**Grade 8 Living in Solidarity**

**Living in Solidarity ~ Hope Expectations for Intermediate Classes**

By the end of Grade 8, it is our hope that students will be individuals who:

* Understand that one’s purpose or call in life comes from God and strive to discern and prepare to live out this call throughout life’s journey; (CGE: 1g)
* Develop attitudes and values founded on Catholic social teaching and act to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good;
* Respect the faith traditions, world religions and the life journeys of all people of good will.

As an introduction to Living in Solidarity you may want to review/teach the two feet of justice. In order to stand upright we stand on both feet. It is the same when we need to act for the common good. One foot is the foot of charity. We act to relieve the needs of those who do not have what they need. I.e. we need food, so we go to St. Vincent Place/a local food bank to get food to eat. The other foot is the foot of justice. We need to seek out the reasons that the common good is not being addressed. Why does the family not have enough food? We need to find responses that will keep the family from needing food. Charity is usually our first response. Once the charity has been dealt with, it is time to ask the difficult questions, to act in justice, to get to the bottom of the problem.

**LS1.1: Connect the principle of the ‘Common Good’ to its biblical source (Isaiah 10:1-2; Ephesians 4:1-7, 12; Mt. 25:35-40; Acts 2:44-45; Gal. 5:22-25; 1Jn 4:7-10; Jn 10:11-18; Deut 30:19; Nehemiah 2:17-18) and relate the message of the scripture to Catholic social teachings found in several ecclesial sources (e.g. excerpts from Papal Encyclicals, Apostolic Letters and exhortations, Bishops’ pastoral letters or documents on social justice).**

The principle of the ‘Common Good’ “includes the social conditions that permit people to reach their full potential and to realize their human dignity. Three essential elements of the common good are respect for the person, the social well-being and development of the group, and peace & security. In our interdependent world, there is also a *universal common good* that requires international structures that can promote universal human development.” Catholic Social Teaching – Learning and Living Justice by Michael Pennock, page 14 Invite your students to research the biblical passages given above and see if these passages speak about respect for persons, social well-being and development of the group, and peace & security. Ask your students if they have seen anything in the news that would speak to this idea of “Common Good.” [response to Syrian refugees crisis, wildfires in California/Australia] “Social justice is thus the virtue of the common good, of the good citizen as citizen (individual or corporate), disposing and prompting to serve the common good, as a demand of justice, owed in view of the benefits derived from membership in a well-ordered society. As looking to the common good, perhaps a great good of a large number, the obligations (perceptive or prohibitive) of social justice are

binding in conscience and can be seriously so. Love of God and of neighbour is the first and greatest commandment (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Mk 12:30f) and absolutely basic to Christian ethics. In a very beautiful and cogent way, the Second Vatican Council, in *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* argues from the data of revelation, from the natural law and the essentially social nature of human kind to the obligation of promoting the common good.” Love Kindness! The Social Teaching of the Canadian Catholic Bishops, page 16. Have your students do a google search of Papal Encyclicals, Apostolic Letters and exhortations on the Vatican website on the concept of Common Good. It is the reason we have food drives, and Heaven Cent collections, and the Walk for Justice. This is a Catholic Social Teaching! It has always be a part of the tradition of the Church to care for the common good.

**LS1.2: Examine the political initiatives presently being promoted at various levels of civil society (city, province, federal) and critique how well each promotes the dignity of the human person and the *Common Good* as it is defined in Sacred Scripture and Catholic social teaching.** [CCC nos. 356-384; 1928-1933; 1391-1401]

It would be important to review what the Common Good is: “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily. The common good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority.” [CCC 1906] “[The common good] consists of three essential elements: *respect for the person; the social well-being and development of the group itself and peace.”* [CCC 1907-1909] You may want to ask your students to identify political initiatives that they may be aware of at the various levels of civic society. (SSM city council – supporting the United Church’s effort to bring refugee family to SSM; Quebec is supporting the right to die with the assistance of a doctor (euthanasia); new TPP deal signed by Conservative government – secret deal; federal government and Syrian refugee response) I might get my students to look in a newspaper for examples of these city, provincial, federal initiatives. If you have a high FNMI population – the federal government’s hesitancy to respond to missing Aboriginal women crisis, housing crisis in the Northern reserves. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s findings may be a good place to look too.

**LS 1.3: Recognize signs of the growing human interdependence of the global community and identify ways it is challenging Catholic organizations and individuals in their mission of promoting social justice principles.**

Review with your class the meaning of the words: dependence, independence, and interdependence.

We have *dependence* upon our parents and family when we are babies and children. We grow more *independent* as we become teens, we can do far more for ourselves than we used to when we were younger.

As mature individuals, we move toward being *interdependent*. When we need the help of others, we ask for it. When others need help from us, we give it. So when we are able to move between dependence and independence then we are interdependent.

Ask your students for signs that they are aware of the growing human interdependence of the global community. [Through the media we are aware of the Syrian refugee crisis. There are some countries who have opened their boarders to these Syrian refugees, i.e. Germany.] Who is dependent in this situation? Who is acting independently? Does this example show interdependence in the global community? With social justice principles we ask why the refugee crisis is happening. The war in Syria is displacing all these people. What is the cause of the war? To get to the bottom of this situation it is a challenge for Catholic organizations and individuals. The United Nations try to work to get to the bottom of this civil conflict but it is a complex problem. Ask your students to do research about what is causing the Syrian conflict. See if they can get to the bottom of this civil war. Ask them to identify ways that it is challenging to understand this situation. Catholic Social Teachings (CSTs) offer us a set of principles for social justice. Which CSTs are being ignored in Syria?

**LS 1.4: Articulate the three essential elements of the *Common Good* (i.e. respect for the fundamental rights of the person; peace and security of societies and nations) and link them to ecological justice and the universal common good of protecting the earth’s resources for future generations.** [CCC nos. 356-384; 1928-1933; 1391-1401]

The three essential elements of the *Common Good* are: 1. respect for the person (the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person); 2. social well-being and the development of the group itself and 3. peace (stability and security of a just order). Each human community possesses a common good which permits it to be recognized as such. Anyone in the office of authority ought to seek the common good of those in his/her care. To teach this lesson, I would use articles from a newspaper or a video clip about the situation in Syria. The president of Syria is bombing his own people. People are feeling very unsafe and they are leaving the country in droves. Ask your students if they think that President Bashar al-Assad is concerned about the *Common Good* of the people of Syria. <http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.pdf> Invite your students to read sections of this recent encyclical by Pope Francis. He is calling all of us to be responsible for how we live on the earth. He is calling us to ecological justice and to protect the earth’s resources for future generations. Ask your students, “What has ecological justice have to do with the *Common Good?”*

**LS 2.1: Identify and examine scripture passages in the New Testament where Jesus invites “inner conversion” of those who exercise roles of authority (i.e. Pharisees, civil officials, tax collectors, etc.) as an ethical obligation to address the social structures of sin, and apply this principle of a need for inner conversion to examples in our present society that call for our active participation in promoting the common good.** [CCC nos. 356-384; 1928-1933; 1391-1401]

Jesus calls Levi the tax collector to follow him. Levi gave a great banquet for Jesus in his house and Jesus speaks to the Pharisees about their need for repentance.(Luke 5:27-39)

Jesus heals a centurion’s servant because the centurion displays a faith in Jesus’ goodness and grace. The centurion is asking for healing for his servant and not for himself.(Luke 7:1-10)

Jesus forgives the sinful woman at the home of Simon, one of the Pharisees and teaches the need for forgiveness to the Pharisees present at the meal.(Luke 7:36-50)

Jesus denounces Pharisees and Lawyers by inviting them to reflect on how they live proud lives and how they place burdens on the poor. Jesus invites them to a different way of living, an inner conversion. (Luke 11:37-54)

Jesus teaches the Pharisees present at a banquet to invite those who cannot repay the invitation, to care for the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind, (common good). (Luke 14: 7-14)

Jesus shares the parable of the Lost Sheep with the Pharisees and scribes; he is trying to get them to understand that sinners who repent cause rejoicing in heaven. (Luke 15:1-7)

Jesus shares the parable of the Prodigal and his brother to teach those in authority that everyone needs to rejoice when someone repents. (Luke 15:11-32)

Jesus calls Zacchaeus down from the tree and goes to his house. Zacchaeus has an inner conversion while in relationship with Jesus and repents from his sinful ways. (Luke 19:1-10)

**Background Information for Teachers on those who exercised roles of authority**

*Pharisees* were religious leaders who tried very hard to be ritually pure/clean. They were the most influential group with the common people. Often though they put the Letter of the Law first and the Spirit of the Law second – which could be burdensome for the poor. *Scribes* were religious leaders who worked with the Pharisees. They could read and write and interpreted the Law with the Pharisees.

*Civic officials* would have been Roman – the oppressive force in power in the Holy Land. So those called centurion or other non-religious officials were trying to keep the peace in the area (Pax Romano)

*Tax collectors* worked for Romans. They were usually Jewish and they charged the Roman tax and put an extra charge for themselves. Sometimes the tax collectors became rich at the expense of their countrymen and women.

I would teach my class the distinctive roles of authority in Jesus’ time. That way the students will be able to read the passages and understand why Jesus says what he teaches. Jesus wants the common good for everyone. Often the people in roles of authority do not yield power so the common good is achieved. It seems the poor stay poor. The religious leaders thought that the poor were poor because they did not keep the letter of the Law strictly enough. The poor did not pray enough. Jesus knows that this is not the case. Jesus is aware that the poor are poor because those in authority are not sharing what they have or even making the poor pay more tax than they are able. Jesus tries to teach the officials an ethical obligation to deal with social sin (the sin of those who are mistreating the poor) and to assist the poor to have a better quality of life. Ask your students if they know of any social sin that needs addressing in the community, province, or country. Are there policies that keep people poor and unable to enjoy a good quality of life? [Examples – refugees that flee governments in Syria, Hydro bills that make those on fixed incomes poorer, unemployment/underemployment rates that make it difficult for parents to provide for their children]

**LS 2.2: Summarize the key principles of Catholic social justice and link them to the primary Christian values of love, promotion of life, reconciliation, inclusion, compassion, fidelity, liberation, community and hope.** [CCC nos. 356-384; 1928-1933; 1391-1401]There are three key principles of Catholic social justice, and these are: respect for the human person; equality and differences among people; and human solidarity.[CCC 1928-1948] Social justice comes as a direct relationship to the commandment to love one another as I have loved you. We are called to love everyone as Jesus invited us to do. (John 13:34) We are called to promote life, which is God’s gift to us and to all of creation. In the Ten Commandments God tells us “You shall not murder.” (Deuteronomy 5:17) This refers to promoting human life. The spirit of the Law would imply that all life must be protected. God created everything and found it to be good. (Gen. 1) Why then would we not promote all of the living beings that God created? Jesus comes to earth to reconcile all things to himself. It was his reason for coming to earth. Reconciliation is crucial for our Catholic lives. We have a sacrament to provide a way to be reconciled. Inclusion comes from the commandment of love. If we look to Jesus’ life and circles of relationships we see inclusion as his manner of living. He includes in his circle of relationships those people who were normally outcast by most others who considered themselves religious. The phrase WWJD seems to fit well here. Many of Jesus’ parables are about compassion. The compassionate response to people’s suffering is what Jesus points to for us to do. Compassion means to act with love. The best example is that of the Good Samaritan who is not bound by the law and the prophets, but who acts out of a sense of right for the dignity of the wounded person. Fidelity is a value that Jesus shows us in his crucifixion. He is willing to be faithful to the point of death. What greater love can be shown? Liberation is at the core of the dignity of the human person. No one ought to be held captive or restricted. It is a human right to have liberty. The dignity of the human person requires that community is formed to support and encourage life. Given when situations are not perfect as God intended, hope is a theological virtue that gives us reason to believe that things can be changed. Have your students look up the Catechism references for the three key principles of Catholic social justice in groups. Have them distinguish the three key principles. Then invite them to link the primary Christian values listed above to one of the key principles.

(i.e. Love is part of each of these three principles. To respect a person we must love them in a way that respects him/her as a child of God. This same love would work to express equality toward everyone no matter what the differences. Human Solidarity requires that we love every person so we ensure that they have all that they need, and we work until everyone has all that they need. This is a love that is about justice not romance. Have the groups go through each Christian value to see if they connect to the key principles of social justice.

**LS 2.3: Define the Church’s social teaching with respect to personal responsibility (i.e., care of family and their education, conscientious work, etc.) and participation in public life (i.e., leadership, politics, culture, etc.) and give examples of how each promotes the good of individuals and the common good of society.** [CCC nos. 356-384; 1928-1933; 1391-1401]

These are the CSTs that you need to respond to this expectation. The Church’s Social Teaching offers us all kinds of insight about how we are to act in the world. **The Principle of** **Human Dignity and Respect for Life** are key social teachings. We ought to offer all people the dignity they have as children of God. We ought to respect their life and treat them as we would want to be treated. **The** **Principle of the** **Family, Community and Participation** is another social teaching. “In a global culture driven by excessive individualism, our tradition proclaims that the person is not only sacred but social….The family is the central social institution that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined….We believe people have a right and duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all. Related to this principle, the role of government is to guarantee and protect human life and dignity and to promote the common good.” Catholic Social Teaching, Pennock, page 14  **The Principle of the Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers** tells us that “the economy must serve the people, not the other way around. Work helps us to make a living and to participate in God’s creation. The dignity of work is safeguarded when workers’ rights are respected. These rights include productive work, decent and fair wages, union participation, private property, and economic initiative.” Social Catholic Teaching, Pennock, page 16. **The Principle of the Common Good** “teaches us that social conditions that permit people to reach their full human potential and to realize their human dignity are significant. Three essential elements of the common good are respect for the person, the social well-being and development of the group, and peace and security. In our interdependent world, there is also a *universal common good* that requires international structures that can promote universal human development.” Catholic Social Teaching, Pennock, page 14. These are the Catholic Social Teachings that are required for the class discussion. Invite the class to discuss how these principles promote the good of individuals and the common good of society. Then ask them to give examples of how these CSTs could be lived out in their communities.

**LS 3.1: Examine a selection of scripture passages to identify the nature of Jesus’ mission and the role of the Holy Spirit in the mission of Jesus and of the Church (Lk. 4:14-30; Jn. 20:21; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 2Tim 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 13:14; Matt. 28:19).**

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| **Scripture passage** | **Nature of Jesus’ mission** | **Role of the Holy Spirit** |
| Luke 4:14-30 | Jesus has come to bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, to recover the sight of the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim that the Lord’s favour. | The Holy Spirit inspires Jesus when he speaks. He speaks the words that God the Father wants him to share. By sharing these words and working to help those who need help, Jesus is building the kingdom of God on earth. Some would say that the Holy Spirit is helping Jesus to build the Church – who will continue once Jesus ascends to heaven.  |
| Jn. 20:21 | Jesus shares God’s peace with his disciples and asks them to share God’s peace with others. | The Holy Spirit inspires Jesus to share God’s peace. The Holy Spirit will remind the disciples of Jesus’ words and they will share God’s peace with others. |
| 2 Peter 1:20-21 | Peter is telling the disciples of Jesus that the prophecy in the scriptures comes as part of Jesus’ mission, it comes from God and not from the person speaking it or sharing it. | The Holy Spirit moves the men and women who share the prophecy in the scriptures. These prophecies have power in the Church because the Holy Spirit inspires them for God’s work. |
| 2 Tim 1:13-14 | Paul is sharing with Timothy in this second letter that it is important to keep the standard of sound teaching from me. This is the mission of Jesus, he tells him to guard the treasure of faith and love that are entrusted to you.  | Paul is reminding Timothy that his teaching is from the Holy Spirit. We believe as Christians that the Holy Spirit is the way we can keep the faith. The Holy Spirit keeps the faith a unchanging treasure that we ought to guard. |
| 2 Cor. 13:14 | Paul ends his second letter to the Christians in Corinth by praying that Jesus’ grace, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit will be with the whole community in Corinth. | The Holy Spirit keeps the spirit of communion (unity in the community) alive and strong. In this way the Church on earth will be alive and well. |
| Matt. 28:19 | Jesus sends his disciples on a mission, to continue his mission, to make disciples of all nations on earth by baptizing them in the name of the Holy Trinity. | The Holy Spirit has continued to inspire the Church to continue this mission to this day, more than 2000 days later.  |

Invite the students in your class to work in groups to complete a chart similar to this one. These passages are quite explicit. It is a perfect activity for Eastertide. Remember to keep a copy so you have the answer sheet already for taking up the students work.

This expectation is from the strand Living in Solidarity. Jesus’ mission and the role of the Holy Spirit are key to understanding Living in Solidarity.

**LS 3.2: Outline the basic principles that guide the Church’s participation in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue (seek unity, respect the gift of religious diversity in the search for the Truth and in the articulation of common beliefs, respect for religious differences, be open and desire to seek communion).**

Before the second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church had no reason to participate in ecumenical and/or interfaith dialogue because the general belief was there was only salvation through the Catholic Church. However, the Holy Spirit revealed to the bishops present at that council that there was truth in all the paths to God. The basic principles that guide the Church’s participation in ecumenical and/or interfaith dialogue are: seek unity; respect the gift of religious diversity in the search for the Truth and in the articulation of common beliefs; respect religious differences and be open and desire to seek communion. Our students do not have a lived experience of the fear and the superiority of the Catholic Church prior to Vatican II unless they are in contact with older grandparents who had grown up in that time. It would be good to outline the basic principles with your class then ask a few thoughtful questions, like: Would the point of this type of dialogue to make everyone Catholic? Is it a competition to see which faith has more members? “No, but to follow the principles! Respect is key. It is good to find similarities but also to respect differences.” Ask students to look up Gandhi quote about Christianity: “If Christians would really live according to the teachings of Christ, as found in the Bible, all of India would be Christian today.”

**LS 3.3: Identify and describe some of the efforts the Church has made to continue Christ’s mission to spread the Good News to all people of the world (e.g. working with people from other religions on issues of social justice as a means to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ; witnessing to Christ through our work with those in need; participating in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue).** [CCC nos.830-856]I would ask your class to research what ecumenical dialogue is and have them explain the difference is between ecumenical and interfaith dialogue. The Church is always open to working with people who have a desire to relieve suffering and other corporal (bodily) needs. We receive the call in our Baptism to do spiritual and corporal works of mercy. People from other faith traditions and other Christians may have a desire to do social justice. When we work collaboratively more is accomplished. At St. Vincent’s Place in Sault Ste. Marie on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons different Christian church groups from across the city prepare and serve a meal to the ones of our city who do not have enough food. It is great to see all these good people helping out and working together to feed those who are hungry and give drink to the thirsty. I would have my students research how the World Council of Churches does justice work in different countries. Is there a similar council for all faiths working together?

A bit more

Since Jesus sent the disciples out on mission to spread the Good News in the first century there have been people trying to complete Christ’s mission. 1. There are Mission societies. Have your students research Mission societies > <http://www.missionsocieties.ca/> - this is the Canadian branch of the pontifical missions. There are four main mission focus groups: Holy Childhood (sometimes supported by our schools); Propagation of the Faith; St. Peter the Apostle; and Pontifical Missionary Union. Ask your students to dig deeper to find out the goals of each group. The pontifical Mission societies are organized and coordinated by the Holy Father, Pope Francis. 2. Working with people from other Christian traditions on issues of social justice as a means to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. <http://www.kairoscanada.org/> <http://www.wicc.org/> <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/> These are three other groups that work for justice as a means to spread the good news of Jesus. (National and International level) 3. Ecumenical Dialogue – Week of Prayer for Christian Unity happens every year from January 18-25. In 2017 St. Jerome’s and Zion Lutheran Church communities were invited to come together in dialogue on six Wednesday evenings from January 25 – March 1st. [2017 marked the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s Reformation action.] This dialogue helps the participants to get to know the similarities and differences in the beliefs of each church. This type of dialogue also happens on an international level too. 4. Interfaith Dialogue brings people from different faith traditions together to communicate beliefs. For example: Christians and Jewish people sometimes get together in certain locations. <http://www.cjdt.org/> < this group meets in Toronto.

<https://www.councilofchurches.ca/interfaith/christian-muslim-dialogue/> < this group brings Christians and Muslims together to discuss beliefs and ideas. Have your students research the various faith groups to see if there is dialogue happening.