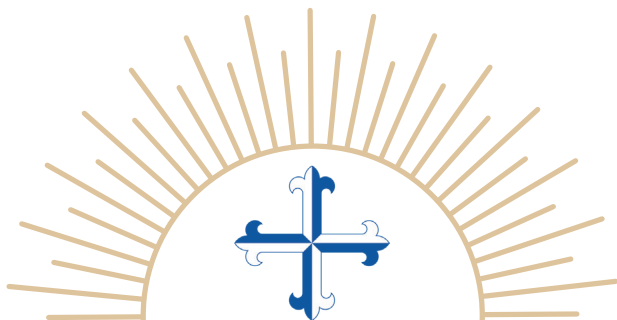


DISCUSSION GUIDE

for



INSIGHT

A joint project of
AQUINAS COLLEGE, NASHVILLE
and the
INSTITUTE FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION
at The Catholic University of America

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Graphic design and layout: Design Q Studio, LLC

Insight is a joint project of:



Institute for the Transformation
of Catholic Education

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Dear friends in Catholic education:

Welcome to *Insight*, the first Social and Emotional Learning professional development program for K-12 Catholic school educators!

This program is designed to support you as you collaborate with parents in the formation and education of their children.

As Catholic educators, we know that education is more than a series of subjects to be learned but is also about formation of the human person, and thus, formation in self-knowledge, interpersonal relationships, and virtue. *Insight* is offered as a professional development resource to help educators examine Social and Emotional Learning through the distinctive lens of the Catholic intellectual tradition.

We pray that this journey will bring you greater insight into your great worth and dignity and that of your students!
God bless you.



“The educational value of Christian anthropology is obvious. Here is where students discover the true value of the human person: loved by God, with a mission on earth and a destiny that is immortal. As a result, they learn the virtues of self-respect and self-love, and of love for others – a love that is universal. In addition, each student will develop a willingness to embrace life, and also his or her own unique vocation, as a fulfillment of God’s will.”

Congregation for Catholic Education
The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 76



USING *INSIGHT*



Insight can be used by groups or individuals.

It was specifically designed to be used in elementary or secondary school faculty meetings over the course of a school year. Yet it could also be of benefit to catechists, parents, or school counselors in small groups or individual study.

USING *INSIGHT* IN A FACULTY MEETING

Ideal time: 30 minutes

1. Begin with an Opening Prayer to the Holy Spirit (found on page 3 of the Prayer Companion).
2. Watch the brief video lesson together.
3. Either together or in small groups discuss the questions provided in this Discussion Guide.
4. As your time permits, spend some time in private reflection and group discussion of the image and scripture in the Prayer Companion.

LESSON 1: SEEING AS GOD SEES



Essential Question: Who is the human person?

Objectives:

- Discuss what it means to be a human person, made in God’s image.
- Articulate the basis for the dignity of the human person.

Discussion Questions:

“Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession, and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead.”

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 357)

1. Discuss this quotation from the *Catechism* and how it impacts your practice as a Catholic educator.

2. This video introduced you to some theological and philosophical terminology about what it means to be a human person. Were there any particular phrases or concepts that struck you? Was there anything you didn't understand or that you would like to study further?

LESSON 2: UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS



Essential Question: How do I understand and integrate my emotions?

Objectives:

- Explain how to help our students to identify and integrate emotions in their lives.
- Define virtue and identify its impact in guiding the emotions.

Discussion Questions:

1. What did you learn about the emotions that was new or surprising to you?

2. During the course of a single day there may be many situations that evoke strong emotions from our students. What are some ways we can prepare our students to respond virtuously?

3. What might be some ways to incorporate an “emotional check-in” for students during the course of a day? Discuss ideas.

LESSON 3: PEERING THROUGH THE FOG



Essential Question: How do I overcome cognitive distortions to think clearly?

Objectives:

- Examine common cognitive distortions that affect our accuracy in perceiving reality.
- Demonstrate that overcoming distortions is necessary to human flourishing.

Discussion Questions:

1. To be in touch with reality and think clearly is to be in touch with the truth. In the video, Sister mentioned that “as Catholic educators, we love the truth.” In addition to seeking the truth about situations with others, how else can we cultivate a love for the truth?

2. It's not uncommon for students to distort reality when they're not thinking clearly. What are some common cognitive distortions exhibited among the students in the age group you teach? What might be some ways you can guide them to a virtuous response and to clear thinking?

LESSON 4: SEEING THINGS THROUGH



Essential Question: How do I move from ideas to action?

Objectives:

- Consider the role of self-reflection as it plays into prudent decision making.
- Discuss how we can help our students to become reflective and decisive individuals.
- Explain how the virtue of prudence helps us to apply right reason to particular decisions.

Discussion Questions:

1. Think of a situation when you found it difficult to decide on a particular action and to do it. How could the virtue of prudence help you to make a decision?

2. The video provided some examples of how to help students in self-reflection and decision making. Think about some teaching strategies that could help your students in developing these capacities.

LESSON 5: THE EYE OF THE STORM



Essential Question: How do I recognize and respond to anxiety?

Objectives:

- Define anxiety and list its key signs in the classroom.
- Recognize how my personal anxiety affects my ability to relate to my students.
- Identify ways to respond to anxious students.

Discussion Questions:

“The worst anxiety of all ... is the fear of not being loved, the loss of love: despair is thus the conviction that one has forfeited all love forever, the horror of complete isolation. Hope in the proper sense of the word is thus the reverse: the certainty that I shall receive that great love that is indestructible and that I am already loved with this love here and now.”

(Pope Benedict XVI, 2005)

1. Discuss this quote and how it impacts your teaching.

2. What are some structures or systems you could put in place in your classroom to help reduce anxiety—both for yourself and for your students?

LESSON 6: HINDSIGHT IS 20/20



Essential Question: How do I learn from mistakes?

Objectives:

- Identify the role of mistakes in growth.
- Explain the relationship between fortitude and resilience.

Discussion Questions:

1. Pope St. John Paul II famously said: “We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father’s love for us and our real capacity to become the image of his Son.” Discuss how this quote connects to how we and our students can learn from our mistakes.

2. What vocabulary, procedures, or structures could you implement in your classroom that might help students to accept and learn from mistakes? Discuss ideas with your colleagues.

LESSON 7: SEEING RED



Essential Question: How do I recognize and respond to anger?

Objectives:

- Identify how to recognize and respond to anger in healthy ways.
- Explain how the virtues of fortitude and patience help us in enduring wrongs done to us.

Discussion Questions:

1. The video points out that anger can be the most reasonable response to a situation. How might this be surprising?

2. Make a list of the classroom situations that you've observed that most often provoke anger in your students. Discuss ways that you could address those situations when they arise to help students respond in a healthy and virtuous manner.

LESSON 8: LOOKING FOR THE GOOD... IN EVERYONE



Essential Question: How do I build trusting teacher-student relationships?

Objectives:

- Identify the foundation for building trusting relationships.
- Describe how through presence we can foster trusting relationships between teachers and students in the classroom.

Discussion Questions:

1. St. Teresa of Calcutta once said, “Peace begins with a smile.” Discuss situations in the classroom or elsewhere when you’ve witnessed (or been the recipient of) the power of a simple smile. How did that smile communicate “presence”?

LESSON 9: OPENING THE EYES OF THE HEART



Essential Question: How do I foster trusting peer relationships in my classroom?

Objectives:

- Discuss qualities of authentic friendship.
- Explore ways to develop students' capacity for effective communication.
- Identify the role of empathy in building trusting relationships.

Discussion Questions:

1. A child's capacity for friendship will grow as he or she matures. Make a list of some skills and dispositions that can be incorporated within a classroom setting to help foster growth in true friendship.

2. What are some strategies that could foster effective communication and empathy in the classroom? Consider ways to incorporate these strategies into particular lessons or activities this month.

LESSON 10: SEEING FACE TO FACE



Essential Question: How do I learn to forgive?

Objectives:

- Explain the terms justice, forgiveness, and mercy.
- Discuss how justice, forgiveness, and mercy play out in the school setting.

Discussion Questions:

1. This video quotes a passage from Corrie Ten Boom’s experience. What was most striking to you about her testimony?

2. Discuss strategies or lessons that might help students to understand the connections between justice, mercy, and forgiveness. What might be some common barriers to extending and receiving forgiveness?

APPENDIX A:

SUGGESTED SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS



LESSON 1

Catechism of the Catholic Church. (2003). Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Paragraphs 355-368.

Video: Body and Soul with Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P. (Aquinas 101). [youtube.com/watch?v=mTzNGUCJkm4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTzNGUCJkm4)

Video: Powers of the Soul: A First Look with Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P. (Aquinas 101). [youtube.com/watch?v=R2_t7nW6MZO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2_t7nW6MZO)

Video: Powers of the Soul: A Closer Look with Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P. (Aquinas 101). [youtube.com/watch?v=UnpycBrUB3U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnpycBrUB3U)

Book for Kindergarten to Third Grade:

Stanton, B. & West, C. (2020). *When You Became You*. Mascot Books.

High School Textbook:

Auer, Sister Terese. (2019). *The Human Person: Dignity Beyond Compare*. St. Cecilia Congregation: LBP Communications.

A Possible Book Study:

Neenan, Sister Mary Angelica. (2017). *The Nature of the Human Soul: Philosophical Anthropology and Moral Theology*. Cluny Media.

LESSON 2

Virtues in Practice Program. (2013). St. Cecilia Congregation: LBP Communications. www.nashvilledominican.org/apostolate/evangelization-and-catechesis/virtues-in-practice

Video: The Passions in General with Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P. (Aquinas 101). [youtube.com/watch?v=opFDXRliu_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opFDXRliu_Q)

Video: The Specific Passions with Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P. (Aquinas 101). [youtube.com/watch?v=xIEmOFkggjQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIEmOFkggjQ)

Video: Habits: A First Look with Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P. (Aquinas 101). [youtube.com/watch?v=Evisxy9Lrp8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Evisxy9Lrp8)

Video: Habits: A Closer Look with Fr. Thomas Petri, O.P. (Aquinas 101). youtu.be/auhGxevtnQo

Video: Virtue with Fr. Thomas Petri, O.P. (Aquinas 101). youtu.be/u3EwK4sy-E

High School Textbook:

Auer, Sister Terese. (2019). *The Human Person: Dignity Beyond Compare*. St Cecilia Congregation: LBP Communications.

A Possible Book Study:

Neenan, Sister Mary Angelica. (2017). *The Nature of the Human Soul: Philosophical Anthropology and Moral Theology*. Cluny Media.

LESSON 3

Video: The Principle of Non-Contradiction with Fr. James Brent, O.P. (Aquinas 101). youtu.be/YL17TRF_12w

Video: What Is Real Truth? with Fr. Mike Schmitz. youtu.be/KZC6RzkCxno

Garey, J. (2022). *How to Change Negative Thinking Patterns*. Child Mind Institute. childmind.org/article/how-to-change-negative-thinking-patterns/#full_article

LESSON 4

Video: Prudence with Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P. (Aquinas 101). youtu.be/exO3YH45UZU

Pine, Fr. Gregory. (2022). *Prudence: Choose Confidently, Live Boldly*. Our Sunday Visitor.

Virtues in Practice Program. (2013). St. Cecilia Congregation: LBP Communications. www.nashvilledominican.org/apostolate/evangelization-and-catechesis/virtues-in-practice

Willis, J., & Willis, M. (2020). *Research-Based Strategies to Ignite Student Learning*. ASCD.

LESSON 5

Child Mind Institute. Anxiety in Children and Teenagers. child-mind.org/topics/anxiety

Benedict XVI. (2005). *The Yes of Jesus Christ: Spiritual Exercises in Faith, Hope and Love*. Crossroad Publishing Company.

Benedict XVI. (2007). *Spe Salvi: On Christian Hope*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

LESSON 6

Brooks, A. (February 2021). Go Ahead and Fail. *The Atlantic*. arthurbrooks.com/article/go-ahead-and-fail

Video: Fortitude with Fr. James Brent, O.P. (Aquinas 101). youtu.be/BDOiDT_awxM

Video: Prudence with Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P. (Aquinas 101). youtu.be/exO3YH45UZU

Pine, Fr. Gregory. (2022). *Prudence: Choose Confidently, Live Boldly*. Our Sunday Visitor.

Virtues in Practice Program. (2013). St. Cecilia Congregation: LBP Communications. www.nashvilledominican.org/apostolate/evangelization-and-catechesis/virtues-in-practice

LESSON 7

Video: The Specific Passions with Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P. (Aquinas 101). youtu.be/xIEmOFkggjQ

LESSON 8

Piteo, Sister Elena Marie. (Fall 2021). Compassionate Discipline: Healing Classrooms That Support Human Flourishing. *Momentum*.

Todd, Sister Mary Madeline. (August 2015). *Absence to Presence*. *L'Osservatore Romano*. www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/absence-to-presence-3966

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LESSON 9

Cuddeback, J. (2010). *True Friendship: Where Virtue Becomes Happiness*. EPIC.

Fink, L. (2017). *Crafting and Conducting a Successful Socratic Seminar*. National Council of Teachers of English. ncte.org/blog/2017/12/crafting-conducting-successful-socratic-seminar

LESSON 10

Video: Justice with Fr. Aquinas Guilbeau, O.P. (Aquinas 101). youtu.be/udblbZNRPhc

Ten Boom, C., Sherrill, E., & Sherrill, J. (2000). *The Hiding Place*. Chosen Books.

APPENDIX B: REFERENCES FOR *INSIGHT* VIDEOS



LESSON 1

Aquinas, T. & Dominicans. English Province. (1947). *Summa Theologica* (1st complete American ed. / ed.). Benziger Bros.

Auer, Sister Terese. (2019). *The Human Person: Dignity Beyond Compare*. St Cecilia Congregation: LBP Communications.

Benedict, XVI. (May 5, 2010). General Audience: *Munus sanctificandi*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20100505.html

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Neenan, Sister Mary Angelica. (2017). *The Nature of the Human Soul: Philosophical Anthropology and Moral Theology*. Cluny Media.

Vitz, P.C., Nordling, W.J. & Titus, C.S. (2020). *A Catholic Christian Meta-Model of the Person*. Divine Mercy University Press.

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Aquinas, T. & Dominicans. English Province. (1947). *Summa Theologica* (1st complete American ed. / ed.). Benziger Bros.

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Frey, N., Fisher, D., Smith, D. (2019). *All Learning Is Social and Emotional: Helping Students Develop Essential Skills for the Classroom and Beyond*. ASCD.

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