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Home Study Lesson 3

Fourth Commandment

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is for the youth to come to an understanding of the fourth commandment, which calls us to honor our father and mother as well as to honor and respect all those who have been given authority.

MAIN IDEAS

- God knows that in order for humanity to function properly we need leaders, we need direction, and we need authority figures to help guide us in various activities and help bring order to our lives.
- The first place that God calls us to show respect for authority is in our own families by honoring our parents, or those who have been put in charge of raising us, and respecting them.
- This commandment also extends to showing respect for all of those who have been given a place of authority. We should all work with those in authority to make our communities and countries a better place. (CCC 2234, 2238-2241)

TEACHING

RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY

God knows that in order for humanity to function properly, we need leaders, we need direction, and we need authority figures to help guide us in various activities and help bring order to our lives. That is why He gives us the commandment to honor our fathers and mothers, or those who have been put in charge of raising us. This commandment means that we should show respect to our parents, or guardian figures, who are the first guides in our lives.

Pause and read CCC 2197.

This commandment is directed toward parents, or guardians, first because of their important role in all of our lives. But this commandment also extends to all those who have authority. There are many different authority figures in our lives other than our parents, such as our teachers, our principles, our coaches, police officers, and even political figures. We are called to honor and respect all those who have authority in our lives.

Pause and read CCC 2198-2199.

When we follow the direction of those who have authority in our lives, we find a lot more peace. Things function well, people get done what needs to be done, and there is a greater freedom because everyone knows what they are supposed to be doing.

Pause and read CCC 2200.

While there are some examples of bad leaders, in general, authority is not meant to be repressive or to simply boss us around, but rather to help us all to grow and to help our communities and families to flourish.

IN FAMILY LIFE

All of us are rooted in a family; even Jesus Christ was born into a family. God created us to come into the world through a family and under the guidance of our parents. The first place that God calls us to show respect for authority is in our own families by honoring our parents, or those who have been put in charge of raising us, and respecting them. Every member of a family has equal dignity — meaning no one is better than the other. But that being said, each member of the family has certain responsibilities and duties.

Pause and read CCC 2201-2203.

For example, your parents might have the responsibility of going to work everyday to provide for your family and the duties of raising you and your siblings. While it is your responsibility to get your homework done and help out with chores around the house. The family flourishes when everyone understands their place and their role in the family and everyone works together to take care of each other.

Pause and read CCC 2204-2207, 2223-2231.

The family is also where we should learn about the faith and how to pray, and where we learn the basics of right from wrong. (CCC 2221-2222)

Many families together make up society, and all humankind stemmed from some sort of family. Because of this, it is the duty of the family to help in various ways in society as well as for the authority figures in society to protect the rights of families. (CCC 2208-2213)

IN SOCIETY

What are some ways that you contribute to the community now? How do you think you will contribute to society when you grow up?

This commandment also extends to showing respect for all of those who have been given a place of authority. We should all work with those in authority to make our communities and countries a better place. (CCC 2234, 2238-2241). Likewise, those who have been given authority should work to create just laws that are for the betterment of all people and society and should always respect the dignity of the human person. (CCC 2235-2237)

The only time that we are not to follow authority or the laws that have been set forth is when those laws go against the moral order and the fundamental rights of human beings, or if they are directly against the teachings of the Gospels. (CCC 2242-2243)

GOING DEEPER

The Church is not a political institution and only passes judgment on laws when they are directly contrary to the teachings of morality and the dignity of the human person. But the Church encourages political freedom and the rights of the citizens as participants in society. (CCC 2245-2246)

We are all called to be a part of the society that God has placed us in. When we all work together and work with those in authority to do good, we can accomplish great things.

This commandment roots us in our family and in our society and reminds us of the greatness we are called to in small ways every single day.

Close this lesson by saying a prayer for authority figures in your life.

4. Do you think that there is one type of authority figure that is the hardest for you or your age group to respect? Who would that be and why?

5. How do you think it makes an authority figure feel when he or she is disrespected?

6. What do you think you or your generation can do better to respect authority figures?