

21ST ANNUAL SAN FRANCISCO ARCHDIOCESAN 2010 RESPECT LIFE ESSAY CONTEST

God Made Man & Woman the Center of His Creative Work and Gave Them Responsibility for Caring for Creation.

“Then God said: Let us make man in our image and likeness: let them have dominion over the fishes of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle and the wild animals, and every creeping creature that moves upon the earth.

God created man in his own image: in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them.

God blessed them, saying be fertile and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it: rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and all living creatures that move upon the earth.”

Genesis 1:26-28

Grades 1 & 2.

God created the sun and the moon and the stars. He created plants and animals, birds and fish, and everything else on earth. But the crowning jewel of God’s creation was man and woman. We all have a responsibility to care for everything God created. Most of all, we must care for each other.



Think about everything God created. Why do babies need and deserve so much of our care and love, compared to our responsibility to care for animals and plants and non-living things? You may want to draw a picture showing how babies fit into the world God created for us.

Grades 3 & 4.

God created the world and filled it with plants and animals and human beings made in His own image and likeness. Everything God created has a place in His Divine plan. Although God told men and women to rule over all the earth’s creatures, we must never forget that the environment is a gift from God which must be used respectfully and responsibly. After all, our children and our children’s children deserve to enjoy the beauty of creation as we do.

Write a letter to babies being born today telling them about all the wonders of creation they will see as they grow up. Tell them about the sky and the plants and animals that God created for them. Tell them what you will do to make sure they are born into the world God wanted us all to share---a world full of goodness and beauty.



Grades 5 & 6.

When God created the universe, he created man and woman as its crowning jewel. He set them at the pinnacle of creation and gave them a unique role as the world's stewards. By endowing them with His image and by placing them in authority over all other earthly creatures, God gave men and women superiority and priority over His other creatures. Environmental stewardship, while it seeks to harmonize the fulfillment of the needs of all creatures, puts human needs above nonhuman needs when the two are in conflict.



Think of examples of how some in our society and in other cultures have reversed these principles, sometimes making men and women the servants of creation rather than its stewards. Talk about the many ways human beings are greater than animals and plants. How can we preserve our environment well, while making our main concern God's most important gift---the gift of human life?



Grades 7 & 8.

In his 2009 World Day of Peace Message, Pope Benedict XVI tells us that many believe poverty is a result of overpopulation. For this reason, international campaigns exist to reduce birth-rates using methods that do not respect the dignity of women, the right to life or the right of parents to chose how many children to have. For example, China has maintained a "one-child policy" since 1979 in an attempt to prevent overpopulation. This policy forces abortion on women if they become pregnant without authorization from the state. We cannot build true peace if we separate---or even set at odds---the protection of the environment with the protection of human life, including unborn life.

Why do population control policies like China's "one-child policy," disrespect the life and dignity of the human person? Why is the "one-child policy" unjust, not only to unborn children, but also to women, men, families and society?



Grades 9 - 12.

Environmental groups have long argued that population growth causes a host of environmental problems. Promotion of birth control, and in some cases abortion, is seen as an efficient and cost-effective means of reversing the degradation of the earth's resources, the pollution of water and air, and even global warming. People are often considered a threat to the environment instead of stewards of creation. In his 2009 World Day of Peace Message, the Holy Father responded to this way of thinking by advocating a model of development based on the centrality of the human person, the responsible use of resources and a realization of the need for a changed life-style. In his 2010 Message, Pope Benedict XVI stressed that our duties toward the environment flow from our duties toward the person. Young people cannot be taught to respect the environment if they do not respect humanity as the apex of creation.

How can we seek solutions to environmental problems, while remembering that we must never attempt to solve problems by artificially interfering with the creation of human beings through birth control or by killing human beings through abortion?