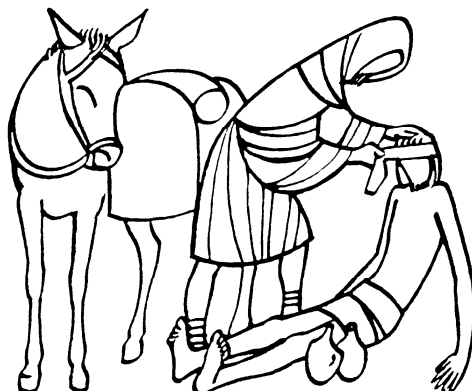


Catholic Character Theme

Compassion



Related Virtues: Faith, Hope, Love, Justice

Descriptor

The language of our *story* speaks of compassion. A compassionate person feels another person's pain and opens their heart to that person's needs. The bible tells us a lot about God's compassion for His people (see Scripture quotes below). We are made in the image and likeness of our compassionate God. Our true character is expressed when we show compassion for one another. Compassion is visible whenever there is acceptance and care for the struggling members of our Catholic schools. The character of Catholic school communities speaks about compassion.

Scripture Quotes

God is Compassionate

As a father has compassion for his children, so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.

For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust.

Ps 103: 2-5, 13-14

God's Warm and Tender Compassion

How can I give you up, Ephraim?

How can I hand you over, O Israel?

How can I make you like Admah?

How can I treat you like Zeboim?

My heart recoils within me;

My compassion grows warm and tender.

I will not execute my fierce anger;

I will not again destroy Ephraim;

For I am God and no mortal,

The Holy One in your midst,

And I will not come in wrath.

Hosea 11: 8-9**God's Compassion – More Than A Mother for Her Child**

Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb?

Even if these may forget, yet I will not forget you.

See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands;

Isaiah 49: 15-16a

God's Steadfast, Compassionate Love

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed,

But my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

Isaiah 54: 10

Jesus Heals, Moved with Compassion

As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. There were two blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, 'Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!' The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet; but they shouted even more loudly, 'Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!' Jesus stood still and called them, saying, 'What do you want me to do for you?' They said to him, 'Lord, let our eyes be opened.' Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

Matt 20: 29-34

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there? He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself." And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour? Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Luke 10: 25-37

Jesus Teaches and Heals With Compassion

...Jesus...withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

Matt 14: 13-14

Jesus Compassionately Raises a Widow's Dead Son

As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; ...When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' Then he came forward and touched the bier and the bearers stood still. And he said, 'Young man, I say to you, rise!' The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

Lk 7: 12-15

Jesus Teaches With Compassion

As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

Mk 6: 34

Jesus' Compassion for the Hungry Crowd

In those days when there was again a great crowd without anything to eat, he called his disciples and said to them, 'I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way –and some of them have come from a great distance.

Mark 8: 1-3

Live With Compassion and Love as the Body of Christ

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body.

Col 3: 12-15

Connection to Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

The Catholic Character Theme "Compassion" relates to the following Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations:

1. A Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic Faith Community who

CGE1a -illustrates a basic understanding of the **saving story** of our Christian faith;

CGE1d -develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic **social teaching** and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good;

CGE1e -speaks the **language of life**... "recognizing that life is an unearned gift and that a person entrusted with life does not own it but that one is called to protect and cherish it." (Witnesses to Faith)

CGE1j -recognizes that “sin, human weakness, conflict and forgiveness are part of the human journey” and that the cross, the ultimate sign of forgiveness is at the heart of **redemption**. (Witnesses to Faith)

2. An Effective Communicator who

CGE2c -presents information and ideas clearly and honestly and with sensitivity to others;

3. A Reflective and Creative Thinker who

CGE3f -examines, evaluates and applies knowledge of interdependent systems (physical, political, ethical, socio-economic and ecological) for the development of a just and compassionate society.

4. A Self-Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner who

CGE4a -demonstrates a confident and positive sense of self and respect for the dignity and welfare of others;

CGE4c -takes initiative and demonstrates Christian leadership;

5. A Collaborative Contributor who

CGE5e -respects the rights, responsibilities and contributions of self and others;

CGE5f -exercises Christian leadership in the achievement of individual and group goals;

CGE5g -achieves excellence, originality, and integrity in one’s own work and supports these qualities in the work of others;

6. A Caring Family Member who

CGE6a -relates to family members in a loving, compassionate and respectful manner;

CGE6e -ministers to the family, school, parish, and wider community through service.

7. A Responsible Citizen who

CGE7c -seeks and grants forgiveness;

CGE7d -promotes the sacredness of life;

CGE7e -witnesses Catholic social teaching by promoting equality, democracy, and solidarity for a just, peaceful and compassionate society;

CGE7h -exercises the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship;

CGE7j -contributes to the common good.

Related Concepts

SOLIDARITY

LOVE

KINDNESS

JUSTICE

COMMUNITY

MERCY

EMPATHY

SYMPATHY

Links to Online Resources

Virtue: Compassion

This site contains a rich selection of resources for teaching compassion to children through a variety of curriculum and school life activities. Contains a helpful list of books and stories that can be read with children, lesson plans and student community outreach activities.

http://www.pearsall.k12.tx.us/Character%20Education/Virtue_COMPASSION.htm

How to Teach Children Compassion

34 articles on teaching children compassion from helium.com . Most are aimed at parents, and some contain stories that are suitable for use in the classroom.

<http://www.helium.com/knowledge/119950>

Teaching Your Children Compassion in a Violent World

by Amy Scholten, MPH

This article provides advice to parents on how to model and draw out compassion in children who are surrounded by images of callousness and violence every day through television and video games.

<http://healthlibrary.epnet.com/print.aspx?token=af362d97-4f80-4453-a175-02cc6220a387&chunkid=36247>

Valentine Ideas for CCD Class: Religion Lessons in Love, Compassion and Kindness to Others

by Diane Laney Fitzpatrick

Classroom activity for Valentine's Day focusing on the Gospel call to love. Contains helpful Scripture quotes, a variety of classroom craft activities that can be integrated with Religious Education and the Arts, and a quick summary of the story of St. Valentinus.

http://catholicism.suite101.com/article.cfm/valentine_ideas_for_ccd_class

Holy Childhood Association

The Holy Childhood Association provides an opportunity for children to become involved in fundraising for overseas Catholic missions. A class or school HCA fundraising activity is a wonderful way to sensitize children to the needs of the world's poor, and teach them about compassion.

<http://www.missionsocieties.ca/child.htm>

L'Arche Canada Foundation

The L'Arche community and its founder Jean Vanier have authored many books and video resources aimed at helping readers and viewers become compassionate. The L'Arche movement focuses on building supportive, compassionate communities where all persons can live together to find healing and wholeness. Vanier reminds us that the disabled and vulnerable of our world are a great gift to our communities because they draw us together in compassion and love. Their brokenness reveals our own brokenness and need for one another – something to be celebrated and treasured.

Recommended resources: VHS/DVD: *Belonging. The Search for Acceptance*, Vanier's books: *The Scandal of Service, Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus Through the Gospel of John*, L'Arche Resources: *More Than Inclusion: Honouring the Contributions of People*

EOCCC: Our Language, Our Story 1.0, 2009.

with Developmental Disabilities, Choosing Our Future: Senior Students in Conversation with Jean Vanier (DVD) On Becoming Human A curriculum package for Grade 12 Philosophy and Ethics (Teacher Guide & CD)

<http://www.larchecanfoundation.org/>

Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace

Development and Peace is the overseas development arm of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Materials related to their ongoing development and relief campaigns provide an opportunity for Catholic educators to teach students about compassion to the less fortunate, and to exercise this compassion through fundraising that will help the poor in the developing world live with hope and dignity.

<http://www.devp.org/>

Celebrating an Education for Justice and Peace

A letter from the Ontario Bishops to Ontario's Catholic secondary school students. This letter provides a helpful overview of how we can educate for justice and peace – the fruits of the Gospel's call to compassion – and become involved in related efforts.

<http://www.occb.on.ca/english/celebrating.html>

Ryan's Well

Ryan's well is one of many projects begun by compassionate young Catholic school students to reach out to persons in need in places far away. A good site to review with students to show them the transformative power their compassionate efforts to help others can have on the world. Similar organizations include Craig and Marc Keilburger's *Kids Can Free the Children* (<http://www.freethechildren.com/index.php>)

<http://www.ryanswell.ca/>