



Anne Frank (1929–1945), writing at her desk (1941)

Room in the hideaway where Anne Frank stayed



Born in 1929, Anne Frank was thirteen when she, her family, and four others went into hiding in the attic above her father's office in the Netherlands during World War II. They were protecting themselves from the Nazi troops who were occupying their country and arresting and killing Jews. Though hidden away, Anne, her family, and those living with them listened to radio broadcasts and knew the horrors of the Holocaust taking place around them.

As many young people do, Anne recorded her feelings and experiences in a diary. Her words address and challenge discrimination, intolerance, and violence in a way that still touches our lives today. She wrote, "It's utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too, I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more."

After two years, the Nazis raided the secret hideaway. Anne, her family, and the others were sent to concentration camps. At the age of fifteen, Anne died at

a concentration camp. But her diary survived. So did her father, who, out of love and respect for his daughter, published excerpts from the diary that expressed so much love and respect for everyone and everything around her.

"It's a wonder I haven't abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart."

Those were the words that Anne Frank, a German-Jewish teenager forced into hiding during the Holocaust, wrote in her diary on July 15, 1944. The Holocaust is the name for the mass murder, during World War II, of Europe's Jews by the Nazis, led by German dictator Adolf Hitler. Since *The Diary of Anne Frank* was first published in 1947, its powerful message of respect for life, for other people, and for oneself has helped to make it one of the most popular books of our time. More than 31 million copies have sold worldwide, and it is available in more than sixty-seven languages.

**Activity** How can you show that you respect your own life? that you respect the lives of others?

"Respect starts with yourself."  
(Anonymous)

# BELIEVING...

## We are called to choose life.

The Ten Commandments are the laws of God's covenant. In the Old Testament God reminds the Israelites: "If you obey the commandments of the LORD, your God, . . . loving him, and walking in his ways, . . . you will live . . . and the LORD, your God, will bless you. . . . I have set before you life and death, . . . Choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:16, 19). It is not surprising, then, that in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke we find a rich young man asking Jesus what he would have to do to "gain eternal life" (Matthew 19:16).

Jesus told this young man, "If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17). When the young man asked which commandments, Jesus replied, "You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother; and 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 19:18–19). Then, when the young man explained that he had kept these commandments, Jesus said, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to [the] poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me" (Matthew 19:21). Jesus' words to this young man point out that the New Law, the Law of the Gospel, "fulfills, refines, surpasses, and leads the Old Law to its perfection" (CCC, 1967).

Jesus had already explained to his disciples that he had not come to do away with the laws that God had given to Moses, but to fulfill them. Jesus taught his disciples to live out the commandments as an expression of love for God, for themselves, and for their neighbors. He also taught them that love of neighbor extended even to their enemies and to those who persecuted them. Jesus called his disciples to "be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). In Luke 6:36, where this same teaching of Jesus is also given, the word *perfect* has been replaced by the word *merciful*. Thus, as Jesus called his disciples to be perfect, he also called them to imitate the example of God, his Father, who is all-merciful. Jesus called them to a life filled with mercy toward others—a life of caring for everyone; of giving to those who

were poor; of being kind, generous, and compassionate toward all people; and of showing God's mercy, his love and forgiveness, to everyone.

Jesus calls us, too, to keep the commandments and to live as his disciples. He calls us to follow him and to be perfect—to be merciful in all of our dealings with others. He teaches us that we can live out our discipleship by loving and forgiving all people—even those who are hard to love and hard to forgive. Jesus teaches that God's love, and the call to respond to God's love, are at the center of the commandments. And Jesus shows us that in living out the commandments we are able to choose "life" by loving God and walking in his ways, as Jesus himself did.



**Activity** Compare and contrast Jesus' call to be "perfect" with our society's understanding of what it means to be "perfect." Complete the chart below.

Society's view of being perfect	Jesus' vision of being perfect





**We live out the fourth commandment.**

The commandments are part of God's Revelation. Yet they also express what is instinctively, or naturally, moral to each of us. Thus, as we look closely at the fourth through tenth commandments, we recognize the fundamental rights of all human beings and our obligation to respect those rights by loving each of our neighbors.

When God gave the fourth commandment, he said, "Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you" (Exodus 20:12). How fitting that God called people to first honor and respect those who are most closely connected to them: their parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, other relatives, and friends. How fitting, too, that Jesus' own life showed us how to live out the fourth commandment. In his early life, within the Holy Family, we find that Jesus "went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them" (Luke 2:51). The Gospels recount, too, that throughout his whole life Jesus lived in loving obedience to the will of God, his Father, and called all of his disciples to do the same.

“Keep the commandments.”  
(Matthew 19:17)

As Jesus' disciples we try to show our love by living out the commandments. We can live out the fourth commandment by:

- appreciating and obeying our parents, guardians, other family members, and all those who lead and serve us
- continually being grateful to our parents for all they have given us
- eventually supporting our families and helping to care for our parents in their old age
- respecting those who are our elders, appreciating their wisdom as valued members of our communities, and avoiding any form of discrimination that causes us to treat older people as less than equal to everyone else
- valuing and listening with respect to parents, guardians, family members, friends, teachers, pastors, bishops, the pope, those with whom we work, those who govern our lands, all those who help us to see God's will for us, and our neighbors everywhere.

We must always be aware, though, that God our Father never asks us to be obedient to those who direct us to do what is morally wrong.

**Activity** In groups brainstorm ways to better live out the fourth commandment at home, at school, and in your neighborhood.

### Civil authority

The fourth commandment requires civil authorities to use their authority justly, fairly, and respectfully. They are to respect the rights of everyone. And they are never to command what is "contrary to the dignity of persons and the natural law" (CCC, 2235). They cannot dismiss anyone's rights as a citizen without a legitimate, justifiable reason.

As citizens, we, along with our civil authorities, are responsible for building up society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom. Thus, we have a moral obligation to pay taxes, to exercise our right to vote, and to defend our country when necessary.

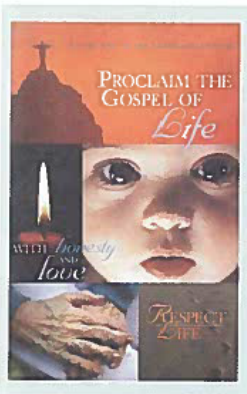
If you were the mayor of your town, how would you use your authority to respect the rights of everyone?

# BELIEVING...

## We live out the fifth commandment.

How can we show love for our neighbors?

Out of all of his creation, God has chosen to share his own life with humanity and has called us to the special responsibility of loving, caring for, and protecting his gift of life. This responsibility requires us to live out the fifth commandment, "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13). This commandment is based on the truth that all life is sacred, created by God.



Pro-life flyer, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities

And the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, took on our human life is the greatest testimony we have to the dignity and sacredness of human life.

The right to life, from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death, is the most basic human right. Following the fifth commandment demands that we respect and protect human life in all that we say and do.

As Catholics we recognize that some forms of violence are always wrong:

**abortion**—The direct termination of the life of an unborn baby is always wrong. The Supreme Court of the United States has legalized abortion, but we must remember that what is legal is not always morally right. We should work to change laws in society that allow abortion.

**euthanasia, or mercy killing**—We can never deliberately kill someone, even in cases of great suffering. Our faith requires us to take ordinary measures to preserve life. A dying patient, however, may refuse "over-zealous" treatment" (CCC, 2278).

**murder**—The deliberate taking of a life is not our right.

**suicide**—The taking of one's own life is an offense against God, who gave each of us the gift of life.

**terrorism and related violence that intentionally targets innocent civilians**—Misusing political views and personal beliefs to intimidate or attack others is wrong.

There are many other forms of violence. Catholic teaching should shape our decisions on these:

**war**—We should always try to use nonviolent means to resolve conflicts. War should be a last resort when other means fail to protect the innocent against fundamental injustice. Our American Catholic bishops have declared, "We do not perceive any situation in which the deliberate initiation of nuclear warfare . . . can be morally justified" (*The Challenge of Peace*, 1983, 150).

**the death penalty**—The *Catechism* states, "The cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity 'are very rare, if not practically non-existent'" (2267).

**domestic violence**—People are often violated in their own homes by their own families. Domestic violence is an assault against human dignity, and those who commit it should seek professional help.

**environmental waste and pollution**—This is the destruction of those things in creation that God gave us to support life. To pollute the environment is to poison ourselves and to take away the possibilities of life for the generations that will come after us.

**scandal**—This is "an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil" (CCC, 2284). It is wrong when individuals or groups use their power and influence to tempt others to disrespect life in any way.

God's mercy is greater than the actions of any person. Through God's grace each of us can find the power to heal, to build up, and to choose life.

**Activity** Make a timeline of the various stages of the average person's life. Note ways to show respect for people at each stage of their lives.

## Dealing with anger

Jesus' words to his disciples in his Sermon on the Mount give us a deeper understanding of the ways we are to follow the fifth commandment.

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment" (Matthew 5:21-22). Anger can lead us to act in violent ways—to destroy things and to harm or injure others. And violence against others can lead us to a complete disregard for human life.

Brainstorm some positive ways of dealing with anger.

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- silent reflection time alone
- engage in activity that brings joy ex. painting, drawing
- pray to God
- ignore the source—depends on situation
- listen to music ex. classical/peaceful
- stress ball, sports—running, lift weights, etc.
- sleeping
- crying
- talking with friend or family member
- eating (not too much)
- counting to calm self
- breathing deeply





### We live out the sixth commandment.

God created humanity in his image, giving us the human dignity that makes us all equal. And he created us with human sexuality, the gift of being able to feel, think, choose, love, and act as the male or female person God created us to be. Our human sexuality makes us female or male, and our sexuality is an important part of everything about us. Our human sexuality is a good and beautiful gift from God that gives us the capacity to form bonds of unity, love, and communion with others.

“Through God’s grace each of us can find the power to heal, to build up, and to choose life.”

The sixth commandment is “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14). Adultery is infidelity in marriage, unfaithfulness to one’s husband or wife. Married couples promise, or vow, to commit their whole lives to each other while showing their love for each other in a beautiful, physical way. This full expression of sexual intimacy is reserved for marriage, and married couples vow to share this love only with each other. The sexual union of husband and wife bonds them into a covenant of life and love that is open to the responsibility of procreation—bringing God’s gift of new life into the world.

Married couples are obliged to love and protect each other and their relationship. Divorce is the breaking of the marriage contract between a man and woman. The sixth commandment obliges married couples to be faithful to each other until death, both physically and emotionally. They must be open to the children with whom God may bless them, never artificially preventing the conception of a child. The sixth

commandment also obliges each of us to honor the love a husband and wife have for each other and to honor their promise to be faithful. The sixth commandment obliges us to grow in loving ourselves, in respecting our bodies, in loving our family and friends, and in properly showing our feelings of love.

As we live out the sixth commandment, we refrain from these and all offenses against the dignity of marriage and the commitment of relationships:

*polygamy*—the practice of having two or more spouses at the same time

*incest*—sexual relations with family members

*free union*—living together and having sexual relations without the commitment of marriage

*fornication*—sexual relations outside of marriage, including premarital sex

*lust*—an excessive or uncontrollable desire for inappropriate sexual enjoyment or pleasure

*masturbation*—deliberately stimulating one’s sexual organs by oneself

*pornography*—the degrading portrayal of human sexuality in words, movies, or pictures

*promiscuity*—a casual approach to sexual love with no regard to faithful commitment

*prostitution*—the buying and selling of sex

*rape*—the violent act of forcing someone into sexual intimacy

*homosexual acts*—sexual relations between persons of the same sex.

The sixth commandment also reminds us of our vocation to love as God calls us to love, remaining faithful to our baptismal promises. It reminds us to

practice the virtue, or good habit, of chastity. Chastity is the use of our human sexuality in a responsible and faithful way, a way in which we integrate our sexuality and our spirituality in a unity of body and spirit. Whether we are single, married, ordained priests, or religious sisters and brothers leading consecrated lives, Christ is the model of chastity for all of us.

#### Faith Words

human sexuality  
adultery  
chastity

**Activity** What could you say to someone your own age to emphasize the positive nature of chastity?

## RESPONDING...

### Recognizing Our Faith

Recall the question at the beginning of this chapter: *Whom do I respect?* Whom did you list as you began the chapter? Would you add others to your list after working on this chapter? If so, whom does the list include now?



### Living Our Faith

Discuss ways to honor life and creation. Choose one way and make it part of your life today.

### The Sisters of Life



The Sisters of Life are a community of religious women who devote their lives to promoting respect for every human life. In addition to taking the three traditional religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, the Sisters of Life take a special, fourth vow to protect and enhance the sacredness of every human life.

### Partners in FAITH

This religious order was founded in 1991 by a New York archbishop, John Cardinal O'Connor. In the archdiocesan newspaper, he had published a special request: "Help Wanted: Sisters of Life." Many women responded to this call, and on June 1, 1991, eight

women entered this new religious order. Within a few years the Sisters of Life had established several convents in the New York area and were actively helping pregnant women, offering retreats, and assisting families in need. In 2002 New York Archbishop Edward Cardinal Egan appointed these sisters to run the Family Life/Respect Life Office of the Archdiocese of New York.

In what ways can you devote some time to promoting respect for every human life?

@\* For additional ideas and activities, visit [www.weliveourfaith.com](http://www.weliveourfaith.com).



## Putting Faith to Work

Talk about what you have learned in this chapter:



**We understand** that Jesus taught us to fulfill the commandments out of love for God, others, and ourselves.



**We express** this love in the specific ways taught by the fourth, fifth, and sixth commandments.



**We choose** life by obeying these commandments with love and respect for God, ourselves, and others.

Decide on ways to live out what you have learned.

## ENCOUNTERING GOD'S WORD



Jesus said:

**“I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you”**

(John 15:11–12).

- ➔ **READ** the quotation from Scripture.
- ➔ **REFLECT** on the following:  
Jesus wants us to love as he loved. How did Jesus show his love? How can we show love and respect for one another, no matter what our age or role in life?
- ➔ **SHARE** your reflections with a partner.
- ➔ **DECIDE** to show love and respect to others in the ways that Jesus taught us.

Write the letter of the answer that best defines each term.

1.  E  chastity
  2.  D  right to life
  3.  A  human sexuality
  4.  C  adultery
- a. the gift of being able to feel, think, choose, love, and act as the male or female person God created us to be
  - b. discrimination that causes us to treat older people as less than equal to everyone else
  - c. infidelity in marriage, unfaithfulness to one's husband or wife
  - d. the most basic human right
  - e. the virtue by which we use our human sexuality in a responsible and faithful way

Write True or False next to the following sentences. On a separate sheet of paper, change the false sentences to make them true.

5.  False  Jesus came to fulfill the laws God had given to Moses.
5.  True  Jesus came to do away with the laws God had given to Moses.
6.  True  The fourth commandment requires that we obey all those who lead and serve us, except when they direct us to do something that is morally wrong.
7.  True  The fifth commandment demands that we respect and protect human life.
8.  False  The sixth commandment and its requirement of chastity apply only to those who are married. ...apply to everyone.

9–10. **ESSAY:** What are three ways to show that we are living out the fourth commandment?

- appreciating and obeying our parents, guardians, other family members, and all those who lead and serve us
- continually being grateful to our parents for all they have given to us
- eventually supporting our families and helping to care for our parents in their old age
- respecting those who are our elders, appreciating their wisdom as valued members of our communities, and avoiding any form of discrimination that causes us to treat older people as less than equal to everyone else
- valuing and listening with respect to parents, guardians, family members, friends, teachers, pastors, bishops, the pope, those with whom we work, those who govern our lands, all those who help us to see God's will for us, and our neighbors everywhere