

CURRICULUM FOR INTERMEDIATE 4-6

Excerpts from "Giving and Receiving the Gift of Life"
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PURPOSE

The overall objective of these lessons is to provide children from fourth through sixth grades the opportunity to learn about organ transplantation within a religious context. Specific lesson objectives will enable students to:

1. Understand that many people are given a second chance to live due to organ transplantation.
2. Learn what an organ is.
3. Learn that without vital organ transplants, many people would die.
4. Discuss the possible feelings of an organ donor and organ recipient
5. Discover the fact that many more organ donors are needed.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Children between the ages of nine and twelve have an understanding of the concept of death. They can relate not only to the death of plants and animals but people as well. These children, for the most part, have not experienced the death of a parent or sibling. Several students, however, remember grandparents, neighbors, or their parents' friends who have died. Discuss the concept of life and death in a way in which is honest and open but not frightening. They should understand death as a natural process. Discussion and information should be appropriate to the emotional maturity of the students.

This is important: Each class leader should be careful **not** to impose his or her own personal feelings about organ donation on the class either through verbal or body language communication.

LESSON PLAN

Approximately one hour of lesson material is enclosed which you can use to fit your particular situation. The lesson plan can be set in a regular religious school format or in a longer retreat or vacation schedule.

The regular teaching staff or youth counselors may be the best presenters and discussion leaders since they are the best known and trusted, but consider also the possibility of guest speakers or leaders with special credentials: a doctor or nurse, an organ recipient or donor family member. This will affect the enclosed lesson plan, which may have to be adjusted, as time will allow. Contact Brenda Owen for referrals and appointments at 916-567-1600 or Bowen@dcids.org.

We suggest that the class leader review the background material, order the activity material needed, and arrange outside speakers two weeks in advance. The class leader should be familiar with the background materials furnished in order to better lead the discussion. Most of the background information included would not be used by primary students but would be of help to the teacher in answering technical questions, which may arise during class discussion. The enclosed fact sheet is intended as information for the teacher.

VOCABULARY

- “Gift of Life”:** A term used to describe the action of giving organs and tissues to help another person live or improve their life.
- Tissue:** A group of cells which act together to perform a special function (skin, bone, cornea).
- Organ:** Made up of different kinds of tissues that work together to do a special job in the body (heart, lung kidney, liver, pancreas).
- Medication:** Medicine; used to treat or prevent illness or infection.
- Transplant:** To move from one body to another body.
- Donor:** Person who gives a gift.
- Recipient:** Person who receives anything.
- Matching:** Comparing objects with similar characteristics; being alike, equal or exactly alike.
- Rejection:** When the recipient's body will not accept the organ from the donor.
- Dialysis:** A medical process for cleaning a person's blood when the kidneys cannot.

LESSON ACTIVITIES FOR INTERMEDIATE GRADES

20 minutes – Discuss Vocabulary and Do Activities

The class leader should introduce vocabulary and background materials for discussion. Explain to students the meaning of the special vocabulary words, and any additional background material seen as appropriate to each particular age group. Respond to questions the students may have.

15 minutes – Worship Services

Bring students together in prayer circle or other place of worship.

1. Begin service by leading a prayer that speaks to life and God's care for all people.
2. Read or retell the story of Joseph (Genesis 37:2-35, 39:1-6, 41:39-44, 46-49, 53-57, 42:1-28).
3. Relate to student the following ideas:
 - ...God, throughout all of history, has given many people a second chance at life.
 - ...Just as God used Joseph to give his brothers a second chance at life, so too do many people need organ donors for their second chance at life.
4. Give time for prayers and meditation which can include a prayer for:
 - ...all people who are sick
 - ...all doctors, nurses and scientists who help make organ transplants possible
 - ...all who have died
5. Read a sacred text reference or other inspirational reading to the students.

FEELINGS FINDER

Under the teacher's direction, students make a listing of feelings which might be exhibited by the following people before and after a transplant operation.

Doctor	Patient (recipient)	Recipient's Family	Donor's Family
pride satisfaction etc.	joy relief happiness etc.	gratitude relief joy etc.	sadness love pride anger relief etc.

FACT SHEET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why should someone consider organ donation?

A: There is a severe shortage of organ donations in the United States, and here in California. Nationally on average seventeen people die each day waiting for a transplant. Right now, more than 87,000 people are on the waiting list, more than a third of them will die before an organ can be found. The numbers are growing. Another name is added every 13 minutes. In the GSDS area, more than 550 people are on the waiting list, yet in 2004 there were only 46 people who donated one or more organs upon death.

Q: How does one become an organ donor?

A: Now you can sign up online at Donate Life California Donor Registry (www.donateLIFecalifornia). In the past, a pink "donor dot" on your California Drivers license demonstrated your wish to donate life. But it did not record your decision on a list that ensured your wish was fulfilled. Your personal information will be kept secure and confidential and only accessed by authorized organ and tissue recovery personnel.

Q: If my loved one is an organ donor, will everything be done to save his or her life?

A: Yes, absolutely. The doctors first concern and focus is to save their patients life. In California, the process of donation takes place only after two physicians declare you brain dead,* using strict neurological examinations.

**Brain death occurs in patients who have suffered severe injury to the brain, such as a motor vehicle accident or blow to the head. (In the U.S. about 15,000 people die such a death each year, but in 2004 only about 6,000 actually became organ donors). As a result of the injury, the brain swells and obstructs its own blood supply, causing brain tissue to die, and cessation of brain function. This condition is irreversible. However, the vital organs (heart, lungs, liver, pancreas, intestine and kidneys) can be kept viable for a short time, if supported by artificial mechanical means, i.e., a ventilator. Brain death is an established medical and legal diagnosis of death.*

Q: Why, and for how long must the ventilator be kept on after declaration of death?

A: The ventilator is needed to provide oxygen to the vital organs, and will be kept on until surgery can be arranged and performed. Without oxygen the vital organs would die, and not be viable for transplant.

Q: Who gives consent to donate?

A: If you have signed up on the Donate Life California Donor Registry that is considered "first person consent" and you are legally able to become an organ donor. If you haven't signed up on the Donate Life California Registry then your legal next of kin will be asked if they wish you to become an organ donor.

Q: Will any pain be felt during surgery?

A: No. Since the patient is brain dead all brain activity has stopped, and the central nervous system has ceased to function, it is physically impossible to feel pain.

Q: Will the funeral be delayed?

A: Every effort is made to schedule surgery as soon as possible, so there should be no unnecessary delay in making funeral arrangements.

Q: Is an open casket funeral possible after organs and/or tissues are removed?

A: Absolutely. The transplant operation is done under surgical, sterile conditions in a hospital operating room. The donation of organs and/or tissues will not interfere with an open casket funeral should you desire one.

Q: Do donor families have to pay costs associated with the donation?

A: No. All costs related to organ and/or tissue donations will be covered by the organ and tissue donor program. You will not be financially responsible for any aspect of the donation process. However, funeral arrangements and costs remain the responsibility of the relatives or persons in charge of the estate.

Q: How are recipients chosen?

A: Recipients are matched with available organs based on strict criteria that include: medical urgency, geographic proximity and blood and tissue type. A national waiting list of recipients is maintained by the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), a nonprofit service under contract with the federal government, located in Richmond, Virginia. UNOS was established under the National Organ Transplant Act of 1984 and serves transplant centers, physicians, and donor organizations nationwide.

Q: Can you buy or sell organs?

A: No. It is a crime to buy or sell organs under state law and the National Organ Transplant Act (Public Law 98-507). Anyone convicted of violating this law is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000, and/or a maximum of five years imprisonment. Organ procurement organizations (OPOs) such as Golden State Donor Services, which coordinate all activities associated with donation, (including distribution), are non-profit agencies certified and monitored by the U.S. government's Health Care Financing Administration.

Q: Who is eligible to be a donor?

A: Anyone who wants to be a donor should sign up at Donate Life California Donor Registry (www.donateLIFCalifornia.org) where your wishes about donation can be recorded. Transplant coordinators, along with transplant surgeons, evaluate each potential donor, and the viability of each organ. They do a thorough evaluation of a donor's social and medical history as well as blood tests. But, up front, everyone is a potential donor, and is encouraged to "share their life, share their decision."

THE TRUTH ABOUT COMMON MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

- Becoming a donor will not affect the quality of your medical care. Organ recovery takes place **only** after all efforts to save your life have been exhausted, and two doctors must declare the individual legally brain dead.
- The donor family pays **none** of the costs associated with donation.
- Organ and tissue donors **can** have an open casket funeral.
- Transplants are accessible and available to **everyone**. Organs are allocated according to medical criteria (urgency of medical need, blood/tissue type, height and weight), not wealth or social status.
- All major religions permit or support donation and consider it a gift, an act of charity.

CAUSES OF BRAIN DEATH

• **Trauma to the brain**

Examples: a severe head injury caused by a motor vehicle accident, a fall, a blow to the head, a gunshot wound to the head.

• **Cerebrovascular injury** - (massive bleeding or swelling of the brain)

Examples: stroke, aneurysm

• **Anoxia** - (loss of oxygen to the brain)

Examples: drowning, heart attack, hanging, carbon monoxide poisoning (when emergency procedures result in the restoration of heartbeat and respiration, but not before lack of blood flow/oxygen to the brain has caused brain death).

• **Brain tumor** - uncontrollable growth of a brain tumor can cause permanent loss of blood flow/oxygen to the brain.