

# Lesson Plan: Uncovering the Social Nature of Persons

## INTRODUCTION

A major barrier to solidarity is the U.S. culture's confidence in rugged-individualism and meritocracy which translates to: people must earn their dignity. The Catholic view of the human person insists that human dignity is God-given and highlights the social nature as essential to human survival and flourishing. Human beings by design need each other.

TIME: One Class Period

## OBJECTIVES:

- Students will discover the social nature of the human person by exploring the realities of feral children and our needs for cooperation.

## MATERIALS:

- PowerPoint *Social Nature of the Person*
- Paper for brainstorming lists

## PREPERATION:

Guided by PowerPoint *Social Nature of the Person*

1. Assign the human nature quote find. Have students present these in the future, one each day.
2. In small groups have students complete a list of 15 ways human nature is unique. Have the groups report their lists. Discuss how their lists intersect with the categories described in the PowerPoint slides.
3. Explore the evidence of our social nature: our fundamental need for others to help us survive and flourish
  - Feral Children
  - Provide insights from The Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Communal Character of Human Vocation (par 1878-1896)
4. Debate: Why has the human species survived and flourished?

Engage in a spirited debate concerning the following prompt:

Which skill has contributed more to the survival and flourishing of the human species – our ability to compete within our species or our ability to cooperate within our species? Define successful competition as a *win-lose* outcome and successful cooperation as a *win-win* outcome. Support your position with historical examples.

5. After the debate consider the following questions:
  - Did you notice the interdependency between competition and cooperation? If so, describe this relationship. What might this say about the social nature of the human person?
  - Provide examples of situations in which:
    - Competition is necessary for successful cooperation
    - Cooperation is necessary for successful competition
  - Of the above, which list is easier to come up with many examples? What might this say about the social nature of the human person?
  - How might U.S. culture affect whether we tend to “see” more competition or cooperation?
  - List various building blocks of civilization which represent our need for cooperation on a macro scale.