

Who is My Neighbour?

Adult Faith Leaders' Guide 2006-2007

To be developed:

- Rationale for the process
- develop a “flow chart” structure for the process....
and each session.
- Groome steps.
- bulletins

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Version 5

Some Guidelines for these Adult Faith Sessions

Do...

- ✓ Gather a team that will meet to go over the session, share their stories, and decide which of the stories will be brought to staff.
- ✓ Chose a variety of stories that will appeal to different people in different ways.
- ✓ Privacy is always respected. Only share what you are comfortable with.
- ✓ Form groups at random in a way that is clearly seen as random. E.g. people pick up their numbered bulletins, which is their group number. This allows for people to meet new people and avoids speculation about why people are in your group.
- ✓ Listen attentively always.
- ✓ Be flexible with time, allowing time for talk, moving on when its time.

Do Not...

- ✓ Do not respond to a story with a comment. Respond with your own story. There will be time for discussion during the Critical Reflection movement.

Session 1

Who is My Neighbour?

Call to Order and Welcome

Call to Worship

By our very nature, those who work in education are created to respond to those in need.

There are so many opportunities to be the good Samaritan, to stop and give help to others, even the most difficult people.

Today you are invited to discover and share your stories that answer the question "Who is My Neighbour?"

Opening Prayer

Let us pray...

We gather today as a community dedicated to God, to young people and to each other. God, grant us openness of mind and heart to see and respond to those in need, wherever they might be.

We ask this through Christ our Lord and teacher.

Scripture Reading:

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

Just then an expert in the law stood up to test Him, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the law?" Jesus asked him. "How do you read it?"

He answered: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.

"You've answered correctly," He told him. "Do this and you will live." But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "**And who is my neighbour?**"

Jesus took up the question and said:

"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down that road. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. In the same way, a Levite, when he arrived at the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, while traveling, came up to him; and when he saw the man, he had compassion. He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. 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'll reimburse you for whatever extra 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."

The Parable of the Good Samaritan **Luke 10:25-37**

Personal Reflection:

I remember times when I reached out to someone in need...

Who is My Neighbour?

Three or four designated participants share their stories of reaching out to those in need in the school, the wider community and the world.

Small group sharing of stories

Application

- Who else needs help?
- What else could we be doing as a school community?

Reading

How difficult it is to accept the brokenness
of our societies, cultures and religious traditions,
to be open and to learn from the culture of other people
and to live according to the urgings of the Spirit of God.

This openness to and respect for others implies a belief
in our common humanity,
in the beauty of other cultures, and in God's love for each person.

We are one human race.

We human beings are all fundamentally the same.

We are all people with vulnerable hearts,
yearning to love and be loved and valued.

This openness, which brings together people who are different,
is inspired by love,
a love that sees the value in others through and in their differences
and the difficulties they might have,
a love that is humble, vulnerable and welcoming.

From Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus through the Gospel of John
Jean Vanier

Reflection: How does my response to the needy bless my life?

Let Us pray...

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise you and thank you for your spirit of
courage, compassion and love. Come into our hearts today, to
inspire us to encounter others with joy.

We ask this of Jesus our Lord and Teacher.

Prayers of the Faithful

Let call to mind all those in our community who are in need of our
prayerful support....

(Invite names)

for these people, and for all who we hold in our hearts, we pray to
the Lord...

Lord hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

Lord God, bless us on our journey. Protect us and guide us and we seek to do your will and build the kingdom of God in this troubled world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sign of Peace

Session 2: Why Catholic Schools?

Call to Order and Welcome

Call to Worship

We at _____ Catholic school do amazing things every day. It's not just the obvious charitable work. The day to day walk of the Catholic teacher is a spiritual journey that calls us to go the extra distance.

This generous spirit of service to others is what sets us apart.

Opening Prayer

Lord God, you gather us today as a faith community, dedicated to the loving spirit of your Gospel. Give us the wisdom and understanding to see your hand at work in our lives. We pray in the name of Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke:

Then Jesus told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.' "

Luke 13:6-9

Commentary

Jesus was referring to the religious institutions of his time: if they did not bear fruit, if there was nothing positive, helpful, life giving coming from an institutional structure, religious or otherwise, it should be cut down. There is the opportunity for a second chance here. By digging around the roots, by applying manure, new life, new fruitfulness would yet come.

As Catholic schools, we are called to bear fruit, spiritually, yes, but also in all aspects of the humanity of our students. Like the fig tree, we too need to take the time to be revitalized.

Personal Reflection

What are the times when I am happy and proud to be a Catholic educator?

Sharing our Stories

Designated participants share their stories in response to the above question.

Small Group Sharing

Small Group: Critical Reflection:

Describe four or five examples of Christian love alive in our schools, among staff, students, and with parents?

Option B:

see EOCCC CD *Curriculum Support for Catholic Schools: Enhancing the Religious Dimension of Catholic Education* for documentation on following themes:

Working in small groups, describe how any of the following Gospel values are alive in our schools:

- Faith
- Hope
- Love and Justice
- Dignity of the Human Person
- Intimacy and Sexuality
- Community and the Common Good

- Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Human Rights and Responsibilities
- Dignity of Work and Service
- Stewardship for Creation
- Peace
- Mystery, Wonder and Awe

Application

Describe four or five things that we can do to this year to nurture the spiritual life of the adults in our school communities?

Reading:

The role of the teacher in a Catholic school is of critical importance. Teachers lie at the heart of the educational process. Teaching must be more than a profession; in Catholic terms it ought to be a vocation. Catholic teachers are expected therefore not only to know and teach the Catholic faith, but also to be witnesses to that faith at school and in their personal lives.

**Lay Catholics In Schools: Witnesses To Faith
The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education**

Reading

God has created me to do some definite service;
God has committed some work to me which God has not committed to another.

I have my mission...

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.
God has not created me for nothing.
I shall do good. I shall do my sacred work.
I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place,
while not intending it if I do but keep God's commandments.
Therefore, I will trust God, whatever, wherever I am, I can never be
thrown away...

Verses on Various Occasions,
John Henry Cardinal Newman, 1903.

Reflection: I reflect on the sacred work that God entrusts to me.

A Reading from the Gospel of John:

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

You did not choose me but I choose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.

John 15: 1-16

Silent Reflection

Prayers of the Faithful

Let call to mind all those in our community who are in need of our prayerful support....

(Invite names)

for these people, and for all who we hold in our hearts, we pray to the Lord...

Lord hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord,

Your grace, your love, is sufficient to sustain me.

Be with us as we journey to you. Amen.

Sign of Peace

Let us offer each other a sign of peace.

Session 3:

What Does it Mean to be Church Today?

Call to Order and Welcome

Call to Worship

We have all had different experiences of Church and as well as different understandings and expectations. Each of us identifies with Church differently. Today, there is even less consensus. Today you are invited to claim and share these experiences, yesterday and today, the good and the bad.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus... you once said:

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” Help me to know your presence when I encounter people. Help me to build your kingdom of peace on earth. Amen.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, "Come; for everything is ready now.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, "I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' Another said, "I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, "Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' And the slave said, "Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' Then the master said to the slave, "Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.' "

Commentary

In Jesus' time, his parable would have been directed against the Scribes and Pharisees and the powerful: people who claimed to be religious but who had declined the invitation to participate in the kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed.

Does this parable apply in any way to the Church today?

It could be about Sunday Eucharist.... We all have our excuses when we don't attend; its human nature.

It could also be about the greater mission of the Church to bring the kingdom of justice and peace, love and reconciliation to the world.

Personal Reflection:

What is my experience of being Church: yesterday and today, the good and the bad?

Stories: Designated participants share their stories.

Small group sharing of Stories

Optional Activity:

Draw or describe your symbol of Church.

Explain it to others in the group.

Critical Reflection:

How do Catholic schools contribute to the life of the Church?

How do Catholic schools contribute to the good of Ontario society?

Application

What else could we be doing as Catholic leaders to better contribute to the life of the Church and good of Ontario society?

Reading

The Church is a dynamic reality; it changes its manner of being and acting from place to place and from age to age. It must be responsive to the demands of the times, for it has to signify and mediate God's grace to different groups of people, in accordance with their particular gifts, needs, and capacities. To think correctly about the Church we must therefore pay close attention to the actual situation, and adapt our vision accordingly.

You are challenged to formulate a coherent and meaningful vision of Church. Take account of scripture, tradition, past events of Church life, and present experiences, in expressing your personal and communal understanding of what it is to be *Church* today.

Yuri Koszarycz, Australian Catholic University

Reading:

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.
Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying
that the kingdom always lies beyond us.
No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything. This is what
we are about.
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation
in realizing that. This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well. It may be incomplete,
but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference
between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.
Amen.

Archbishop Oscar Romero

Reflection:

I reflect on aspects of my life and work that build the Kingdom of
God.

Prayers of the Faithful

Let call to mind all those in our community who are in need of our
prayerful support....

(Invite names)

for these people, and for all who we hold in our hearts, we pray to
the Lord...

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