

SHARING THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

St. Thomas Aquinas & Humility and Excellence

Humility is accepting what we're good at and what's hard. Excellence is doing our best in everything because we should use the talents God gave us!

IN DEPTH FOR STUDENTS

Humility is the virtue that helps us remember that God is the source of all goodness. It means understanding that everything we have—our talents, friends, and everything good—comes from God. Excellence is about striving to become the best version of ourselves with God's help. It isn't about having the best stuff or being the best at something. We grow in excellence by praying for and practicing virtues like kindness, patience, and love as well as using our gifts in ways that help others. Our toughest enemy for these virtues is pride, which makes us think we're better than others or don't need God's help. To practice humility and excellence, we have to admit when we make mistakes or don't know something, and thank God for the good things He has given us.

CONNECTION TO THE SAINT

St. Thomas Aquinas is a special saint in the Catholic Church, known as a "Doctor of the Church." This title is given to people who help us better understand the Bible and our faith. St. Thomas wrote an important book about God and our beliefs, and it helped explain many of the Church's teachings. St. Thomas also wrote hymns that we still sing today, like during Adoration. Even though St. Thomas accomplished so much, he saw his work as "straw" compared to the greatness of God. He knew that any good he did came from God working through him and that God was the true source of his gifts. Whether he was studying, writing, or serving others, St. Thomas prayed for God's help and aimed to serve God through everything he did.



OTHER RESOURCES;

- Saints Alive Podcast: [St. Thomas Aquinas + Activity](#) (Ages 8+)
- Photo of St. Thomas Aquinas ([Wikicommons](#))
- Biography + Video ([BeKids](#))
- Family Resources: Available on ht-parish.org/joy/ is a take home sheet created for children's understanding and family practices.

PRACTICAL CLASSROOM IDEAS

- **Authenticity Journal:** Provide students with journals where they can reflect on moments when they were true to themselves, even when it was challenging. Encourage them to write about how their faith helps them stay authentic.
- **Role-Model Spotlight:** Assign students to research a saint or figure from the Bible who embodied authenticity. Students can present what they learned, emphasizing how this person stayed true to their faith and beliefs despite pressure to conform.
- **"Be Yourself" Posters:** Let students create posters with personal mottos or quotes from saints about authenticity. These can be displayed around the classroom as reminders to stay true to themselves and their faith.
- **Saint Quotes on Authenticity:** Share daily quotes from saints like Bl. Carlo Acutis or St. Therese of Lisieux about the importance of being genuine. Invite students to reflect on how these quotes inspire them to live authentically. Display these on the bulletin board in the school hallway to encourage others!
- **'Caught Being Real' Spotlight:** Notice and briefly highlight when a student speaks or acts in a way that reflects their true self, reinforcing the value of authenticity in daily actions.
- **Peer Accountability Partners:** Pair students up to support each other in staying authentic. Encourage partners to check in with each other weekly, offering support and encouragement in living out their true selves.
- **Prayer Minute:** Start the class with a minute of silent prayer, asking students to reflect on how they can be more authentic in their relationships with God, themselves, and others throughout the day.
- **True Self Story Time:** Incorporate short stories, fables, or saint biographies that emphasize the importance of being true to oneself. Follow up with a discussion about how authenticity was displayed in the story.