OVERVIEW

APRIL

Virtue: JUSTICE

Overview of the Virtue of Justice

- Justice means that we deal fairly with others, recognizing the equality and dignity of all.
- It requires that we work to insure that all people, especially the poor and the weak, have access to opportunities.
- It assumes that none of us is free until all of us are.
- One of the central tenants of Catholic social teaching is the dignity of the human being; we are all created in the image of God, and therein rests our inalienable dignity.
- Justice is extended to people, animals, the environment; the whole universe.

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation -- I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES

A Responsible Citizen Who:

- Acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions. OCSGE 7(a)
- Accepts accountability for one’s own actions. OCSGE 7(b)
- Seeks and grants forgiveness. OCSGE 7(c)
- Promotes the sacredness of life. OCSGE 7(d)
- Witnesses Catholic social teaching by promoting equality, democracy, and solidarity for a just, peaceful and compassionate society. OCSGE 7(e)
- Respects and affirms the diversity and interdependence of the world's peoples and cultures. OCSGE 7(f)
- Respects and understands the history, cultural heritage and pluralism of today's contemporary society. OCSGE 7(g)
- Exercises the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship. OCSGE 7(h)
- Respects the environment and uses resources wisely. OCSGE 7(i)
- Contributes to the common good. OCSGE 7(j)
STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION:

Catholic tradition insists that we show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions which cannot be ignored.

PROMOTION OF PEACE:

Catholic teaching promotes peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. “Peace is not just the absence of war,” said Pope John Paul II, “it involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements.” Peace and justice are linked: Peace is the fruit of justice.

PARTICIPATION AND SUBSIDIARITY:

All people have a right to participate in the economic, political and cultural life of society. It is a fundamental demand of justice and a requirement for human dignity that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community. Conversely, it is wrong for a person or a group to be excluded unfairly or to be unable to participate in a society.
SCRIPTURE PASSAGES, ADDITIONAL REFERENCES, AND DISCUSSION STARTERS

JUSTICE

I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES

A responsible citizen who witnesses Catholic Social Teaching by promoting equality, democracy and solidarity for a just, peaceful, and compassionate society. OCSGE 7(e)

STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION* PROMOTION OF PEACE* PARTICIPATION AND SUBSIDIARITY

Faith – Scripture Passages:

- Seek good and not evil, that you may live; And thus may the LORD God of hosts be with you, Just as you have said! Hate evil, love good, and establish justice in the gate! (Amos 5:14-15)
- God has told you, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)
- Is not this the fast that I choose to lose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them... (Isaiah 58:6-7)

Additional References:

- “Be the change you want to see in the world.” ~(Gandhi)
- “If you want peace, work for justice.” ~(Pope Paul VI)

Discussion Starters:

- Identity an injustice that troubles you. What emotion first made you aware of it? Then talk about one action you can take to bring about justice.
- Do you think that all people are born with a yearning for justice or does it have to be taught?
- According to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., life's most persistent question is, "What are you doing for others?" Search your soul and then write an honest answer in your journal.
- Discuss the terms “marginalized” with your class and brainstorm other words that suggest negative attitudes towards individuals or groups of people (e.g. racist, bigotry).
- What are the primary values Catholics need to develop and promote to respect Creation?
- What concrete efforts are needed by individuals, non-profit organizations, business, governments and the world community together to respond to the environmental crises from a Catholic perspective?
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REFLECTION ON THE FOLLOWING 3 ACTIVITIES: Catholic tradition maintains that we show respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation.

- **Title:** Green Team/Earth Day
  
  **Description:** Eight student leaders formed the school’s Green Team and set about raising awareness of environmental issues among all students. They designed a series of activities and contests, all leading up to a special Earth Day in April. These activities included ensuring that all lights and computer monitors had been turned off, and that garbage in the school yard was cleaned up. Students also ran poster contests, created their own short movies on the environment and wrote a special Earth Day song. Teachers were brought on board, asked to read to their classes about environmental issues and to encourage their students to plant their own flowers and plants. To generate excitement and participation, Green Team leaders made regular announcements over the public address system and planned and ran all activities. Finally, for Earth Day in April, they invited the full student body to an assembly where Olympian Adam Kreek spoke about the Clean Air Achievers. Student leaders were also involved outside school, planting 319 white pine trees at Moonlight Beach, in one of Sudbury’s greening initiatives. The project has had a lasting impact as students continue to keep the yards clean and ensure that lights are turned off.

  **Project Type:** Student-Led Teacher-Facilitated  
  **School Name:** St. Paul the Apostle Catholic School

- **Title:** HNM Sustainable Living Conference
  
  **Description:** To build inclusiveness in the diverse school community and promote justice through environmental awareness and healthy living habits, student leaders created the “Sustainable Living Conference”. Presented to the entire student body and staff community, the conference featured a well-received keynote speaker and student-led workshops involving a variety of interactive environmentally-conscious activities. Student leaders used their communications skills to create a flyer that was distributed to each student to inform them and their parents or guardians. The ability to collaborate with other organizations was also important in securing participation from the Region of Peel Health Unit and the Humber College Green Team.

  **Project Type:** Student-Led Teacher-Facilitated  
  **Grade(s) Impacted:** 9-12, Teachers  
  **School Name:** Holy Name of Mary SS  
  **School Board:** Dufferin-Peel CDSB
Title: Message in a Bottle

Description: With the goal of eliminating the use of plastic water bottles at both Mother Theresa and St Benedict schools, a group of Grade 12 student leaders prepared an afternoon workshop called “Message in a Bottle”. This workshop saw Grade 12 students mentoring a group of Grade 7 students, educating them about the negative effects produced by plastic bottles. Armed with this information, the grade 7 students went back to Mother Theresa, spread the word and began weekly data collections. Students at the two schools bought 250 stainless steel water bottles to replace plastic bottles and used tap water instead of bottled water. Three months later, the goal of 80% reduction had been achieved. As well as having a positive impact on the environment, the project allowed students of very different age groups to get to know and appreciate each other.

Project Type: Student-Led Teacher-Facilitated
Grade(s) Impacted: 7-12
School Name: Mother Theresa Catholic C Elem S
School Board: Waterloo CDSB

Other ideas you can try!

- **Listen and learn from a guest speaker:** Ask your teacher to contact the TCDSB Safe Schools Dept. to send a facilitator to come to your class to talk about the process of Restorative Justice Circles which is currently being used in our schools to help promote peace, justice and used to strengthen and rebuild community.

- **Devote one of your meals together, or an hour after dinner, to a "Week in Review."** Talk about what is happening in the world, especially politically and economically.

- **Decide on one action you can take** as a class or a school in response to the state of the world — prayers, letters to newspapers and magazines, letters to your elected representatives, petitions, contributions, etc.

- **Try to consume less** so that there will be more available for others.
FAITH BASED MEDIA LINKS

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STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION* PROMOTION OF PEACE* PARTICIPATION AND SUBSIDIARITY

- Lives in the Balance: Charity or Justice

Although most of us enjoy a standard of living that is comfortable and secure, there are many among us, who for a variety of reasons live in poverty. And there are many more whose lives are in the balance between fulfillment and indignity.

Lives in the Balance looks at these differences through the eyes of an immigrant family, a single mother and someone who relies on disability support. As you watch the video we invite you to rejoice in how human beings help each other but reflect upon what we could all do to bring greater justice to our society.

Keep in mind the statement from Vatican II document: Gaudium Et Spes (On the Church in the Modern World):

"The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and the anguish of the followers of Christ as well."

The Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, Social Affairs Commission

Length: 30 min.

http://saltandlighttv.org/prog_special_lives_in_the_balance.html
**Synopsis & Central Plot:**

Earth follows three animal families around the world, through changing seasons and a changing planet. The diversity and vivacity of our planet is highlighted, from the North Pole to Antarctica, from the forests of North America to the deserts of Africa. The audience is privy to the incredibly fragility and simultaneous robustness of life on our planet. Elephants, polar bears, and humpback whales provide a lens through which the audience experiences the harsh elements and extraordinarily precious moments of animal life. Throughout the film, humans are invisible, but our impact on the climate and natural resources is regrettably prominent.

**Main Themes to Engage through the Film:**

- The climate change crisis
- The harmony of life on our planet
- The perfection and beauty of God’s creation
- The cycles of life and death, destruction and creation
- The impact of humanity on the rest of the Earth’s living plants and creatures
- The interdependence of all life

**Catholic Social Teaching Themes and Connections:**

- We are all called to **care for God’s creation**. In *earth* we see how rapidly our planet is changing and the impact that changes are having on animals’ lives right now. We must recognize the connectedness of all of God’s creations and our duty to care for the perfect gifts that God has given us. As humans, we were created in God’s image and share a call to strive for the common good. Our planet is shared amongst all humans and by respecting the **diversity of life**, whether human, animal, or plant, we become closer in our united humanity.
FAITH PRAYERS AND AFFIRMATIONS

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STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION* PROMOTION OF PEACE* PARTICIPATION AND SUBSIDIARITY

Prayers:

- **Faith, Hope and Charity Prayer**
  Loving God, we pray that the Toronto Catholic District School Board community continue to witness to the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity.
  May we be people of FAITH, always willing to follow the example of Jesus in all that we do.
  May we be people of HOPE, always trusting in your loving presence in our lives.
  May we be people of CHARITY, always willing to give of ourselves to better the lives of others.

- **Come Holy Spirit**
  Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.
  Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

  O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen

- **Magnificat - Mary’s Song of Praise** (Luke 1:46-56)
  My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
  for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
  From this day all generations will call me blessed:
  the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.
  He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.
  He has shown the strength of his arm; He has cast down the might from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly.
  He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.
  He has come to the help of his servant Israel, for He has remembered his promise of mercy, The promise He made to our father, to Abraham and his children forever. Amen.
**A Prayer Service for Earth Day**

**Leader:** Come, let us praise God for the gift of Creation.

**All:** Creator God, we praise you for the grandeur of the universe.
We praise you for the gift of this Earth.
We praise you for the land, and we praise you for the seas.
We praise you for the great miracle of teeming life on our prolific planet.
We praise you for the cycle of growth and for the beauty of bursting blooms in the Spring time.
We praise you for the green growth of summer and for the holy harvest in the Fall.
We praise you for the infinity of different creatures on the land and in the sea,
each unique in its own way, each fitting into the complex ecosystems you have gifted us with,
each dependent on each other and the whole.

We praise you, our Creator.
Grace us with a sense of our responsibilities to preserve
and protect your precious gift, this garden, this Earth.
We praise you, Creator God, and we offer you our hearts and hands
for the preservation of your Creation.

**Affirmations:**

- I am a peace-maker
- I am fair
- I am forgiving
- I follow rules and do my share
- I help for the poor and care for people in need
- I will stand up for what is right
- I know that life is precious
- I respect and protect the world and all that is in it
REFERENCES

- Salt and Light  http://saltandlighttv.org/
- ICE- Institute for Catholic Education  www.iceont.ca
- CCC- Catholic Curriculum Corporation  www.catholiccurriculumcorp.org
- CARFLEO  www.carfleo.org
- TCDSB- Nurturing Our Catholic Community website  www.tcdsb.org
- Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board  www.dpcdsb.org
- Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board  www.hwcdsb.ca
- Niagara Catholic District School Board  www.niagaracatholic.ca
- York Catholic District School Board  www.ycdsb.ca
- Spirituality and Practice Website  http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/

Actions
- Speak Up Student Engagement --Ontario Ministry of Education
  http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/students/speakup/index.html
- Passionist Community Prayer Resources  www.cptryon.org/prayer/index.html
- Key Principles of Catholic Social Teaching
  http://catholicactionnetwork.org/dec05/documents/CSTprinciples.pdf
- http://schools.alcdsb.on.ca/schoolcouncil/Shared%20Documents/renewingthevision.pdf
- http://www.educationforjustice.org/