

Lesson Plan

Science & Religion Institute

Lesson Plan Description

Topic

The means to be made human in the Imago Dei

Title of Lesson Plan:

"Building a Baby"

Description

We recognize the responsibilities given to us by God concerning the human condition; through technology we have the capacity to alter and commodify human life. At this point in our history we cannot afford to reduce life merely to its constituent components but need to utilize both science and religion in order to inform a moral as well as a material understanding of man. In doing so we need to come to a clear understanding of who man is, his dignity and purpose. It is in this way we seek to join the insights of faith and science in order to produce a more complete view of what it means to be human.

Quotes taken from "Our knowledge of God and nature: physics, philosophy and theology" to illustrate our connection to the course material.

"We bear before God enormous responsibilities for the human condition because historically we have had and continue to have a major influence on the development of ideas and values and on the course of human action." (St. John Paul II, Letter to the Director of the Vatican Observatory, June 1, 1998 p2)

"Through technology it also has given us the capacity to travel, to communicate, to build, to cure, and to probe in ways which would have been almost unimaginable to our ancestors. Such knowledge and power, as we have discovered, can be used greatly to enhance and improve our lives or they can be exploited to diminish and destroy human life and the environment even on a global scale. " (St. John Paul II, Letter to the Director of the Vatican Observatory, June 1, 1998 p4)

“What is critically important is that each discipline should continue to enrich, nourish and challenge the other to be more fully what it can be and to contribute to our vision of who we are and who we are becoming.” (St. John Paul II, Letter to the Director of the Vatican Observatory, June 1, 1998 p5)

Essential Questions

- Are human beings predisposed to objectify and commodify other human beings?
- What is the responsibility of the scientific community and the community as a whole to conduct research in a fashion that respects the human person?
- What are possible outcomes of the Crispr-Cas9 technology on what it means to be human?
- What are ways that a responsible society can utilize the combined understanding of faith and science to protect the human person from commodification and what are the moral obligations as Catholics to defend and promote the idea that human beings are created in the Imago Dei?

Method

- Introduction
 - Related Question for exploration
 - Activating Prior Knowledge:
 - Warm-up:(pre assessment)
 - How does life get from genotype to phenotype?
 - How does genotype naturally get passed onto offspring?
 - What direct choices did your parents make to determine your genotype?
 - How is your genotype related to your grandparents' genotype?
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- Delivery
 - Presentation
 - Designer Baby (PPT)
 - Selection (activities of designing your baby, slides
 - Product (activities review of baby produced through selection of genes)
 - Discussion
 - Crispr / IVF - Catholic Response (Catholic Teaching)

- Conclusion
 - assessment
 - Teacher asks for discussion on the essential questions listed above
- **Proposed basis for teacher summary of lesson:**
 1. Are human beings predisposed to objectify and commodify other human beings?
 2. What is the responsibility of the scientific community and the community as a whole to conduct research in a fashion that respects the human person?

Skills

Our lesson plan involves the use of Crispr/Cas 9 to alter the genome of human embryos for the purpose of commodifying children.

- Students will place themselves in the role of parents ordering a child.
- Then they will evaluate the preferences of the class as a whole for different attributes and what those preferences currently say about our society and what that will mean for future generations.
- Students will then be asked to put themselves in the role of being the order child and asked to now evaluate the relationship between themselves and their parents
- Students will evaluate the effect on the grandchildren of the parents that first ordered a child.
- Students shall predict the results of the physical, social and emotional implications for the family and society.
- Students will then be asked how science and technology guided their moral decisions.



Knowledge

- Students will learn that we have a responsibility to care for God's Creations especially those made in His image

- Students will learn that we currently have the potential technology (Crispr/Cas 9 with *in vitro* fertilization) to greatly influence what it means to be human (we are now a commodity)
- Students will learn the Catholic understanding of personhood.
- Students will learn the Catholic teaching on manipulation of human embryos and *in vitro* fertilization.
- Students will learn that science often sells the sizzle.

“When the human person is no longer seen as standing under God’s protection and bearing God’s breath, then the human being begins to be viewed in utilitarian fashion. It is then that the barbarity appears that tramples upon human dignity...The Fate of all of us depends on whether this moral dignity of the human person can be defended in the world of technology, with all its possibilities.” *In the Beginning... pages 45-46. Joseph Ratzinger*

Resources

-  Designer Baby ND conference
- Watch GATTACA
 -  Gattaca Visit to the local geneticist
- <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/44994/catholic-bioethicist-warns-against-gene-editing-experiments>

Assessment

(Recommended Formative)

Role play - students will be divided into 3 person groups and roleplay three different scenarios.

- **Scenario 1: (Discussion of commodification)**
 Roles: Mom,Dad and Ordered Child
 Guided/suggested questions:
 - For what purpose would mom and dad choose gene editing? Justify their choices.
 - Why don't I look like you?
 - How does the ordered child feel about being “designed”?

- What is my value?
- **Session 2 (Discussion on familial effects.)**
 Roles: Grandparent, Ordered Child, Ordered Child's Child
 Guided/suggested questions:
 - As an ordered child, would you want to design your child as well, why or why not?
 - Given the genetic change within the ordered child and the birth of their child what effect does this have on the relationship with the grandparents and family dynamics (traditions, gatherings,...)
- **Session 3 (Socioeconomic outcomes)**
 Roles: Ordered Child, Classmate who is Naturally Born, Classmate who is an Ordered Child of a Wealthier Couple
 - What will be the possible socioeconomic outcomes(class,education,occupations etc.) within the family and society between, natural born children, designed (ordered) children of a middle class family and the designed (ordered) children of a wealthy family?