OVERVIEW

MAY

Virtue: COMPASSION

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation: A Self Directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching: Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

Overview of the Virtue of Compassion

- Compassion is a feeling deep within ourselves—a "quivering of the heart"—and it is also a way of acting—being affected by the suffering of others and moving on their behalf.
- Compassion is made up of two words. 'co' meaning together and 'passion' meaning a strong feeling. When we see someone is in distress and we feel their pain as if it were our own, and strive to eliminate or lessen their pain, then this is compassion.
- Sharing, readiness to give comfort, sympathy, concern and caring—all are manifestations of compassion.
- You will notice also that in the compassionate person, care and love towards others has its origins in care and love for oneself. We can really understand others when we really understand ourselves.

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation -- I AM A LEARNER FOR LIFE

A Self-Directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner Who:

- Demonstrates a confident and positive sense of self and respect for the dignity and welfare of others. OCSGE 4(a)
- Demonstrates flexibility and adaptability. OCSGE 4(b)
- Takes initiative and demonstrates Christian leadership. OCSGE 4(c)
- Responds to, manages and constructively influences change in a discerning manner. OCSGE 4(d)
- Sets appropriate goals and priorities in school, work and personal life. OCSGE 4(e)
- Applies effective communication, decision-making, problem-solving, time and resource management skills. OCSGE 4(f)
- Examines and reflects on one's personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities. OCSGE 4(g)
- Participates in leisure and fitness activities for a balanced and healthy lifestyle. OCSGE 4(h)

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching – DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS:

In a marketplace where too often the quarterly bottom line takes precedence over the rights of workers, we believe that the economy must serve people, not the other way around. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected - the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property and to economic initiative.
I AM A LEARNER FOR LIFE

“A self-directed responsible, lifelong learner who demonstrates a confident and positive sense of self and respect for the dignity and welfare of others.” OCSGE 4(a)

DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

**Faith – Scripture Passages:**

- Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. *(Romans 12:15)*

- When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. *(Matthew 9:36)*

- Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience *(Colossians 3:12)*

**Additional Resources:**

- “In a time which often seems to be without goals or ennobling aspirations, we are challenged to declare ours and to dedicate our lives to their achievement. *(This Moment of Promise)*

**Discussion Starters:**

- “Love your neighbour as you love yourself”. *(Matthew 22: 39)* Identify an area where you need to be compassionate to yourself. Write about how you will go about this.

- Tell a story about a moral mentor you have known- someone who inspired you with his or her compassionate activity.

- In groups of 3 or 4, choose one act of kindness which would make --
  - the school
  - your home
  - your city
  - the world
  - a more compassionate place to live.

- What have been some “authentic signs” of God’s compassionate presence in Catholic schools?
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DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

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 declare their goals and ennobling aspirations and to dedicate their lives to their achievement”. (This Moment of Promise)

- **Title: Bishop Tonnos - PERFECT COUNCIL**

  **REFLECTION ON ACTIVITY:** Catholic teachings promote that we develop leadership potential in order to be of service to others, rather than to boost our own egos. What leadership opportunities are available in your school, classroom or community?

  **Description:** About 35 student leaders between the ages of 14 and 18 made themselves available to create a respectful school environment as they developed and demonstrated their own leadership potential and independent lifelong learning skills. These leaders provided mentorship for students beginning their high school experience. They led Grade 9 students in activities, with a special emphasis on disengaged students. They also assisted at school functions and represented the school in the community. They acted as “student voices”, providing feedback to the school administration and helping to foster the continual development of the school community. These student leaders represented diverse experiences, cultures and gender. All expressed great excitement about this new opportunity to develop their own leadership potential, while helping other students.

  **Project Type:** Student-Led Teacher-Facilitated  
  **Grade(s) Impacted:** 8-12, Community  
  **School Name:** Bishop Tonnos Catholic SS  
  **School Board:** Hamilton-Wentworth CDSB
Case Studies-Child Labor

**REFLECTION ON ACTIVITY**: In a marketplace where too often the quarterly bottom line takes precedence over the rights of workers, we believe that the economy must serve people, not the other way around.

1) **LUI**

Lui is a 15-year-old uneducated Laotian girl. A woman in her village named Jai suggested she work in a factory in Bangkok. Lui’s family is very poor. Jai claimed that Lui could earn 3000 baht ($75) per month working in a factory in Bangkok. Lui’s mother said she should go, and she paid for the travel cost. Jai took Lui to a house in Bangkok where there were many Laotian girls waiting for employers to select them. A few days later, Ladda, the owner of a garment factory, took Lui to her factory. Most of the workers in the factory were children between 12-15 years. They came from Laos and Burma. They had to work from 6 a.m. until 10 p.m. Sometimes they had to work till midnight. They had three meals per day and slept on the floor in the working room. They couldn’t relax, laugh, or talk with each other. The owners of the factory supervised the children to make sure they worked hard enough. They could not rest, even when they were very tired. Children who broke the rules were beaten. They did not have holidays and never received any salary. They were not allowed to go outside the factory. On Sundays, they received 70 baht ($1.75) so they could buy some necessary things, such as soap or a toothbrush at a small shop besides the factory under the supervision of the employer. One child ran away because she was beaten very badly and she reported it to the police. After that, all the children including Lui were rescued. These children were detained and fined for their illegal entry before being deported.


2) **MYRIAD-**

My name is Myriad. I live in Central America, Pakistan, China, South America, Bangladesh, Saipan, Taiwan, Indonesia . . . I am as young as 4 and can be physically spent, of no further use, and thrown away by the time I am 15 years of age. I am forced to work from 70-110 hours a week, and my typical workday is at least 12-14 hours long. I work 6 days a week—frequently 7—and earn as little as 6 cents an hour. My factory has armed guards, no windows, no fire exits, and working conditions are often toxic and very unsafe. I am kept behind locked gates. During my only half hour break, I race to the factory fence and reach through the barbed wire to buy the little food I can afford. My home is a bed in a dirty, cramped dorm, and my food is frequently thin gruel and bread; and for these “luxuries,” money is deducted from my pay at the will of my employer. I am insulted, beaten, fined, body-searched, sexually abused. I make your jeans, your shoes, your rugs, your handbags, your shirts, your children’s toys. I am a child . . . I am a child of God.

Adapted from Barbara Richardson’s *Reflection*, UNICEF.
Discussion Questions:

1. What factors led to Lui’s imprisonment in the sweatshop?

2. A child laborer may have made the clothes you wear. How does this personal dimension affect your reaction to the case studies?

3. Why do you think factory owners choose to use children as workers? Are children more or less vulnerable than adults? Are they more or less willing to obey commands? How do their wages compare to those of adults?

4. Who benefits from the structures and systems which allow child labor to exist? What needs to be changed so the problem of child labor can be solved? What role can you play?

Other ideas you can try!

• Volunteer to serve meals at a soup kitchen, to carry meals to shut-ins, to read to people in the hospital or in a senior’s residence, or to do any other activity that puts you close to compassion.

• Go on a fast. If you are inexperienced in this practice, begin with a one-day fast. Eat only fruits or vegetables and drink at least eight glasses of water. Or skip a meal a day for one week. Use the time you would have spent preparing and eating food for quiet reflection on the experience of being hungry. Feel compassion for the millions of people around the world who do not have enough to eat.

• Create a Compassion Collage. Gather pictures of people, places, and things for which you feel compassion. You may take photos yourself, cut them out of magazines and newspapers, copy them from books, or find them in the direct mail appeals from service organizations. Look for strong pictures to which you have an emotional response, no matter how painful. Include examples of the suffering of animals, nature, and things. Add words or symbols to represent others areas of concern.
Children of the Batey  Sugar is more than just a sweetener for the children in the bateyes of the Dominican Republic. For these children of sugar cane cutters, sugar is the reason they can survive. But it is also sugar that keeps them in their impoverished condition. In the batey where the sugar cane cutters and their families live, the children run around in the midst of tiny shacks and garbage heaps, exposed to malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS.

Along with native Dominicans, Haitian migrants and their children make up most of the batey’s population. Their children have difficulties obtaining proper education, health care and other basic human rights because by law, they are not considered citizens of the Dominican Republic.

St. Peter’s Parish in Woodbridge, Ontario, responded to the needs of these children by organizing a week-long summer camp in the bateyes. A group of 37 people brought books, clothes and other donated goods. They also played games and other activities with the children.

The Canadians accepted that they could not change the reality of the Dominican Republic, but they could impact one life. And a beautiful exchange happened! They became the hands and feet of Christ for the children, and in the process allowed the faith and joy of the children to touch their hearts! One of the Canadians, a six year-old boy named Christian, went right to the heart of everybody’s experience in exclaiming: “Blessed are the poor, and blessed are you who help the poor.”

http://saltandlighttv.org/prog_special_batey.html
FAITH PRAYERS AND AFFIRMATIONS

COMPASSION

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DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

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.

- **Prayer to St. Joseph, Patron of Workers**

  By: Education for Justice

  St. Joseph, Patron of Workers,
  Help us to respect the dignity of all workers.
  Help us to learn about and to care about
  Workers who do not have fair wages, just benefits, safe working environments.
  Help us to raise our voices for justice for workers.
  Help us to ask our government and our representatives
  To develop policies that create jobs with dignity.

  You taught your son
  The value of work and the joy of work well done.
  Teach us these lessons.
  Guide us in our own work
  And in the work of justice we are all called to participate in.
  Renew our strength and commitment
  Each day as we face the work ahead
  As we labor for the common good of all. Amen.
Dear God, help us to remember that others don't always see the way we do, hear what we hear, feel what we feel, or understand things the way we've come to understand them. You give each of us gifts that are uniquely ours but so often we fail to value the gift in another, judging other gifts as wrong as or somehow less important than our own. Give us the compassion you want us to have, O Father, and teach us to embrace each other with compassionate arms, no matter what our age, color, creed, history, or belief. Help us to remember that you are Life Itself, and that you are using every one of our unique gifts to bring us together with you once again. Amen.

Dear God, How long has it been since we walked in someone else's shoes? Today, we can honor and respect those people we meet who come from different backgrounds, travel on different roads, choose different lifestyles, express themselves differently, or come from other parts of the world. We can look at them with eyes of love and know that our differences show the unique character of our individual gifts, but the life that animates us--the light at the center of our souls--comes from one source, the source we all share from our loving God the Father. Amen.

Affirmations:

- I use my gifts and talents given to me by God
- I always do my best
- I build on my strengths and weaknesses
- I set goals
- I accept change
- I am proud of the good things I do
- I am thankful for the gifts of others
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://old.usccb.org/sdwp/catholicteachingprinciples.shtml
- http://www.revisionsplus.com/compassion.html
- http://old.usccb.org/sdwp/catholicteachingprinciples.shtml
- http://schools.alcdsb.on.ca/schoolcouncil/Shared%20Documents/renewingthevision.pdf
- http://www.educationforjustice.org/