**Teacher’s Notes**

**Image of God**

The belief that all human beings are created in God’s image comes from Genesis 1:27:

“God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he

created him, male and female he created them.”

1. Human beings are CREATED. God is the creator so our life is a GIFT and in our lives we learn to be THANKFUL for everything we have and our worship is centred on being thankful to God (the most important liturgy is the Liturgy of the Eucharist [thanksgiving in Greek]). Because we are created by God we also realise that we depend on God for everything – this is the root of our need to pray.
2. Of all the creatures God created, humans are the only ones created in God’s image. Human beings are UNIQUE (not better). Human life has a special status: human life is sacred (this is the root of the sanctity of human life); it is God’s life in us.
3. Humans therefore have a special DIGNITY. Our dignity (our worth) is not given by our status in the eyes of the world: “We believe each person possesses a basic dignity that comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment, not from race or gender, age or economic status.” (The Common Good, Bishops’ Conference, p.9, 1996)
4. As creatures with a unique dignity, the human person is worthy of RESPECT. Definition of Respect from virtue work: “you show respect when you treat other people as you would like to be treated (The Golden Rule, Matthew 7:12). To respect everyone means that you treat them with courtesy and kindness not because of who they are or what they have done, but because, like you, they have a God-given dignity. It is important to respect yourself so that you have the confidence to be yourself and not give in to things you know are wrong or not to give in to those who want you to do things you don’t want to do. It is also important to show respect for creation through your care for nature.”
5. Made in the image of God means we have freedom to decide our own actions. This is seen in the verses after Genesis 1:27 when God tells humans to be fruitful (this can mean, have children, but also ‘do good’ and ‘think well’ - use your intelligence to good effect).
6. Human beings are also given charge of the earth, not to ruin it but to be like gardeners (VV. 28-30) – STEWARDS OF THE EARTH.

Below is Michelangelo’s ‘Creation of Adam’ (Genesis 2:7) that is on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome.

1. Adam is Hebrew (language of the Old Testament) for “Man”. God is show as an old man and Adam as young – showing that human beings are the ‘children of God’.
2. God in a womb: God may be inside a womb shaped cloud indicating that through God’s out stretched hand and finger God gives Adam life (the sanctity of life – it is God’s life in us)
3. God in a human brain: God may be inside what appears to be a brain shaped cloud indicating that our being made in God’s image is about human intelligence and our ability to come to know God through knowledge, creativity and wisdom.

