

Human dignity is God's gift

Lesson Overview

Receive Genesis's teaching about shared human dignity, fitting partnership and marriage. Learners contribute to a gallery of practical actions that honour people because their Creator gives them worth.



Passage

Genesis 1:26–31; Genesis 2:18–25



Focus statement

God gives male and female shared image-bearing dignity and establishes the marriage bond, so we should honour every person and receive his good design.



Age-focused objective

Use Genesis 1:27 to explain why weakness or low status does not reduce worth, and explain why equal dignity does not erase the text's male-female marriage description. Learners may explain aloud or point to evidence.



Memory verse

So God created man
in his own image;
he created him in the image of God;
he created them male and female.

Genesis 1:27, CSB

Before the class

Read Teacher preparation, then rehearse this guide with your selected resources.

Choose, then print. Select one illustration and either activity A or its replacement B. Print single-sided A4 portrait at actual size. Print Printable Resources, pages 1–3 and 5, once for the teacher. Add page 4 if choosing illustration A.

Student copies. For activity A, print Student Pages, pages 2–4 once for the shared gallery, plus enough copies of page 5 for one contribution card per learner or supported pair; page 5 supplies six cards. Page 1 is optional lined notes: print one per learner who wants it, kept separately from shared activity work. Activity B needs no activity copies; the optional notes page remains available.

Have ready. Cut the contribution cards and set out the three gallery profiles. Keep pencils available. For illustration B, have the supplied Alex profile on a sheet and a spare sheet to cover its second clause. Keep a spare blank sheet for any covered words or later reveal, and a Bible or the supplied readings available. Learners may speak, point or dictate; personal notes need not be handed in.

How the lesson unfolds

Begin with God’s gift of identity, then follow the relationship He provides. The activity tests whether our practical decisions agree with the dignity the passage gives.



Shared dignity comes from God

Genesis 1 names male and female as image-bearers before achievement. This provides the basis for recognising the woman as a fitting human partner.



God provides a corresponding partner

Genesis 2 shows shared humanity and God’s care for relationship. The partnership leads into the account’s explanation of marriage.



God gives a marriage bond

The husband–wife union belongs to His good creation. Distinguish universal dignity from the new life received by grace in Christ.



Explain and apply the passage

Choose the main reinforcement or its replacement: dignity gallery or image caption and explanation. Bring the explanation back to the passage and its fitting response.



Remember and practise respect

Learn Genesis 1:27, check the basis of dignity and respond with humble trust and practical care.

Transition

Ask, “Why does the created world deserve care without becoming something we worship?” Receive that God made it good and remains its Creator. Add, “Today we look more closely at the people God made.” Ask learners to think quietly about the question, “What makes someone valuable?” No one needs to rank or name another person. Pray for truthful understanding and respectful hearts.

Lesson

Explain that we will follow dignity, partnership and marriage in Genesis. The first tells us why people matter before we discuss what they can do.

1. God gives shared image-bearing dignity

Show Printable Resources, page 1, *Dignity is received from the Creator*. Use the present-day welcome illustration to raise the question of worth, then ground the answer in God's image.

READ ALOUD

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."

²⁷ So God created man
in his own image;
he created him in the image of God;
he created them male and female.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth."

Genesis 1:26–28, CSB

SAY (SUGGESTED WORDING)

To bear God's image is to be made to represent Him and live responsibly in His world. It does not mean that God has an ordinary human body that ours copies. Male and female both receive this identity. It is God's gift before anyone earns marks, becomes popular or works independently. People who need help have the same human dignity as people who can offer it.



Ask

What gives male and female their dignity here?



Listen for

God creates both in His image. Their worth is received from Him, not earned through ability or status.



If needed

Point to verse 27 and ask who creates and who receives His image.

Invite pairs to complete this sentence without naming anyone: “If a person needs more help, their dignity ...” Receive “does not become smaller”, with God’s image as the reason. Explain that equal dignity does not mean every action is right; harmful actions still need correction.

Genesis 2 looks more closely at the first man’s life. God identifies a need and provides a corresponding human partner. The account tells of animals being named, but no suitable helper being found among them.

2. God provides a fitting human partner

Show Printable Resources, page 2, *Male and female; shared humanity*. Hold shared dignity beside God’s provision of a fitting partner; do not introduce personality stereotypes.

 READ ALOUD

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him.”

Genesis 2:18, CSB

 READ ALOUD

²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place.

²² Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.

²³ And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone
and flesh of my flesh;
this one will be called “woman,”
for she was taken from man.

Genesis 2:21–23, CSB

 SAY (SUGGESTED WORDING)

The woman is another human being, not a possession or a lesser creature. The man recognises their shared humanity. Helper does not mean someone of lower worth; the Bible also calls God His people’s help. Here God gives a partner corresponding to the man. Their shared dignity and their relationship belong together. Neither gives permission for ridicule, control or harm.



Ask

What does the man recognise when the woman is brought to him?



Listen for

She shares his humanity: bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. God has provided a fitting partner.



If needed

Point to the repeated “my” in his words and explain that he recognises someone of the same human kind, not another animal.

Point to the second teaching display, which describes shared humanity. Ask for one word that describes the response this gift deserves: welcome, honour or care are fitting. Move directly to the relationship the narrator now explains.

3. God establishes an embodied marriage bond

Show Printable Resources, page 3, *Marriage and the dignity of every person*. Retain the husband–wife teaching and the safeguards against household disclosure or harmful authority.

READ ALOUD

²⁴ This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.

²⁵ Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

Genesis 2:24–25, CSB

SAY (SUGGESTED WORDING)

Genesis describes marriage as the committed union of a man and his wife. Their bodily life and shared bond matter to God. The final verse describes life before sin, without shame or broken trust. We can honour this good design while remembering that not every household is safe or peaceful. Marriage is not the measure of a person’s worth: unmarried people also bear God’s image. Nothing here gives anyone permission to harm another person.



Ask

What relationship does verse 24 describe, and what must remain true of people in other circumstances?



Listen for

It describes a husband–wife marriage bond. Every person still has God-given dignity; being unmarried or living in a difficult household does not remove it.



If needed

Point to “wife” and “one flesh”, then return to Genesis 1:27’s source of dignity. Keep the discussion about the text, not learners’ households.

SAY (SUGGESTED WORDING)

These good gifts also show how serious our wrongdoing is. We have treated people as less valuable or resisted God’s rule. Jesus, God’s eternal Son, became truly human, obeyed the Father, died for sinners and rose bodily from the dead. He gives forgiveness and new life by grace. Being human gives us dignity, but it does not mean we are already reconciled to God. Hear how Paul explains salvation and good works.

READ ALOUD

⁸ For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—

⁹ not from works, so that no one can boast.

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

Ephesians 2:8–10, CSB

SAY (SUGGESTED WORDING)

We receive Christ through repentance and faith. Good works follow His gift; they do not purchase it. Treating people with respect matters because God made them and because His grace changes how His people live.

Choose one illustration. Use this in place of an additional example while drawing the teaching together. Let the passage govern what the comparison can establish.

Illustration A: A place at the table

Show Printable Resources, page 4. An imagined host makes room for another person. What might this action communicate before anyone knows the visitor’s achievements? What would a respectful invitation leave them free to choose?

Connect and limit: Connect the welcome to the dignity given in Genesis 1:27. An invitation recognises worth; it does not create it. The image supplies no information about the visitor's abilities or faith.

Illustration B: A description with the achievements covered

Write a fictional profile: "Alex is a person; Alex has won a prize." Cover the second clause and ask whether Alex's human worth has disappeared. Then add "Alex needs help with a task" and ask again.

Connect and limit: Genesis grounds dignity in God's creating, not in a person's usefulness or independence. The paper is only a way of comparing claims, never a model of a person's value.

Application

Choose one of the following approaches. The replacement uses the same passage and conclusion; do not run both.

Option A: A gallery of dignity in action

Set out the fictional profiles on Student Pages, pages 2–4 with space for contributions. Read all three aloud before inviting quiet consideration. Give each learner a blank card from Student Pages, page 5 and a pencil, or let a supported pair share a card and willing scribe. Explain that this is a gallery of actions, not a ranking of people.

Consider and contribute quietly

Learners visit the profiles or receive them at their seats. Each chooses one person and offers a short action that would help them participate with dignity. Model the operation without writing an answer for a profile: place a blank card beside a profile and explain that it should name something someone could actually do. Learners may write, dictate or speak their contribution. Keep the facts fictional.

Compare actions with one foundation

Gather the class and read a few different contributions. Ask why patience, an accessible route or an invitation to contribute can honour the same human worth in different circumstances. If an offer takes over someone's choice, ask how it could include their preferences. Do not require anyone to act disability or old age, and never use an actual learner as an example.



Ask

"What gives all three people dignity before we know how useful, able or confident they are?"



Listen for

God makes people in His image. Age, ability, familiarity and achievement do not grant or reduce human worth.



If needed

Return to Genesis 1:27. Ask who gives the identity and whether the verse makes performance its price.

Join this to the whole lesson: male and female share this dignity; Genesis also describes a corresponding partnership and the husband–wife bond. Neither marriage nor usefulness measures someone’s worth. Dignity does not mean every action is right or that everyone is already reconciled to God. Recall Christ’s saving grace and the good works that follow it. Keep the gallery for a later recap.

Option B: Explain the welcome

Show the welcome picture. Let learners suggest two short captions, one grounded in achievement and one in God-given dignity. Together revise the achievement-based caption without mocking its author. Ask which phrase in Genesis 1:27 gives the reason.

Draw it together: No learner is used as the example. Finish by explaining why equal dignity allows different practical help and does not make marriage, ability or social standing a measure of worth. Christ’s grace remains the way of reconciliation, not a reward for welcome.

Close

Memory and understanding

Show Printable Resources, page 5. Read the complete verse below once and say the reference. Learners may listen, point or join. The repeated source of human dignity is God’s creating, before possessions, achievement or independence.

SCRIPTURE

²⁷ So God created man
in his own image;
he created him in the image of God;
he created them male and female.

Genesis 1:27, CSB

Explain, then remember. With the poster visible, choose one significant phrase and explain how it answers today’s question. Give quiet thinking time before hearing a willing explanation. Return to the exact words and invite the class to say the complete verse and reference together, looking at the poster as needed. Learners may listen or point; understanding comes before unaided recall.

**Ask**

What gives every person dignity, and how does Genesis 2 describe marriage?

**Listen for**

God creates humanity in His image, male and female. Marriage is the husband–wife union described in Genesis 2:24; people outside marriage retain full human dignity.

**If needed**

Point to “God created” on the poster, then recall the marriage display on Printable Resources, page 3. Supply the beginning, “Worth comes from ...”.

Respond and pray

Student page 1 offers optional lined notes and private reflection. Learners may listen, think, sketch or write; nothing personal needs to be handed in.

Invite quiet reflection: “Is there a way you treat someone as valuable only when they are useful to you?” No response needs to be shared. Thank God for human life and for Christ’s saving grace. Ask for repentance, patient respect and willingness to hear His word. Any further pastoral conversation should follow the church’s supervised care arrangements.

Invite learners to revisit Genesis 1:27 during the week and practise one respectful action within an ordinary relationship. There is no written task or report about anyone’s home.

Teacher reflection after the lesson

Could learners ground dignity in God’s act rather than ability, explain the marriage passage without devaluing others, and propose a practical act of dignity with a biblical reason? Record what needs revisiting and the actual whole-class time. Keep private learner information out of the record; a clear answer does not establish saving faith.

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