



Life Lessons

13 lesson plans from kindergarten to 12th grade for teaching about **prolife** issues and respecting human life.



We're here to help you succeed!

Right to Life of Michigan wants to help educators provide their students with a genuine appreciation for the gift of life. To do so, we have compiled this set of lesson plans for every age group throughout grade school.

Life Lessons is designed to inspire you. Feel free to adapt the plans in whatever manner helps you teach. Lessons can be broken up into multiple days, combined, or used at different age levels than listed. They can be adapted for homeschooling, Sunday school, or any educational setting. Michigan public school standards for each lesson are listed to help you integrate the lessons into your regular curriculum, if desired.

Though prolife issues can be difficult for even well-educated adults to grasp, it's vital that young people encounter prolife issues while they develop their worldviews. The airwaves, Internet and phone screens are constantly filled with biased or incomplete information on abortion and many other topics, often from the very institutions dedicated to educating and informing us.

Thank you for leading others to understand the importance of respecting every human life.

Classroom Materials Available

Besides specific resources mentioned, Right to Life of Michigan has many other resources available to help you with these lesson plans or find further information on other prolife issues. These resources can be utilized in conjunction with the lesson plans in this guide, or for other lessons or learning projects you might create.

Factsheets

Dozens of factsheets are available covering several different prolife issues, everything from the economic impact of abortion to stem cell research ethics. These can be freely downloaded from RTL.org for you to print.

LifeNotes

LifeNotes cover specific prolife issues in an in-depth way, including many footnotes or citations for additional reading and research. These can be downloaded and freely printed from RTL.org.

PowerPoint Presentations

Several free PowerPoint presentations are available for download from RTL.org and come with a full script for the presenter. Presentations cover the Right to Life movement, Roe v. Wade (faith-themed), Planned Parenthood, and fetal development and abortion methods (non-graphic).

Fetal Models

We have several sets of anatomically accurate, life-sized fetal models available for free loan. They come in several styles, including hand-held sets, stand sets, or display sets.

To find these resources or to seek additional advice or help, please visit our website, RTL.org, e-mail us at info@rtl.org, or contact your nearest Right to Life of Michigan Resource Center:

State Central Resource Center

2340 Porter St., SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49509
(616) 532-2300

Lansing Resource Center

233 N. Walnut St.
Lansing, MI 48933
(517) 487-3376

Wayne County Resource Center

2010 Eureka Road
Wyandotte, MI 48192
(734) 282-6100

Macomb County Resource Center

27417 Harper
St. Clair Shores, MI 48081
(586) 774-6050

Books

Hundreds of individual titles are available for free library loan, from older titles to the latest prolife books. If you are just looking to do some prolife reading on a specific topic, call us and our staff will be happy to recommend a title for you.

Videos

DVDs and some older VHS tapes are available for free library loan. Excellent options include fetal development videos or prolife movies for older students like *October Baby*.

Quizboards

We have several electronic quizboards available to test the knowledge of your students on the issue of abortion. The quizboards come with handouts providing more detailed answers to the questions.

For-Sale Items

Some prolife items for sale make excellent classroom aids, for example our poster detailing fetal development, our *If They Say...You Say* speaker guide on abortion, our short film *Life Uninvited*, or reprints of *Life* magazine's 1965 *Life Before Birth* special edition.

The Value of Life

Objectives

1. Learn that a person's value does not change based on their personal qualities.
2. Develop respect for the uniqueness of every individual.

Standards

(Social Studies) 1 – H2.0.4: Retell in sequence important ideas and details from stories about families or schools.

Instruction

1. If desired, read or have students watch a movie version of *Horton Hears a Who?* as an introduction to the topic.
2. Students will write a brief history of a family member or friend who is special to them. The story should focus on some basic details of the student's life and what makes them unique.
3. Students will briefly present their stories to the class.
4. Lead the class in a discussion covering the following themes:
 - Is there anyone who is more valuable than another person?
 - Is there value in every human life? Even if we don't know someone?
 - How should we treat people we value?
 - Impress upon students that we don't know the talents or history of everyone we see (their classmates in the school, neighbors, strangers), yet they are all unique individuals.

Materials

You may provide *Horton Hears a Who?* book or movie (if desired). Other acceptable children's book titles or videos can be borrowed from a Right to Life of Michigan Resource Center. Some examples include *I Have a Sister, My Sister is Deaf* by Jeanne Whitehouse Peterson; *God's Greatest Gift* by Deborah Burch, for very young students; or for fetal development resources suitable for younger students, *Angel in the Waters* by Regina Doman or the fetal development video *You Are a Masterpiece*. You may also provide paper and pencils.

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion. You may grade the students' short stories.

Elementary School

The Stages of Life

Objectives

1. Learn that a person's value does not change based on their age.
2. Recognize that a person has different needs and responsibilities in every stage of life.

Standards

(Social Studies) K – H2.0.2: Create a timeline using events from their own lives (e.g., birth, crawling, walking, loss of first tooth, first day of school).

Instruction

1. Students will bring pictures of themselves as a baby up until the present day.
2. Students will arrange the pictures in age order on a poster board.
3. Students will present their pictures to the class in a time of "show and tell."
4. Lead the class in a discussion covering the following themes:
 - What did students need help with as a baby/toddler compared to today?
 - What are students able to do on their own now?
 - What are the students' responsibilities toward others now that they are older?
 - What responsibilities do the students think they will have when they are a few years older, or even as old as their parents?
 - Try to parallel their "micro-responsibilities" to themselves with their "macro-responsibilities" to society.

Materials

Students provide their own pictures. You will provide poster board, glue sticks, and markers to write on posters if desired. If students are unable to provide their own pictures, cut-outs from old magazines could be used instead. Right to Life of Michigan also has a short fetal development video geared towards elementary-aged children that can be shared (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_JQRjVTk34).

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion, and the post boards can be graded.

Recognizing our Uniqueness

Objectives

1. Learn that a person's value does not change based on their personal qualities.
2. Understand that every human being is unique, but also shares a common humanity.

Standards

(Social Studies) 1 – C5.0.1: Describe some responsibilities people have at home and at school (e.g., taking care of oneself, respect for the rights of others, following rules, getting along with others).

Instruction

1. Students will go through old magazines/newspapers to cut out several pictures of people who differ from each other in visible ways, e.g. age or job.
2. Entire class will assemble their pictures into one large collage.
3. Lead the class in a discussion covering the following themes:
 - How are people in the collage unique?
 - What do all of the people in the collage have in common?
 - What responsibilities does everyone in the collage share, regardless of how different they are as individuals?
4. Ask each student in the class to give one example of how they are unique.

Materials

You will provide old magazines and/or newspapers, scissors, glue, and a large poster board.

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion.

The Right to Life

Objectives

1. Recognize that a functioning society depends on our rights being recognized and protected.
2. Learn that certain rights are fundamentally important, especially the right to life.

Standards

(Social Studies) 3 – C5.0.1: Identify rights (e.g., freedom of speech, freedom of religion, right to own property) and responsibilities of citizenship (e.g., respecting the rights of others, voting, obeying laws).

Instruction

1. Break class up into small groups. Each group will be given an imaginary name as a country, or students can come up with their own names.
2. Students will come up with a list of the three most important rights for their imaginary country.
3. One student from each group will present their list of rights to the class. You may want to write all of these on a whiteboard so the entire class can see them.
4. Read an excerpt from our Declaration of Independence about our unalienable rights.
5. Lead the class in a discussion covering the following themes:
 - What did the groups' lists of rights have in common with each other?
 - What did the groups' lists of rights have in common with the Declaration of Independence?
 - Explain to students that all of the rights they listed and rights in the Declaration of Independence depend on our fundamental right to life.

Materials

You may provide paper and pencils. You may need a whiteboard or equivalent.

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion. The lesson could be expanded into a broader "create a nation" with a few more details included, and each group's project could be graded.

Serving Mothers in Need

Objectives

1. Engage in serving others in need.
2. Understand the importance of helping people who can't help themselves.

Standards

(Social Studies) 4 – P4.2.2: Participate in projects to help or inform others.

Instruction

1. The class will travel to a local pregnancy help center as a field trip.
2. Students will help the center sort and fold clothes for their baby pantry, diapers, or other items.
3. You may let a member of pregnancy center staff explain (in an age-appropriate manner) how they help parents take care of babies after birth.
4. Lead the class in a discussion covering the following themes:
 - Not everyone can afford basic needs.
 - Many organizations exist to assist people who need help taking care of their babies, including this particular one in our community.
5. If the students are mature enough, this may be a good opportunity to explain to students the purpose of the pregnancy center, or that the pregnancy center tries to educate pregnant women about their babies. A fetal model set would be good to use for this.
6. Students could also be asked to write a brief journal entry about their experience.

Materials

No materials necessary. If organizing a field trip is difficult, organize a class diaper drive or something similar, and invite the local pregnancy center staff to present to the class. A list of prolife pregnancy help centers in Michigan can be found here: RTL.org/pregnancy-help/. Fetal model sets can be borrowed from our Resource Centers.

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion.

Respecting the Elderly

Objectives

1. Understand the value of the historical perspective of the elderly.
2. Learn how to conduct an interview.

Standards

(Social Studies) P2.4: Use multiple perspectives and resources to identify and analyze issues appropriate to the social studies discipline being studied.

Instruction

1. Provide students with a list of questions to ask a grandparent, elderly neighbor, or other elderly member of the community (students may be asked to come up with some of their own). The questions for all students should refer to one common theme or a specific historical event.
2. Students will conduct interviews as homework and return to class with written answers for their questions.
3. Students will briefly summarize their interview responses in class.
4. Lead the class in a discussion covering the following themes:
 - What did the interview responses have in common? How did they differ?
 - What did they learn about their elderly family/friends that surprised them or taught them something new about the theme or event?
 - Discuss if age has anything to do with how much respect a person deserves.

Materials

Provide a list of interview questions in advance.

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion. You may grade their interview responses.

Life in the Womb

Objectives

1. Learn about the stages of human development.
2. Understand that unborn children are human throughout every stage of development.

Standards

(Science) MS-LS1-5: Construct a scientific explanation based on evidence for how environmental and genetic factors influence the growth of organisms.

Instruction

1. Show students an age-appropriate video on fetal development or utilize a detailed set of fetal models.
2. Give students a handout listing major weekly milestones of fetal development throughout the entire pregnancy. Give students a homework assignment to create a chart about the stages of pregnancy. The students will come up with their own stages of pregnancy, name them, and define them by important milestones.
3. The next class day, students will briefly summarize what stages of pregnancy they came up with and the important milestones they used to define the stages.
4. Explain to the students the common stages used to describe pregnancy, including trimesters and the concept of viability.
5. Lead the class in a discussion covering the following themes:
 - Which stages did most students have in common? Which differed the most?
 - Focus on the arbitrary nature of how we divide up stages of pregnancy. Ask them if any particular milestone means we should value the life of the child differently.
 - Explain that fertilization is the obvious starting point as the moment in which everyone's life began.
 - Explain that the genetic code of the child is different from the mother at fertilization, and how their unique code helps define them as unique life, separate from the life of their mother.

Materials

Right to Life of Michigan has several copies of fetal development videos or fetal model sets you may borrow. Provide students with a fetal development resource to take home. Right to Life of Michigan has one available for free download and printing, our *History of You* handout (RTL.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/fetaldevelopment.pdf). An excellent book with detailed photos is available, *From Conception to Birth: A Life Unfolds* by Alexander Tsiaras. A handout with vocabulary definitions of scientific terms could be helpful.

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion. You may grade the students' charts for originality, quality of design, and critical thinking.

The Abortion Issue

Objectives

1. Learn about the basics of abortion as a policy issue.
2. Recognize the moral implications of abortion.

Standards

(Social Studies) 7 – P3.1.1: Clearly state an issue as a question or public policy, trace the origins of an issue, analyze and synthesize various perspectives, and generate and evaluate alternative resolutions. Deeply examine policy issues in group discussions and debates to make reasoned and informed decisions. Write persuasive/argumentative essays expressing and justifying decisions on public policy issues. Plan and conduct activities intended to advance views on matters of public policy, report the results, and evaluate effectiveness.

Instruction

1. Instruct students about important basic abortion facts:
 - What is an abortion? You may want to offer basic descriptions of abortion procedures.
 - A brief history of abortion, including a basic description of the U.S. Supreme Court's role in the issue.
 - Important abortion statistics, including the number of abortions in the U.S. and Michigan. You could also provide some specific statistics on who has abortions and reasons why they have them.
 - Give the positions on abortion of major organizations involved on the issue and what the organizations do, e.g. Right to Life of Michigan, Planned Parenthood.
2. Lead the class in a discussion covering the following themes:
 - Abortion has several forms at various stages of pregnancy, but each abortion method ends the life of an unborn child.
 - Abortion raises serious moral questions.
 - Abortion has a large impact on our political system and elections, especially the U.S. Supreme Court and judicial nominations.
3. Students can also be asked to write a short essay about possible state and federal public policy solutions to reduce abortions (hypothetically imagining that a total ban on abortion wasn't possible).

Materials

You can provide handouts to students to aid instruction. Right to Life of Michigan has several relevant handouts available, including *Abortion Fast Facts* ([RTL.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/abortionfastfacts.pdf](https://www.rtl.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/abortionfastfacts.pdf)), and *Abortions Since Roe v. Wade* ([RTL.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/AbortionsSinceRoeFlyer.pdf](https://www.rtl.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/AbortionsSinceRoeFlyer.pdf)). Students could be asked to do a close reading/guided note taking of the handouts as well. Several good videos can be found on our YouTube channel ([youtube.com/@rtlmich](https://www.youtube.com/@rtlmich)), including our *Still on That Journey* and *Compassion Project* series.

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion. Essays could be graded.

Abortion Legislation

Objectives

1. Understand the basics of the legislative process.
2. Learn more about the impact of abortion on society.

Standards

(Social Studies) 8 – P3.1.1: Identify, research, analyze, discuss, and defend a position on a national public policy issue.

Instruction

1. Give students a brief overview/refresher of the basic steps in the legislative process. A handout or diagram may be helpful.
2. Give students a basic overview of abortion law in Michigan (our legislation page on RTL.org provides a helpful summary).
3. The class will break up into two separate groups, a “house” and a “senate.” Each group will be tasked with coming up with a basic amendment to an existing prolife law (selected by you) and voting on it. Michigan’s old Stillborn Child Tax Credit is an easy example, potentially allowing students to have a genuine debate over cost or how the law is implemented.
4. Each group will present their proposed amendment. Facilitate a debate between members of both groups in a “conference committee” to reach a compromise to be approved by both houses to “send” to the governor. If both groups come up with the same amendment, change one of them so they can debate it further.
5. Lead the class in a discussion covering the following themes:
 - The difficulty of finding a compromise on a controversial issue.
 - What makes an argument successful?
 - What about our state’s abortion laws surprised you?
6. These exercises may be split up into multiple lessons/days to give a richer experience as a “mock legislature.”

Materials

Provide students with pencils and paper to take notes during debates, a whiteboard or equivalent is helpful to track proposed amendments and to display them to the entire group for the “conference committee.” A list of prolife laws in Michigan can be found on our website: [RTL.org/legislation/prolife-law-directory](https://www.rtl.org/legislation/prolife-law-directory).

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion.

Research

Objectives

1. Learn more about the issue of abortion.
2. Learn how to evaluate sources of information and bias.

Standards

(Social Studies) P2.3: Know how to find and organize information from a variety of sources; analyze, interpret, support interpretations with evidence, critically evaluate, and present the information orally and in writing; report investigation results effectively.

Instruction

1. Review strategies for evaluating the credibility of a source, encouraging students to ask the following questions:
 - In what way is the author or authors associated with this topic?
 - Does the author have a proven or potential source of bias? Can any source be entirely free of bias?
 - When was it written, and why does that date matter?
 - What is the intended purpose of the information?
 - Does this source contain citations? Who else is cited within the content and are those sources themselves credible?
2. Present an example of a credible and a non-credible source and lead the class in evaluating the sources.
3. Give students one keyword (or a list of keywords to choose one from) to search online for information about abortion: statistics, late-term abortions, etc. Students will search the Internet to find one credible source. Student will write a brief summary of reasons the source they found is credible and something interesting about the information they learned.

Materials

Computer and Internet access for each student. You can provide pencils and paper for the summary or have students write it using the computer.

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion. You may grade the students' summary of their sources.

High School

Roe v. Wade & Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Org.

Objectives

1. Understand that the arbitrary nature of *Roe v. Wade* was a major source of its controversy.
2. Discuss the impact of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* on America.

Standards

(Social Studies) U8 8.2.4: Domestic Conflicts and Tensions – Using core democratic values, analyze and evaluate the competing perspectives and controversies among Americans generated by U.S. Supreme Court decisions (e.g., *Roe v. Wade*, *Gideon*, *Miranda*, *Tinker*, *Hazelwood*), the Vietnam War (anti-war and counter-cultural movements), environmental movement, women's rights movement, and the constitutional crisis generated by the Watergate scandal.

Instruction

1. Provide a basic summary of *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, highlighting that together the decisions legalized abortion through all nine months of pregnancy in the United States. Highlight that many legal scholars—both those that support and oppose abortion—agree the decisions' legal reasoning was poor.
2. Announce that students will be playing "Activist Judge for a Day." Have each find one amendment to the U.S. Constitution and come up with a ridiculous decision legalizing something (or banning it) based off of it. Students will write a short judicial opinion explaining their ruling and how the amendment justifies it.
3. Students will share their rulings with the class. Lead a discussion covering the following themes:
 - What's stopping the U.S. Supreme Court from agreeing with your ruling?
 - Who might disagree with your ruling? How would they respond to it?
 - What if someone agrees with the result of your ruling? Would they defend the ruling or agree the process used to create it was wrong?
 - What is the proper role of the judicial system in our republic?
4. Bring the discussion back to the topic of *Roe* and abortion, discussing relevant current events regarding the *Dobbs* decision and how it is affecting American politics and states today.

Materials

Pencils and paper will be provided to each student, as well as text of the amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Good summaries for *Roe* and *Dobbs* can be found on oyez.com, along with copies of the cases and transcripts/recordings of the oral arguments. Some articles found online featuring the reactions of legal scholars would be helpful. Excellent background reading includes Clarke Forsyth's book on *Roe v. Wade*, *Abuse of Discretion*.

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion. You may grade the students' judicial opinions for creativity and critical thinking.

Apologetics

Objectives

1. Articulate the most common arguments on the issue of abortion.
2. Develop strategies for succeeding in debates or private discussions on controversial issues.

Standards

(Social Studies) C3 3.5.8: Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the formation and implementation of a current public policy issue, and examine ways to participate in the decision making process about the issue.

Instruction

1. Explain to students the basic philosophical arguments for or against abortion:
 - Prolife syllogism: P1) Intentionally taking the life of an innocent human being is wrong. P2) Abortion intentionally takes the life of an innocent human being. C) Therefore, abortion is wrong.
 - Pro-abortion arguments: bodily autonomy (“the violinist”), personhood theory, societal necessity (utilitarianism).
2. Highlight that arguments for abortion all have to deny either the first or second premise of the prolife syllogism, most commonly the second premise. Highlight the most common prolife technique for defending the second premise, the SLED Test: The only relevant differences between a child in the womb and a child outside the womb are Size, Level of development, Environment, or degree of Dependency.
3. Lead a class discussion asking students to match pro-abortion arguments to parts of the prolife syllogism or the SLED Test and refute them. Instead of a discussion, students could be asked to participate in a mock debate (or a real debate in a more neutral setting).
 - Bodily autonomy (premise 1)
 - Personhood theory (premise 2)
 - Societal necessity (premise 1)
 - A fetus is just a clump of cells (size)
 - A fetus can’t understand what’s happening to it (level of development)
 - A fetus is inside the woman’s body (environment)
 - A fetus can’t survive on its own (degree of dependency)
4. Lead the class in a discussion covering the following themes:
 - When is abortion likely to come up as a topic of discussion?
 - What are some ways to encourage a healthy debate?
 - What are some things likely to cause another person to end the debate or stop listening?

Materials

A whiteboard or equivalent to display the common arguments. You may also provide students with information from Right to Life of Michigan’s *If They Say... You Say...* guide on abortion arguments: RTL.org/abortion/if-they-say/. Other resources for background reading include Randy Alcorn’s book *Why Prolife?*

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion, or participation in a class debate.

Euthanasia

Objectives

1. Recognize the moral implications of euthanasia.
2. Understand the competing values in the euthanasia debate.

Standard

(Social Studies) C2 2.2.3: Use past and present policies to analyze conflicts that arise in society due to competing constitutional principles or fundamental values (e.g., liberty and authority, justice and equality, individual rights, and the common good).

Instruction

1. Provide students with a definition of euthanasia and assisted suicide and present different policies regarding euthanasia (Michigan, the Netherlands, and Oregon are excellent examples).
2. Divide students into small groups and ask them to come up with one or more arguments for and against euthanasia.
3. Bring the class together and combine each group's list into one complete list on the whiteboard.
4. Lead the class in a discussion covering the following themes:
 - Euthanasia involves competing values of patient autonomy and the dignity of every human life.
 - What are the secondary effects of euthanasia on society and those involved with it? How could it affect friends and family members presently or in the future?
 - What do these issues and suicide in general have in common?
 - How are our medical systems, doctors and nurses impacted by this change in their mission from saving lives to ending lives?
5. If possible, share a personal story from how a person or family has been affected by euthanasia or assisted suicide.
6. For homework, ask students to write a short argumentative essay utilizing research and statistics from states/countries that have legalized it.

Materials

A whiteboard or equivalent to display the groups' arguments. Groups should be provided with pencils and paper to take notes. Right to Life of Michigan has several brochures providing information and sources about euthanasia and other end-of-life issues you may provide, including personal stories: RTL.org/euthanasia. For background reading for you, consider excellent materials like *Forced Exit* or *Culture of Death* by Wesley J. Smith, or other book titles available from our Resource Centers.

Assessment

Assess student understanding during the class discussion. Essays can be graded.



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