

Catholic Character Theme

Reverence (Piety)



Related Virtues: Faith, Hope, Love, Justice, Temperance, Fortitude

Descriptor

The language of our *story* speaks of **reverence**. Reverence is a kind of *holy respect*. We have reverence for God and all that is holy. We genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament, kneel in prayer and speak in hushed tones while in Church. We treat creation with reverence because it is charged with God's holy Presence, and is a sacred gift from God to sustain the human family. We look on all human persons with great reverence. We are God's masterpieces, made in the divine image and likeness. Reverence fuels our work against bullying, poverty, injustice and our care for the environment. We have a special reverence for persons who answer God's call to lead and serve: parents, teachers, pastors and persons in authority. Reverence is visible in our Catholic schools whenever people are moved by their faith to a deep and holy respect. The character of our Catholic school communities speaks about reverence.

Scripture Quotes

Moses and the Burning Bush

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God."

Exodus 3: 1 – 6

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God

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he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 1: 26 – 31

Humble Reverence for God, the Hope of Israel

O Lord, my heart is not lifted up,
 my eyes are not raised too high;
 I do not occupy myself with things too great
 and too marvellous for me.
 But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
 like a weaned child with its mother;
 my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.
 O Israel, hope in the Lord
 from this time on and forevermore.

Psalms 131

Divine Majesty and Human Dignity

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour.

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Psalms 8: 3-9

God's Glory in Nature

By the word of the Lord his works are made; and all his creatures do his will. The sun looks down on everything with its light, and the work of the Lord is full of his glory. ... How desirable are all his works, and how sparkling they are to see! All these things live and remain forever; each creature is preserved to meet a particular need. All things come in pairs, one opposite the other, and he has made nothing incomplete. Each supplements the virtues of the other. Who could ever tire of seeing his glory?

Sirach 42: 15b-16, 22-25

God's Greatness in the Splendour of the Sun

The sun, when it appears, proclaims as it rises what a marvellous instrument it is, the work of the Most High. At noon it parches the land, and who can withstand its burning heat? A man tending a furnace works in burning heat, but three times as hot is the sun scorching the mountains; it breathes out fiery vapours, and its bright rays blind the eyes.

Great is the Lord who made it; at his orders it hurries on its course.

Sirach 43: 2-5

God's Glory in the Stars and the Rainbow

The glory of the stars is the beauty of heaven, a glittering array in the heights of the Lord.

On the orders of the Holy One they stand in their appointed places; they never relax in their watches. Look at the rainbow, and praise him who made it; it is exceedingly beautiful in its brightness. It encircles the sky with its glorious arc; the hands of the Most High have stretched it out.

Sirach 43: 9-12

God's Awesomeness – Greater Than all His Works

We could say more but could never say enough; let the final word be: "He is the all."

Where can we find the strength to praise him? For he is greater than all his works.

Awesome is the Lord and very great, and marvellous is his power.

Sirach 43: 27-29

The Shepherds and the Angels

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!"

Luke 2: 8-14

The Magi's Reverence for the Newborn Jesus

On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Matt 2: 11

The Transfiguration

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

Mark 9: 2-8

Judgement of the Nations: Reverence for Jesus in the Poor and Suffering

Then the king will say to those at his right hand: Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

Matthew 25:34-40

The Lost Sheep

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Luke 15: 1-7

Connection to Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

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

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

- CGE1b** -participates in the **sacramental life** of the church and demonstrates an understanding of the centrality of the Eucharist to our Catholic story;
- CGE1c** -actively reflects on **God's Word** as communicated through the Hebrew and Christian scriptures;
- 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)
- CGE1f** -seeks intimacy with God and celebrates **communion** with God, others and creation through prayer and worship;
- CGE1g** -understands that one's purpose or **call in life** comes from God and strives to discern and live out this call throughout life's journey;
- CGE1i** -integrates faith with life;

2. An Effective Communicator who

- CGE2a** -listens actively and critically to understand and learn in light of gospel values;
- CGE2c** -presents information and ideas clearly and honestly and with sensitivity to others;

CGE2e -uses and integrates the Catholic faith tradition, in the critical analysis of the arts, media, technology and information systems to enhance the quality of life.

3. A Reflective and Creative Thinker who

CGE3b -creates, adapts, evaluates new ideas in light of the common good;

CGE3d -makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience;

CGE3e -adopts a holistic approach to life by integrating learning from various subject areas and experience;

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;

CGE4b -demonstrates flexibility and adaptability;

CGE4e -sets appropriate goals and priorities in school, work and personal life;

CGE4g -examines and reflects on one's personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities;

CGE4h -participates in leisure and fitness activities for a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

5. A Collaborative Contributor who

CGE5c -develops one's God-given potential and makes a meaningful contribution to society;

CGE5d -finds meaning, dignity, fulfillment and vocation in work which contributes to the common good;

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

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

CGE5h -applies skills for employability, self-employment and entrepreneurship relative to Christian vocation.

6. A Caring Family Member who

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

CGE6b -recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God given gifts, to be used as the creator intended;

CGE6c -values and honours the important role of the family in society;

CGE6d -values and nurtures opportunities for family prayer;

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

7. A Responsible Citizen who

CGE7a -acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions;

CGE7d -promotes the sacredness of life;

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

CGE7f -respects and affirms the diversity and interdependence of the world's peoples and cultures;

CGE7g -respects and understands the history, cultural heritage and pluralism of today's contemporary society;

CGE7i -respects the environment and uses resources wisely;

CGE7j -contributes to the common good.

Related Concepts

DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON"
 INCLUSIVITY
 JUSTICE
 PRAYER
 RESPECT
 STEWARDSHIP
 WONDER AND AWE
 WORSHIP

Links to Online Resources

The Vatican: Catechism of the Catholic Church

http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm

See: *Part III - Life in Christ, Chapter Two: The Human Community*. Details the Church's teaching on Social Justice, including sections on:

- Respect for the Human Person* <http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p3s1c2a3.htm#I>
- Equality and Differences among Men [People]*
<http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p3s1c2a3.htm#II>
- Human Solidarity* <http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p3s1c2a3.htm#III>

See also: Section Two: The Ten Commandments-

- Fourth Commandment: "You Shall Love Your Neighbour as Yourself"
- Fifth Commandment: "You Shall Not Kill" Both concentrate on themes central to social justice.
- Seventh Commandment: "You Shall Not Steal" also addresses economic activity, labour, solidarity among nations, and love for the poor.

While the Catechism has no links and is difficult to read at times, it is an important resource for understanding Church teaching on social justice.

Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://www.occb.on.ca/english/documents.php?f=celebrating.html>

This provides a direct link to the Ontario Bishops' document *Celebrating Education for Justice and Peace*. Addressed to high school students, it affirms and challenges them to respond to the needs of the poor and vulnerable.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

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

The CCCB website is a valuable resource for persons seeking to understand where the Canadian Catholic stands on social justice. See their Episcopal Commission for Social Affairs page at:

http://www.cccb.ca/site/content/category/28/92/1119/lang_eng

Includes letters of praise and concern to prominent politicians and members of the business and international community. The 'Public Statements' section contains the Bishops' position statements on current issues such as aboriginal land claims, religious rights and the sanctity of life. Many of these relate to the theme of reverence.

Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace

<http://www.devp.org>

Development and Peace is the international development office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Comprehensive information about their projects around the world is available

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through their site, including: *Global Village Voice* (D & P's educational magazine), archive of policy statements – with interesting insights into D & P projects and related issues, annual reports on activities, links and resources.

See also D & P's *Just Youth* section, with information on: D & P youth groups, international exposure tours, *Think Fast* retreats, education and action campaign resources, extensive links to related social justice resources and organizations, at: <http://youth.devp.org/aframes.html>
Catholic school involvement in D & P's education, Fall Action, Share Lent and ongoing relief campaigns are ways of showing our reverence for the dignity of persons most in need of our help.

KAIROS

<http://www.kairoscanada.org/e/index.asp>

KAIROS unites churches and religious organizations in a faithful ecumenical response to the call to "do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). Site contains helpful background and position papers on current justice issues, national and international justice campaigns, monthly newsletters and regular calls for solidarity through various action writing campaigns. A useful source of current and background information for educators looking to help students develop their sense of justice that flows from reverence for the dignity of all persons.

Scarboro Foreign Missions

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

This Catholic Canadian-based mission society offers a variety of educational resources for Catholic schools as well as opportunities for students to experience first hand the developing world. Their publications and educational materials reflect an approach to mission with deep reverence for all persons, their cultures and religions.

Catholic Relief Services

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

Founded by the American Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Relief Services provides international assistance and development programs worldwide. A topical relief and development site that is logical and easy to navigate. Site is anchored by an interactive map of nations where CRS operates, outlining why the country is in need, how they are helping, with an overview for the nation as a whole. CRS also details what they do through their programmes, identifying: an issue (e.g. AIDS), why there is a need (via statistics), social values important to fight the problem, and how they are helping with the problem. Also has useful links to current programmes throughout the world and personal feedback from local persons involved in projects. A useful site for helping students understand the relationship between reverence for human dignity, justice and global outreach to the poor and suffering.

Special Education, Government of Ontario

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/speced.html>

<http://www.peopleforeducation.com/research/links/specialed>

The most visible and vulnerable members of our school communities are students with special physical, intellectual and emotional needs. The above two links will bring you to resources for educating students with special needs such as autism and mild intellectual disabilities. Our Catholic educational communities' reverence for the dignity of these persons reflects our recognition that in them is found a special presence of Christ.

Education for Justice

<http://www.coc.org/ej/>

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This site is run by the Jesuit Centre for Concern in Washington, D.C. and offers an extensive collection of resources, discussion groups, news and views from a Catholic perspective.

Make Poverty History

<http://www.makepovertyhistory.org>

Every single day, 30,000 children are dying as a result of extreme poverty. We finally have the resources, knowledge and opportunity to end this shameful situation. This website is part of a campaign to end global poverty. With rich online resources and television promotions, this is a very effective educational site.

Passionist Community Prayer Resources

<http://www.cptryon.org/prayer/index.html>

Comprehensive prayer resources from the Passionist community. Contains helpful links to prayers and prayer exercises for families, children, youth and adults. A very useful site for helping members of our Catholic school community grow in reverence through prayer.

Sacred Space Home Page

<http://www.sacredspace.ie/>

The *Sacred Space* online prayer page is hosted by the Irish Jesuits. It provides a variety of resources for prayer, ranging from online retreats, seasonal reflections and daily scripture meditations. A helpful site for adults seeking to grow in faith through reverent prayer.

Minute Meditations - St. Anthony's Messenger Press

<http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/Minute/default.asp>

As the name would indicate, you are invited to take a brief moment from the business of your day to pray. Useful resource for creating your own prayer services as well.

Pray With The Heart

<http://prayers.pray-with-the-heart.org/>

This site offers a rich collection of individual prayers, litanies, novenas and much more.

Universalis - Prayer Site

<http://www.universalis.com/20040324/sitemap.htm>

This site provides information related to the daily Liturgy of the Hours. It provides accurate information with regard to the prescribed readings for any given day.

Domestic Church - Prayers for Children

<http://www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/19980301/SCRMNTL/CHILDPRAY.HTM>

While this is not an extensive collection of prayers written by and for use with children, it does contain some creative pieces that evoke the innocence and simplicity of children.

Catholic Prayers

<http://www.catholic.net/linksframe.phtml?link=http://www.webdesk.com/catholic/prayers>

This is an extensive resource both of traditional prayers and reflections as well as others inspired by contemporary events.

Daily Prayer Online

<http://www.pray.com.au/>

This Australian site offers both a variety of resources for prayer as well as some interesting, interactive experiences of prayer. There is a separate section on prayer in the classroom organized by grade level.

World Prayers

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

The purpose of this website is to gather many of the great prayers rooted in the religious traditions of our planet into an online database representing all life affirming traditions. Many of these prayers have been used for hundreds if not thousands of years. Others are from spiritual contemporaries in today's intricate global fabric. Though these sacred verses arise from divergent paths, voices, languages, cultures and heritages, they all carry within them the same burning flame - the same impassioned love for life and the divine mysteries.

St. Joseph Software - Prayer Site

<http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/index.htm>

This site features resources, both traditional and contemporary, rooted in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Community of Prayer

<http://www.soe.usfca.edu/institutes/icel/prayer.html>

This is another rich site featuring a wide range of traditional and contemporary prayers useful for personal and/or liturgical use.

The Interview With God

<http://www.theinterviewwithgod.com/>

This interesting, on-line prayer experience invites you to take time to consider the place of God in your life.

Taizé Community Site

<http://www.taize.fr/>

This official site of the Taizé community features a wide variety of resources for prayer and worship, including on-line versions of some of their most famous musical chants

Liturgy Help

<http://www.liturgyhelp.com/lithelp/mark/asp/parish.asp>

LiturgyHelp.com is a comprehensive range of Lectionary based liturgical and catechetical resources designed to assist the key ministries in the parish to better prepare for liturgy and catechetics, integrating liturgy into their diverse ministries. LiturgyHelp provides very cost effective resources to individual ministers or a complete suite of web services to parish communities and ministry teams.

Oremus Bible Browser

<http://bible.oremus.org>

The Oremus Bible Browser provides a simple interface to the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. A powerful search engine allows the user to track down biblical passages. In addition, the Authorized Version (or King James Version), and several other versions of the psalms are available. This is a useful resource both for research and liturgical planning.

Bible Gateway

<http://bible.gospelcom.net/>

BibleGateway.com is a free service for reading and researching scripture online-- all in the language or translation of your choice! It provides advanced searching capabilities based on keywords or scripture references, and various tools to enhance your study of the Bible.

Forum on Religion and Ecology

<http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/religion/>

This site offers a rich variety of the perspectives of the major world religious traditions on the present ecological crisis.

The Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship

<http://www.cornwallalliance.org/articles/read/the-cornwall-declaration-on-environmental-stewardship/>

A declaration on environmental stewardship which emerges from the Judaeo-Christian tradition. This document calls all the earth's peoples to reverence the human person as image and likeness of God and to assume their biblical role as stewards over God's creation.

"We Are Still Betraying the Mandate God Has Given Us"

<http://conservation.catholic.org/declaration.htm>

Joint Declaration on the Environment by Pope John Paul II and Orthodox Patriarch Bartholemew of Constantinople. A very solid declaration on the need for humankind to respond to the ecological crisis with conversion, prayer and cooperation.

Catholic Conservation Center

<http://conservation.catholic.org/>

The mission of the Catholic Conservation Center is to promote ecology, environmental justice, and the stewardship of creation in the light of sacred Scripture and living Tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Their goal is to help bring about the ecological conversion called for by Pope John Paul II. His World Day of Peace Message, ***Peace with God - Peace with all of Creation*** announced, "There is a growing awareness that world peace is threatened not only by the arms race, regional conflicts, and continued injustice among peoples and nations, but also by a lack of due respect for nature.... Moreover, a new ecological awareness is beginning to emerge which, rather than being downplayed, ought to be encouraged to develop into concrete programs and initiatives." The Catholic Conservation Center is one such initiative. Site's *7 Themes for Ecological Responsibility* are a good senior elementary and secondary level discussion piece, as are many of their other resources, which are geared to promote stewardship and reverence for God's gift of creation.