

Respect for All Persons

The Five Core Principles



"God has willed that all people should constitute one family and treat one another as brothers and sisters. ... All things on earth should be related to the human as their center and crown." (*Gaudium et Spes*: 24, 12)

"Respect" - What does that mean?

The word **respect** comes from two Latin roots: **re** meaning **again** and **spect** meaning **to see**. Respect is "to see again" - an intentional gaze, a serious look, a "Wait ... What?" for and about individual people that you meet each day.

Respect is something that is generally expected in terms of our outward behavior, but it is perhaps much more critical in terms of our nuanced, inward, habitual stance toward people or groups, because this is where genuine respect is brought to life and finds definition.

One may say that the meaning of "respect" - that nexus of personal convictions about others - is built from within. Like love, justice, and goodness, respect grows from how it is planted, fed, and exercised. Being "nice" is not enough. Too much is at stake.

Finally, all those words - love, justice, goodness, and respect - relate to one another. And respect, as Leo Tolstoy wrote, "was invented to cover the empty place where love should be." Respect is love made visible in relationships.

Why should I care?

Why? Because respect is a big piece of what it means to be human. As social beings, we live, learn, and love by means of one another.

It's not just about what we would lose without this stance of respect. It's more about the universe that we open up within ourselves and within others when respect becomes a habit, a conviction, an intentionality.

You should care because you are human and part of a human community. Respect is God's invitation to seek Love's presence in others.



From Circular 261 (2010)

2.3.2 - Lasallian educational centers must be places where welcome, peace, and respect are lived out in communities characterized by the acceptance of each human person. They must be places where cultural diversity is not an occasion for conflict, exclusion, or destructive tension but rather where being different is an enriching component of community life. In so doing these centers incarnate what "together" means in "together and by association."

3.3 - The anthropological view of human nature that motivates Lasallians recognizes and dignifies every human being as being unique, unrepeatable, and educable. Discrimination based on gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation or political affiliation has no place in the Lasallian educational mission.

As social beings, humans are capable of establishing meaningful relationships. As spiritual beings, they are open to transcendent reality and the search for life's meaning. This holistic view of human nature includes intellectual, emotional, social, cultural, ethical, and spiritual dimensions.

3.4 - Lasallians recognize that each person can and needs to be formed in a holistic way. Inspired by the Founder's writings and experience and by the living tradition of the Institute, Lasallians regard education as a process of integral human formation. They recognize human dignity in the face of everyone they meet. In keeping with the Lasallian tradition, they devote themselves especially to the education of young people who are in difficult and challenging circumstances.

What Does De La Salle Say?

"Jesus Christ compares those who have charge of souls to a good shepherd who has great care for the sheep. One quality he must possess, according to our Savior, is to know each one of them individually."

This should also be one of the main concerns of those who instruct others: to be able to understand their pupils and to discern the right way to guide them.

They must show more mildness toward some, more firmness toward others. There are those who call for much patience, those who need to be stimulated and spurred on ..." (Med. 33.1)

De La Salle

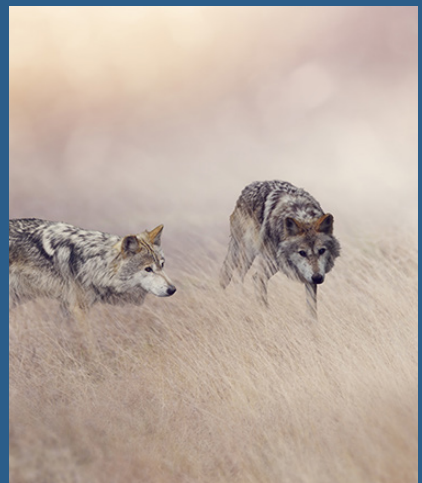
The Two Wolves

An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy.

"It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – this wolf is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego." He continued, "The other is good – this wolf is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."



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TWO STORIES ABOUT RESPECT IN ACTION

"As a young man, full of questions about faith, I traveled to the United States where, I had heard, there were outstanding rabbis. I met many, but I also had the privilege of meeting one of the greatest Jewish leader of my generation.... Heir to the dynastic leadership of a relatively small group of Jewish mystics, he had escaped from Europe to New York during the Second World War and had turned the tattered remnants of his flock into a worldwide movement. Wherever I traveled, I heard tales of his extraordinary leadership, many verging on the miraculous. He was, I was told, one of the outstanding charismatic leaders of our time. I resolved to meet him if I could.

I did, and was utterly surprised. He was certainly not charismatic in any conventional sense. Quiet, self-effacing, understated, one might hardly have noticed him had it not been for the reverence in which he was held by his disciples. That meeting, though, changed my life. He was a world-famous figure. I was an anonymous student from 3,000 miles away. Yet in his presence I seemed to be the most important person in the world. He asked me about myself; he listened carefully; he challenged me to become a leader, something I had never contemplated before. Quickly it became clear to me that he believed in me more than I believed in myself.

As I left the room, it occurred to me that it had been full of my presence and his absence. Perhaps that is what listening is, considered as a religious act. I knew then that greatness is measured by what we efface ourselves towards. There was no grandeur in his manner; neither was there any false modesty. He was serene, dignified, majestic; a man of transcending humility who gathered you into his embrace and taught you to look up."

(Jonathan Sacks, *The Tablet*, 1 April, 2000. Pg. 451)

"It was my first visit to the marvelous art treasures of Florence in Italy. I was one of a crowd of tourists but my attention was caught by the sight of a tall, elegant figure, making her way down a narrow, shadowy street. I wondered if she might be going for a dinner appointment, or if she had a very important job in the city.

My thoughts were disturbed by the noise of a heavy dustcart. And I realized that this beautiful lady - who impressed me with her dignity in the way she looked and the way she walked - was, in fact, a "dustbin lady", a street-sweeper, a cleaner. Her care for her appearance revealed a great pride in herself. Her self-esteem and happiness came from within, from her own view of her value.

And I knew that Jesus would have noticed and approved of my cleaning lady. He had a way of building up each individual. Amidst the splendors of the Temple in Jerusalem, Jesus looked at the generosity and goodness of one poor widow, and gave her his full attention; she had offered to others the very best that she had.

Schools are to help young people develop a true awareness and knowledge of themselves, and a proper appreciation of their own talents and abilities, in whatever field. I did not need to know of the examination results or university successes of the school of this dustbin lady. One glance at her told me that her parents and her teachers had performed their duty well."

(Claire Elliott in "The Month" - June, 1991)

A LASALLIAN REFERENCE



"You must be on your guard against speaking too freely with your students, for this takes away all respect." (Letter 49)

"Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, prostrate with the most profound respect before your infinite and adorable majesty, I consecrate myself entirely to you to procure your glory as far as I shall be able and as you will require of me. ... " (From the Brothers' Formula of Vows)

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GROUP REFLECTION

On this sheet are the three suggested movements for thoughtfully considering the topic.



FIRST

REMEMBERING GOD'S PRESENCE

Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God

De La Salle: "We can consider God present in the place where we are, because our Lord says in Saint Matthew's Gospel, For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

[PAUSE]



SECOND

REFLECTIONS & CONVERSATION

- After reading the INFOSHEET, what stands out to you about the topic of "respect"?
- How do you see respect manifested at your institution? Be specific.
- What else could or should be done to insure that respect is a priority at your institution in the future?

CLOSING PRAYER

Gracious and loving God. All of us at this school work to make the loving and saving presence of your Son, Jesus Christ, a living and effective reality in the lives of those who are entrusted to our care. Be with us in all that we talk about and do, so that all those involved with Lasallian education here may discover your presence in their midst and come to hold dear what we hold dear. It is your work that we do. Help us to be worthy of the task. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



THIRD

FURTHER EXPLORATION

In his book *Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*, De La Salle points out that "children ought to do these things out of respect for God, in whose presence they are." One manifestation of RESPECT is simple politeness. And DLS wrote a book in order to help young people do so.

