Venerable Pierre Toussaint

A Heart That Made Room for Everyone

Ages about 7-11 | Video 7:43 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth Every person has God-given dignity. We follow Jesus by noticing others and caring for them.

Learning goals Recall Pierre's generosity; recognize slavery and racism as wrong; choose a practical act of care.

Gather Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

Watch online Open this video on Servus Dei

Before watching | 2 minutes

Introduce Pierre, a Haitian-born Black Catholic who became a free man and hairdresser in New York. Explain that enslaving people is wrong: no person is property.

Watch and notice

Notice his basket of food, the family he and Juliette welcomed, his prayer, and his care despite unfair treatment.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. How did Pierre use his work and earnings?
He supported his household and helped people with food, care, freedom, and education.

2. Why was turning his family away from church wrong?
Their race never diminished their dignity. God loves every person, and racism is unjust.

3. What did Pierre do when life was difficult?
He prayed, grieved for his family, and continued caring for others. Sadness is not a failure of faith.

4. What small act of care could we choose?
Invite someone into a game, help with a task, or share appropriately. Practical answers will vary.

Then respond and pray Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

Lead the response

Venerable Pierre Toussaint

Short family lesson Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

Choose a handout

Draw & Tell Draw one caring action from Pierre's life and one kind action a child could do. Invite spoken responses.

Read & Write Recall how Pierre served others, explain human dignity, and suggest a safe, concrete act of kindness.

Adapt by readiness

Emerging readers: read aloud and accept pointing, drawings, or an adult writing the child's words.

Confident readers: connect human dignity with a fair action, not merely a kind feeling.

Make room for someone | Optional 4 minutes

Act out a pretend playground invitation. Practice saying, "Would you like to join us?" Choose one small, safe way to help this week with an adult's guidance.

Look for understanding A child recalls one act of mercy, says why every person matters, and names a caring next step.

Closing prayer Jesus, help us notice people who need a friend or a helping hand. Teach us to respect every person and make room for others in our hearts. Amen.

At home Tell a trusted adult about your chosen kind action. Pray together for someone who is lonely or grieving.

Handout answer notes Pierre shared earnings and care. Slavery and racism deny human dignity. Kind-action answers vary.

Teach with care

Discuss racism and grief gently. Let children pass on personal sharing. Helping someone sick or unfamiliar requires a trusted adult; kindness does not require unsafe contact. Venerable recognizes heroic virtue; it does not mean Pierre has been canonized. Generosity never justified his enslavement or the racism he faced. Illustrations and conversation are dramatized.

Words to explain Dignity: the worth every person has. Charity: love shown in action. Venerable: a person the Church recognizes for heroic virtue.

Sources for the leader

Biography: Venerable Pierre Toussaint (USCCB)
Church history: St. Patrick's Old Cathedral: Pierre Toussaint
Scripture connection: Matthew 25:35-40 (USCCB)