

ZHAWENJIGE - Walking with a good heart

Activity: Footprints

Overview

As described by Isaac in the video, the central theme of Zhawenjige, translated Walking with a Good Heart, is pity, kindness, and compassion for one another, the earth, and all its living things. He also spoke of the importance of recognizing the impact of our actions with regard to the environment and the importance of choosing a life path that is respectful of the environment and the resources of our world.

In this lesson students will examine both their personal and community ecological footprint. Through this activity students will explore the impact of their actions on the environment and the long term consequences of their decisions and actions. Through the teachings of the Sacred Fisher Story students will investigate how they can improve upon their lifestyle practices. Students will complete their own ecological footprint, listing on the footprint all the positive things that they do and can do to help the animals and Mother Earth.

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:

Discuss the concepts of greed and selfishness. Ask students for examples of these character traits that they see in their lives and in the people around them. Teachers may wish to chart student responses and compare them to the concepts of caring and compassion.

Ask students how we can demonstrate caring and compassion to one another and then extend this thinking process to the natural environment, including the animals, the earth, the sky, water, and plants.

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 Zhawenjige - Walking with a good heart. The transcription is also provided.

Action:

Working in small groups, ask students to discuss how the choices of 'the two-legged' (humans) in the story led to negative consequences. Working in their groups, have students brainstorm various choices that they make in their daily lives and the consequences of these choices. Have students choose one or two of the listed items and inquire further into the actual consequences of their action(s).

Once students have had an opportunity to inquire into their particular focus topic, ask them to provide a solution or steps that could be taken in order to provide a positive impact on the environment.

Students will then create their own ecological footprint. Teachers may use a template or ask students to create their own. Ask students to write the positive environmental practices that they had learned from their inquiries onto their footprints. These footprints can then be displayed in various ways in the classroom and hallways of the school.

Consolidation:

Ask students to reflect up the Grandfather Teaching of *Truth* and the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation of being a *Responsible Citizen*.

How are these teachings supported by the story and their explorations into how they can make a positive impact on the environment?

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Grandfather Teaching: *Debwewin*—Truth:

Natural law consists of balance and harmony. Truth is in knowing this and all Sacred Teachings. All natural laws come from the Earth and this is why it is considered to be true because of how the Earth and all of creation works in balance. Our truth comes from an acceptance of this - that creation provides everything that we need. To live with truth is to know the difference between what we need and what we want. We should live with compassion for everything around us, with integrity, honesty and kindness.

~ Nancy Rowe

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 Responsible Citizen: *who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice, and the sacredness of human life.*

Virtues Program

Virtue: Kindness (March) is the act of loving, and giving generously to others as God does. Our empathy for others is transformed into action, an action that extends beyond concern for ourselves.

Possible Connections to Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum Documents

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

GRADE 1

Living a Moral Life

ML1: Demonstrate an understanding that we are created in the “image of God” and that this gift calls us to live in a way which reflects this truth.

ML2: Demonstrate an understanding that we are able to think (i.e. use our reason) about our actions and to know that they affect our relationship with God, other people, and ourselves.

Living in Solidarity

LS1: Demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be made in God’s image both in our equality and diversity and explain why this is the source of our human dignity.

GRADE 2

Living a Moral Life

ML3: Demonstrate an understanding that God wants to help us through the gift of His grace to live a Christian life and that we can respond to this gift by the way we live our lives.

Living in Solidarity

LS2: Focus: Option for the poor and vulnerable

Understand that we are responsible for the gift of our dignity as human beings and are to respect this gift in others (i.e. our neighbour) by following the example of Jesus who calls us to share (i.e. Eucharist) serving the needs of others.

GRADE 3

Living a Moral Life

ML1: Demonstrate an understanding of how God teaches us to be good and to reflect this goodness in our actions (i.e. Moral Law – revealed in Scripture e.g. Old Law – Ten Commandments, New Law – Law of the Gospel).

ML3: Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of sin and our human capacity to choose to commit actions which do not show love for God or neighbour (i.e. personal sin, and social sin).

Living in Solidarity

LS2: Focus: Human dignity

Understand that God created all persons in his one image; equal in their human dignity yet diverse in their being (i.e. male and female, weak and strong, diversity of race, colour, creed, charisms, talents) and this equality and diversity is to be respected.

FAMILY LIFE

Growing in Commitment

D2. Exploring Human Nature: demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which humans grow in their ability to develop committed and trustworthy relationships.

Living in the World

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.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Oral Communication

2. Use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes;

Reading

1. Read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning;

SOCIAL STUDIES

GRADE 1

Heritage and Identity: Our Changing Roles and Responsibilities

A3. Understanding Context: demonstrate an understanding that they and other people have different roles, relationships, and responsibilities, and that all people should be treated with respect, regardless of their roles, relationships, and responsibilities

People and Environments: The Local Community

B1. Application: describe some aspects of the interrelationship between people and the natural and built features of their community, with a focus on how the features of and services in the community meet people's needs

GRADE 2

People and Environments: Global Communities

B2. Inquiry: use the social studies inquiry process to investigate aspects of the interrelationship between the natural environment, including the climate, of selected communities and the ways in which people in those communities live

GRADE 3

People and Environments: Living and Working in Ontario

B2. Inquiry: use the social studies inquiry process to investigate some of the environmental effects of different types of land and/or resource use in two or more Ontario municipal regions, as well as some of the measures taken to reduce the negative impact of that use

SCIENCE

GRADE 1

Understanding Life Systems: Needs and Characteristics of Living Things

1. Assess the role of humans in maintaining a healthy environment;
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic needs and characteristics of plants and animals, including humans.

Understanding Structures and Mechanisms: Materials, Objects, and Everyday Structures

1. Assess the impact on people and the environment of objects and structures and the materials used in them;

GRADE 2

Understanding Life Systems: Growth and Changes in Animals

1. Assess ways in which animals have an impact on society and the environment, and ways in which humans have an impact upon animals and the places where they live;

Understanding Structures and Mechanisms: Movement

1. Assess the impact on society and the environment of simple machines and mechanisms;

Understanding Earth and Space Systems: Air and Water in the Environment

1. Assess ways in which the actions of humans have an impact on the quality of air and water, and ways in which the quality of air and water has an impact on living things;
2. Investigate the characteristics of air and water and the visible/invisible effects of and changes to air and/or water in the environment;

GRADE 3

Understanding Earth and Space Systems: Soils in the Environment

1. Assess the impact of soils on society and the environment, and of society and the environment on soils;