



ACTION GUIDE

RESPECT LIFE MONTH: OCTOBER

INTRODUCTION

Every October the Catholic Church in the United States celebrates *Respect Life Month*, and the first Sunday of October is observed as *Respect Life Sunday*. As Catholics, we are called to cherish, defend, and protect those who are most vulnerable, from the beginning to the end of their lives, and at every point in between. During the month of October, the Church asks us to reflect more deeply on the dignity of every human life.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops provides resources to help parishes, schools, families, ministries, and individual Catholics share the Gospel of life during Respect Life

Month and throughout the year. In the following pages, you will find a number of resources to help you celebrate Respect Life Month. Action ideas and activities, a sample timeline, homily helps, announcements, and intercessions are provided to help you get started. Adapt these resources as needed to fit your specific circumstances. Additional materials can be found at respectlife.org/respect-life-month.

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SIMPLE STEPS

Here are some ways you can use the materials in your parish, school, ministry, or home to celebrate Respect Life Month. Not every step may apply to your circumstances, but most can be adapted to suit your needs. Unless otherwise noted, all materials referenced in this section can be found at respectlife.org/respect-life-month.

1. Display the Respect Life poster.

Think about a prominent place in your parish, school, diocesan office, or home. Hang the poster in the vestibule, on a door or window, on a bulletin board, or near the restrooms and water fountains. Choose a place where people will be most likely to see it. Parents could hang the poster on the refrigerator, a bedroom door, or a place you gather regularly as a family. *(Remember to seek appropriate permissions and follow any rules and guidelines if displaying the poster outside your home.)*

2. Feature the Respect Life reflection in your bulletin or newsletter or on your website.

The Respect Life reflection unpacks the meaning of the poster. If space prevents inclusion of the full reflection, consider using the short announcements that are available in this action guide along with one of our Respect Life Month graphics. The Respect Life reflection can also be printed in your diocesan paper, offered at the beginning of a parish meeting, or used to inspire discussion during a family meal.

We would love to see your Respect Life Month celebrations!

Show us how you celebrated by emailing prolife@uscgb.org, or tag us on Facebook ([fb.com/uscgbrespectlife](https://www.facebook.com/uscgbrespectlife)) or Twitter ([@uscgbprolife](https://twitter.com/uscgbprolife)).

3. Preach about respect for human life on Respect Life Sunday.

Sample homily notes are provided for priests and deacons to help them highlight the gift of human life on Respect Life Sunday or another weekend in October. The Respect Life reflection can also be a source of inspiration. Let your pastor know these resources are available for him.

4. Pray for the protection of human life during the Prayer of the Faithful.

This is a great way for an entire parish or school to pray for the protection of life together! Sample intercessions are provided for use during the Prayer of the Faithful. The set of intercessions in this action guide could be used during one specific Mass or incorporated throughout the Sundays in October. Schools can use these to pray for the protection of human life at the beginning of the day or class period, or perhaps at a school Respect Life Mass. Families can include these intercessions in their regular prayers in the morning or evening, or before or after a family meal.

5. Feature a different Respect Life topic in each week's bulletin.

Short, quarter-page summaries are available for many of Respect Life articles covering a wide range of topics. Using the predesigned, downloadable "bulletin boxes," highlight a different topic each weekend of October. For those who would like to learn more, each bulletin box also includes the web address of the full article. Or, if you have the space, use one of the corresponding, full-length bulletin insert versions of the highlighted summaries. These can be found at the same web address listed in each bulletin box. These bulletin boxes can be found under the Respect Life Month action guide section of respectlife.org/action-guides.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY

Interactive Respect Life Bulletin Board

This activity utilizes the Respect Life poster to help create an interactive Respect Life bulletin board. The idea is to hang the poster in the center of a large bulletin board or other prominent area with space around it. Then, invite members of your parish, class, youth group, etc. to add their own items to the board or surrounding area that illustrate the gift of human life.

To illustrate the concept, you can pin some examples: a sonogram photo of a new family member; a birth announcement; a picture of aging grandparents; a flyer for an upcoming abortion-healing retreat; a note about volunteer opportunities at a local pregnancy center or nursing home; or a sticky note with a related prayer request. This is where you can get creative! Invite others to pin items that help illustrate the gift of human life, from beginning to end.

Materials

- ◆ Respect Life poster
- ◆ Large bulletin board (or a large wall or window)
- ◆ Push pins, masking tape, and/or a stapler
- ◆ Notecards or sticky notes
- ◆ Writing utensils (pens, pencils, markers)
- ◆ Scissors, *optional*
- ◆ Construction paper in various colors, *optional*

Directions

1. Place the poster in the center of a large bulletin board. (If you don't have a large bulletin board, you can also use a wall or window to achieve a similar result. Simply swap out push pins for masking tape.)
2. Include an explanation of the display beneath the poster so those who pass by can more fully enjoy it, or even participate.

Sample Explanation

October is Respect Life Month. This display celebrates the gift of every person's life at every stage and in every circumstance. From birth announcements and pictures of aging loved ones to prayer requests and service opportunities, all are invited to add their own items highlighting how precious every life is.



3. Decide how many items you need to get the bulletin board started. You can choose from some of the examples listed above. Or, write one of the intercessions for Respect Life Sunday/Month on a notecard and post it on the bulletin board.
4. Invite others to join in the activity by contributing their own content to the bulletin board. You will need to determine the best way to explain it and have participants bring items in. For example, if your whole parish is invited to participate, consider putting a note in the weekly bulletin and/or making an announcement before or after Mass. In a classroom or youth group setting, you can simply explain the activity and perhaps send a note home to parents. Families can also do this activity at home.