

## **DODEM - The Clan System**

### **Activity: Rights VS Responsibilities**

#### **Overview**

As described by Isaac in the video, the Dodem (clan) system teaches everyone his or her responsibilities. The traditional governance system of the Anishinaabek is derived from how the animals conduct themselves in order to stay close to nature and live in accordance with natural law. Today we have governments that operate upon rights based agendas instead of being based on responsibilities. In the Fisher Story, the reason why things became so bad was due to the fact that the humans decided to create their own paths instead of following the sacred trails of the animals.

In this lesson students will explore the difference between rights and responsibilities. Students will create a “Declaration of Responsibilities” for their classroom as the final product.

Teachers are encouraged to invite an Elder or Knowledge Keeper into their class to discuss the clan system.

#### **Assessment:**

*Assessment for, as, and of learning is developed through the co-creation of learning goals and success criteria with students, based upon chosen overall and specific expectations. Teachers are encouraged to choose focus areas from the overall expectations listed in relation to this lesson.*

#### **Minds on:**

Teachers may wish to refer to the section called Inaaknigewin – Natural Law for further background knowledge.

Watch *The Sacred Fisher Story* as told by Isaac Murdoch. Teachers are also encouraged to use the transcription of the story as a shared reading lesson.

Watch the video discussing the concept of Dodem – The Clan System. The transcription is also provided.

Have students turn and talk to discuss what it means to have a “right”. Share with the whole class.

Ask the students to create a list of rights they believe they have in their school community, local community and global community.

### **Action:**

Students will be asked to explore the questions:

“What does it mean to be responsible?”

“What is the difference between a right and a responsibility?”

“Do animals and the environment have rights?”

Through the inquiry process, students will gather information about various declarations of differing human rights (ex., Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Bill of Rights) as well as environmental rights. Have students present their findings through the use of a graphic organizer to illustrate what “rights” exist. For example, there are many laws that cover human rights but very little that protect the rights of water, land, animals etc. Have a class discussion on why that might be.

Have students compare and contrast different rights and responsibilities. For example, students could compare the list of student responsibilities from their agendas to the United Nation’s Children’s Rights.

### **Consolidation:**

Based on their investigations, have students develop a definition of a right and a responsibility.

Working in pairs, have each group develop a list of “rights” that include humans as well as the environment (water, land, sky, animals). Create a master list that will be shared for the whole class. Have each pair of students partner up with another pair so that they are now in a group of four. Have the groups go back through the class list of “rights” and have them re-write those “rights” as “responsibilities” instead. Have each group share what they came up with. As an example, having a “right” to clean water means that it is someone else’s job to ensure the water is clean, whereas having a “responsibility” to clean water means that we all have a role to play in ensuring the water is clean.

Using a consensus model, decide upon a final class “Declaration of Responsibilities”.

As an extension activity: Have each individual student choose one responsibility from the “Declaration of Responsibilities”. Through various opportunities (oral presentation, multimedia presentation, dramatic representation) students will share with the class their understanding of that

responsibility and how it will contribute to a better world to live in. Encourage students to make connections back to the Fisher Story on how their responsibilities could have either prevented the problem to begin with and/or helped in the solution to the problem in the end.

Further Reflection Guiding Questions:

*Why is the clan system so important for the First Nations Peoples? Teacher Note: Highlight important concepts of governance, responsibilities.*

*The significance of the clan governance system is based on responsibilities rather than rights. How is this connected to the concepts of respect and empathy?*

*How are the values and teachings of the clan system reflected through our Catholic teachings?*

*How can we work together to improve our school, at home, and our community?*

### **ONLINE LEARNING SUGGESTIONS**

#### CONTENT:

**Upload** the video “Dodem – The Clan System” from the website and provide a link to this page.

#### DISCUSSION:

##### **Suggested discussion questions:**

What does it mean to be responsible?

What is the difference between a right and a responsibility?

Do animals and the environment have rights?

The significance of the clan governance system is based on responsibilities rather than rights. How is this connected to the concepts of respect and empathy?

What are some examples of how we can work together to improve: our school, at home, our community?

#### ASSIGNMENT:

##### **Investigate**

Find a country whose laws also protect the environment.

How did this law come about? Who helped to bring this law into existence?

##### **Create**

Create a “Declaration of Responsibilities” that can be used in either your classroom or community. List the ways in which your responsibilities



benefit those who make up your community (including the environment, animals, etc.)

**Summarize**

Choose one responsibility from your Declaration of Responsibilities and explain how this will contribute to a better world for all. Provide specific examples of how you will act on this responsibility.



# DODEM – The Clan System

## **Grandfather Teaching: Minaadendamowin—Respect:**

Respect is accepting everyone & their ideas just the way they are. No one is better than anyone or anything else. Respect means that everything is equal because they have spirit. The Earth does not need us to survive. We need the Earth and each other to survive. Respect is how we conduct ourselves to make the world a better place.

~Nancy Rowe, Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation

## **Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations**

*The Ontario Catholic Graduate School Expectations provide a set of overriding principles that serve to guide Catholic students through their Catholic education faith journey. The expectations serve as a continuous reminder of the behaviours that are to be exemplified throughout their lives.*

### ***Connected Expectation:***

***A Caring Family Member who:*** attends to family, school, parish and the wider community.

## **Virtues Program**

### **Virtue: Respect (February) is seeing the goodness in others.**

It helps us to see others as God sees them, to accept them as they are, and to treat them with dignity.

**Virtue: Empathy (October)** is the ability to put oneself in another's shoes and the capacity to feel what the other person is feeling.

# Possible Connections to Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum Documents

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### GRADE 7

#### **LIVING A MORAL LIFE**

ML2: Demonstrate an understanding that when faced with a moral choice in our life, the judgement of our conscience can be right or wrong.

ML3: Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of developing a life of virtue in order to discern and implement the moral teachings found in the Gospels and applied through the teachings of the Church.

#### **LIVING IN COMMUNION**

LC1: Understand that belonging to the community of the Church involves responsibilities of faith and of Christian living.

### GRADE 8

#### **LIVING A MORAL LIFE**

ML1: Demonstrate an understanding of how living the Christian moral life in accordance to the Moral Law is a witness to the Truth, the Dignity of the Human Person and the building up of the Church and Society.

ML2: Demonstrate an understanding of the important roles of Scripture, the Church and the Holy Spirit in the formation of a healthy conscience.

#### **LIVING IN SOLIDARITY**

LS1: Understand that the principle of human dignity, revealed in Scripture requires Christians to work for the common good of all people and to participate in society.

LS2: Focus: Principle of Rights and Responsibilities

Understand that the principles of responsibility and participation in society are Christian social virtues, which call us to roles of leadership, to evangelize through our witness of the Gospel and through the promotion of social justice in the world.

## **FAMILY LIFE**

### **GRADE 7 & 8**

#### **CREATED AND LOVED BY GOD**

A1. Appreciating God's Goodness: demonstrate an appreciation that humans have been created in the image of a loving God.

A2. Exploring Human Nature: demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which humans are both unique and share a common human nature with each other.

A3 Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing: apply an understanding of the unique and shared aspects of human nature in personally relevant contexts.

#### **LIVING IN RELATIONSHIP**

B1. Appreciating God's Goodness: appreciate that humans are called to image the love of God by living in relationship with others.

#### **GROWING IN COMMITMENT**

D3. Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing: apply an understanding of the role of commitment in human relationships in personally relevant contexts.

#### **LIVING IN THE WORLD**

E1. Appreciating God's Goodness: appreciate that humans are called to image the love of God by caring for all of God's gifts of creation.

E2. Exploring Human Nature: demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which humans participate in society and fulfill the responsibility to care for and build God's world.

E3. Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing: apply an understanding of the global dimension of human nature in personally relevant contexts.

## **LANGUAGE ARTS**

### **GRADE 7 & 8**

#### **ORAL COMMUNICATION**

1. Listen in order to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes;
2. Use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes;
3. Reflect on and identify their strengths as listeners and speakers, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful in oral communication situations.

## **READING**

1. Read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning;
2. Recognize a variety of text forms, text features, and stylistic elements and demonstrate understanding of how they help communicate meaning;

## **WRITING**

1. Generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience;
2. Draft and revise their writing, using a variety of informational, literary, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience;
3. Use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and present their work effectively;

## **GEOGRAPHY**

### **Grade 7**

#### **PHYSICAL PATTERNS IN A CHANGING WORLD**

A1. Application: analyse some challenges and opportunities presented by the physical environment and ways in which people have responded to them  
(FOCUS ON: Spatial Significance; Interrelationships)

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

### **GRADE 7**

#### **UNDERSTANDING LIFE SYSTEMS INTERACTIONS IN THE ENVIRONMENT**

1. Investigate interactions within the environment, and identify factors that affect the balance between different components of an ecosystem;

### **GRADE 8**

#### **UNDERSTANDING EARTH AND SPACE SYSTEMS WATER SYSTEMS**

1. Assess the impact of human activities and technologies on the sustainability of water resources;

