can destroy their stuff. You distract them so they don't notice what you're doing.

1. Tell people you think destroying their stuff is funny.
2. Pay attention to the fact that your friends have stopped telling you when they're playing.
3. Tell people they should grow up. It's only a game.

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