OVERVIEW

DECEMBER

Virtue: CHARITY

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation: A Collaborative Contributor

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Overview of the Virtue of Charity

- The virtue of Charity means being generous with our presence, time, and money.
- Charity allows us to give freely without expecting anything in return.
- The virtue of charity encompasses a range of small acts and habits that affects our own immediate surroundings as well as the larger global community. It can be as simple as giving someone a smile or it can be expressed on a larger scale through raising funds for world organizations.

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation -- I AM A TEAM PLAYER!

A Collaborative Contributor who:

- Works effectively as an interdependent team member. OCSGE 5(a)
- Thinks critically about the meaning and purpose of work. OCSGE 5(b)
- Develops one’s God-given potential and makes a meaningful contribution to society. OCSGE 5(c)
- Finds meaning, dignity, fulfillment and vocation in work which contributes to the common good. OCSGE 5(d)
- Respects the rights, responsibilities and contributions of self and others. OCSGE 5(e)
- Exercises Christian leadership in the achievement of individual and group goals. OCSGE 5(f)
- Achieves excellence, originality, and integrity in one's own work and supports these qualities in the work of others. OCSGE 5(g)

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching - OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE:

Catholic teaching proclaims that a basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.
I AM A TEAM PLAYER

“Develops one's God-given potential and makes a meaningful contribution to society.” OCSGE 5(c)

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

Faith – Scripture Passages:

• Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. (Acts 2: 44-45)

• And now abide with faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. (1Corinthians 13: 1)

• The measure you give will be the measure you get. (Matthew 7: 2)

• It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)

• The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free. (Mark 4:18)

Additional References:

• “In a world which ignores the human thirst for God, we are called to share the living waters of our faith.”
  (This Moment of Promise)

• Ubi Caritas et amor, Deus ibi est. Where there is charity and love, God is there. (Roman Missal)

Discussion Starters:

• Who has taught you the most about generosity and kindness? Do you think they are given enough attention in our society? Explain your views.

• Explore the website www.habitat.ca with questions such as:
  ➢ How are those involved with Habitat helping with the common good?
  ➢ How are they demonstrating that they are collaborative contributors?
  ➢ What do you think are the admirable qualities of the volunteers?
  ➢ How is this program inclusive?

• Life Among the Believers
  All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. (Acts 2: 44-45)

  • How have your experiences in Catholic schools reflected this same spirit of the early Church?

  • Suggest ways in which a school could promote such a strong sense of collaboration and community.
FAITH IN ACTION – ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS

CHARITY

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The following Catholic Schools are among some which have received Speak Up Grants from the Ministry of Education. These Catholic Schools from around the province illustrated “Faith in Action” in their schools through various clubs and activities. May they serve to spark inspiration and innovation in your school, as your Catholic Community lives out the call “to share the living waters of our faith in a world which ignores the human thirst for God.” (This Moment of Promise)

- **Title: Acts of Kindness for the Community**

  REFLECTION ON ACTIVITY: Jesus walked with the poor and the vulnerable embracing each of them as unique gifts of God’s creation. His entire ministry was based on the giving of himself so that others may have life, especially those who were marginalized. To what extent do you feel that you are serving in a Christ-like way to better your community and those in it?

  **Description:** Students committed themselves to creating a more positive environment in their school and developing a climate of caring for each other and the outside community. Their “Random Acts of Kindness” included sending greeting cards and letters of thanks to members of the school staff, serving at a soup kitchen once a month, visiting a seniors’ home and putting together welcome kits to make new students feel at home. Students demonstrated communications skills in crafting announcements to encourage their peers to participate, and then keeping students and teachers informed via a bulletin board that carried photographs and information related to the different acts of kindness.

  **Project Type:** Student-Led Teacher-Facilitated
  **Grade(s) Impacted:** Teachers, Community
  **School Name:** Bishop Gallagher Senior Catholic E.S
  **School Board:** Thunder Bay CDS Board
Title: BAGS - Be A Giving Source

REFLECTION ON ACTIVITY: What small and/or larger scale contributions can you make to assist others in need? Suggest ways in which your school community can promote the Catholic Church teaching which proclaims the priority for “the option for the poor and vulnerable”.

Description: Developed by student leaders, “BAGS – Be a Giving Source” enabled all students to take an active role in serving those in need, both in the local community and in developing countries. The student leaders presented information about the needs of those less fortunate, encouraged participation by the entire student body and collected material goods to assist families in need. Four different bags were developed: a baby bag, family bag, student bag and worker bag. Students, teachers and parents joined in filling these bags with donated items. Student leaders created information to be sent home, led presentations to all classes, communicated via newsletters and spoke about the project on Radio Teopoli, a local radio station. A BAGS theme song was also created and student leaders plan to record it and include it on a music CD. “BAGS” taught all students the importance of giving and helped raise awareness of the needs of less fortunate families.

Project Type: Student-Led Teacher-Facilitated
Grade(s) Impacted: School, Teachers, Community
School Name: St. Patrick S
School Board: Dufferin-Peel CDS Board

Other ideas you can try!

- Keep a bank or box in your room and deposit loose change in it. Every time you go out, you might put money to pay for another’s meal in the box. Hold a family/friends meeting to decide how to distribute your generosity fund.

- Identify one activity/event in the school or your parish that serves others who are in need. You might consider an annual event such as the ‘Adopt A Family Christmas Basket’ where individual classrooms sponsor a family in need for Christmas. Or, you might want to consider an ongoing activity such as a food bank in your parish or, the Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

Worksheet and Rubric Link:

http://www.iceont.ca/resources/1/HamWentworth%20OCSGE%20Portfolio.pdf
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OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

Is it fair that good people get hurt?” | “Why is it difficult to accept myself the way I am?”

Young people have so many questions when it comes to issues such as fairness, acceptance, self-control, and respect. But they’re not just sitting around waiting for answers. They’re doing great things! In this dynamic and inspirational 10-part series, host Mary Rose Bacani brings you virtues in action. Each half-hour episode presents “virtues in action” in our Catholic school community, in our personal lives, and in the lives of young people who have followed the call to priestly or religious life. A life of virtue is not impossible. Take it from those who say, “People of virtue? They’re in The World I Know!”

The World I Know supports the promotion of safe, caring, inclusive and healthy school communities.

http://saltandlighttv.org/theworldiknow/
FAITH PRAYERS AND AFFIRMATIONS

CHARITY

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OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

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.

• **For Little Things**
  Dear Jesus, help me to make a difference in the lives of others.
  Be with me when I feel challenged or hopeless or when the task at hand just seems too big.
  Remind me that the small and everyday things I do for the poor, neglected, and the voiceless are important to them and to You. Amen Now and Forever: The Catholic University of America Student Prayer Book. (2007)

• The call to charity begins inside the home that is our hearts, and extends in an ever widening circle to include the entire community of being – all who are, and all that is. When we respond to the call to charity by giving something of ourselves to those in need, we find ourselves transformed, alive, and at peace. As we wait in longing this Advent for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, we ask for an increase of charity in our thoughts, words and deeds.

• For all those in this community in need of our love, kindness and generosity. We pray to you Lord. Amen
To Our Lady of Guadalupe (Feast Day December 12th)

O Mother of the Americas,
You came
On a dark hill in a dark time
To one who had no documentation.
To the challenge of the authorities,
You offered roses and grace.
You wanted a space,
Simple and extraordinary,
A space where all could worship
Together, equally your children.
You call us again
In this dark time
To create a space
Where all your children
Are welcomed,
Cherished,
Offered bread, roses,
and what grace we can gather.
O Lady, still shining,
Madre, Mother,
You wait on the hillside,
Until we believe,
Until we can welcome
The ones whom you send.

Christmas Season Prayer

May the love that breathes life into all of humanity
Be born in us this Christmas season.
May the love that brings forth all of creation,
Be born in us this Christmas season.
May the love that overcomes hatred and brings healing,
Be born in us this Christmas season.
May the love that forgives and renews,
Be born in us this Christmas season.
May the love that brings the fruits of justice,
Be born in us this Christmas season.
May the love that brings the blessing of peace,
Be born in us this Christmas season.

May that Peace now be the gift we with share with all our brothers and sisters.

Affirmations:

- I co-operate with others in all that I do
- I value everyone's work
- I respect and listen to others
- I think of others before myself
- I follow rules of fair play
- I work hard in school so that I can build my community and make it a better place
REFERENCES

- Salt and Light  http://saltandlighttv.org/
- ICE- Institute for Catholic Education  www.iceont.ca
- CCC- Catholic Curriculum Corporation  www.catholiccurriculumcorp.org
- CARFLEO  www.carleo.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/