

Grade Six Believing Expectations – Support for Teachers

Believing ~ Hope Expectations for Junior Classes

By the end of grade 6, it is our hope that students will be individuals who:

- ❖ Reflect on the saving story of our Christian faith and how we are to respond to God's gift of salvation;
- ❖ Cherish the Hebrew and Christian scriptures as an encounter with God, and Christ Jesus as the living Word of God at the heart of the gospels;
- ❖ Actively seek to find the face of God in Scripture, in God's creation, particularly in the *face of the other*;
- ❖ Proclaim with confidence a belief in the mysteries of the Catholic faith, the Creed.

BL 1.1: Examine a selection of biblical passages that reveal the link between sin, grace, conversion and mercy in God's plan of salvation. In the Scriptures we can come to understand how sin came into the world. In the beginning God created all things good. God invited humans into a love relationship. God created everything humans could need to live and be content. God invited us to enjoy our humanity and allow God to be God (knowing everything.) However, humans at some point decided that they wanted not only to be like God, being created in God's image, but they wanted to *be God* in knowing all things. So sin was created, that which separates us from God, puts space between us and God. **Read the passages of Genesis one chapter at a time. Discuss the content of the chapters. Ask the students to explain what they understand from the chapters. The above paragraph gives a summary of the three chapters.** [Gen 1-3; Is 59:2; Rm. 3:23] **God is a God of mercy and forgiveness. God loves us so much. Read the passage from Ephesians 2:8-9. Ask students what it means to them. Ask them if they have ever had an experience where they did something for which they thought they were going to be in big trouble and they experienced mercy instead. If they haven't, wait until it happens. It is such a joyful experience.** However, God still loved us and wanted to be God in our lives and so grace and mercy is given to us by God. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast." [Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7] Jesus eventually comes as the source of salvation. He shows us God's love and he shows us that conversion and mercy are part of God's plan of salvation as was given in the beginning. [Jn. 1] **In the last decade there has been a little slogan that has become very popular, WWJD. Does anyone know what it means? What Would Jesus Do? Jesus would do the most loving thing. Jesus would forgive. Jesus would include someone no one else includes. It is part of God's plan that we learn to be loving, merciful, forgiving...** "But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us." [Rm. 5:8; Rm. 4:12]

BL 1.2: Compare Church teaching on the relationship between faith and reason with the approach of natural and human sciences and explain how the latter might lead to an erroneous belief in God's non-existence. (Reason and faith work together to assure us of the existence of God, i.e. Truth) This will be a challenging lesson. Explain Faith this way: The Church teaches us that our desire for God is written on our hearts, because we were created by God and for God; and God never stops drawing us to himself. Only in God will we find truth and deep happiness. (faith) Sometimes humans forget, overlook or even reject their relationship with God. God never forgets, never overlooks or rejects us, even if we do it to God.

Explain Reason this way: There are many ways to come to know and love God. These can be called proofs for the existence of God; we come to these proofs by observing the world and being open to its order and beauty. As well, our human sense of moral goodness, our freedom and the voice of conscience within us, helps us to come to understand that we can have our origin only in God. (reason) The Church teaches that the one true God, can be known with certainty from God's works, by the natural light of human reason. [CCC 47] **An explanation of how the natural and human sciences might lead to an erroneous belief in God's non-existence:** Natural and human sciences seek to find the truth in their study of absolutes (proofs). The scientific method experiments to prove hypotheses and creates truth through replication of results. So without methods to prove the existence of God these sciences might lead a person to the error of God's non-existence. We require both faith and reason working together not just reason as the sciences would instruct us. If we try to prove the existence of God without faith, we will fall short. **In Grade 6 you may encounter a precocious young person who will begin to move away from faith. Be gentle in your response. Allow the student to question if it is done respectfully. It can be challenging but your openness will give the student pause to reflect. If it becomes a battle, it can become ugly. Some of your students may come from an evangelical position. Again, we do not read the Scriptures literally but contextually so be gentle in how you respond. Firm but gentle.**

BL 1.3: Identify the many ways we come to know God from the physical world and the human person (i.e. creation). [CCC 27-49; 166-184] **Think about some of the ways that you have come to know God in your life. Ask your class if they have had any experiences that helped them to know God. My most common experience of God is when I hold a newborn child. The perfect formation of their fingers and toes, how they breathe, every little detail of who they are. Another way is in creation. The more biology and anatomy I have studied the more convinced I am about a creator who's genius is amazing. Here are some thoughts that could be shared with a class:** The desire for God is written in the human heart, because humans are created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw us to God's self. Only in God will we find the truth and happiness we never stop searching for. [CCC 27] All that God created in the physical world reflects its Creator's beauty, genius, planning, power and integrity. Spending time watching the sun rise or set can be one of the most intimate moments of coming to know God. The human person can also provide for us a way to come to know God. With our openness to truth and beauty, our sense of moral goodness, our freedom and the voice of our conscience, with our longings for the infinite and for happiness, we can question ourselves about God's existence. [33] **Invite your class to sit beside a newborn gently sleeping.** It is challenging to not know the presence of God.

BL 2.1 Distinguish the Mysteries of Jesus' Infancy and Hidden Life (Incarnation, Visitation, Circumcision, Epiphany, presentation in the temple, flight into Egypt, at home in Nazareth) from the Mysteries of his Public Life as revealed in the Gospels (Baptism, Temptation, Transfiguration, Paschal Mysteries) and link them to the celebrations of the Liturgical Seasons. [CCC nos. 512-570] **There are many ways to begin this expectation. One way would be to start a timeline of Jesus' life and ask your students to give examples of stories that they know of along the timeline of Jesus. Hopefully there is more than Birth at one end and**

death & Resurrection at the other... “Concerning Christ’s life the Creed speaks about the mysteries of the Incarnation (conception and birth) and Paschal mystery (passion, crucifixion, death, burial, descent into hell, resurrection and ascension). It says nothing explicitly about the mysteries of Jesus’ hidden or public life, but the articles of faith concerning the Incarnation and Passover do shed light on the whole of his earthly life. “All that Jesus did and taught, from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven is to be seen in the light of the mysteries of Christmas and Easter.” [CCC 512] **Read the passages before Jesus’ birth so students can have a sense of the preparation for Jesus’ birth. Mark the annunciation of Jesus’ birth before the birth event.** The Incarnation is the mystery of Mary’s yes [fiat] come to fulfilment. **You may also want to mark the Visitation event after the Annunciation.** The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth is the first time that Jesus’ presence in the world is welcomed by Elizabeth and her baby John (the Baptist) in her womb. **You will have to go back and forth between Matthew’s account and Luke’s account of the birth of Jesus and the early days of his life.** At the Circumcision (Luke 2:21), Jesus is given the name that Gabriel had spoken for the baby. **We celebrate Epiphany around January 6th, about 12 days after Jesus is born but it may have been far longer. The wise men may have arrived years later. That is why Herod asks that all children under 2 are killed.** The Epiphany tells us that wise ones from faraway places came to pay homage to Jesus as a king. The presentation in the Temple is about two holy people in the temple celebrating Jesus’ coming. Both Simeon and Anna rejoice in the Messiah’s arrival and their prophecies tell of Jesus’ future. The angel warns Joseph in a dream about Herod’s plot to kill Jesus so the couple and their newborn take exile in Egypt. When it is safe, the Holy Family returns to Nazareth. All of this is a fulfillment of the promise made by God that a Messiah would come. **We celebrate all of this during the liturgical seasons of Advent and Christmas. Most of Jesus’ time on earth is not mentioned in the scriptures. It is like the life of all of us, ordinary. We celebrate a liturgical season of Ordinary Time. Ordinary comes from the word order, or being numbered. Most of our lives are lived from one week to the next. You will want to leave a space of 25 years with no events. You may want to ask your students to come up with some events that they think Jesus would have experienced in the hidden years. {Joseph’s death is one. He is not mentioned after the infancy narratives}.** The next time we hear about Jesus in the gospel it is about the mysteries of his public life. He goes to John and is baptized in the Jordan. John is perplexed because Jesus does not require a baptism of forgiveness of sins (which is the kind of baptism that John is offering people.) But Jesus asks him to baptize him so he can be a witness. Jesus moves into the desert to prepare for his public life. In the desert he is tempted by the devil three times. Jesus comes from the desert into ministry and calls followers, the apostles to become fishers of people. They form a band of disciples and learn from Jesus how God wants us to live and love. Jesus teaches them through his words and miracles. Jesus takes three of the apostles to the Mountain to witness his Transfiguration, but on their descent asks them not to share what had happened until he had been raised from the dead. As Jesus’ life becomes more problematic for the chief priests and elders, a plot is designed to silence Jesus. We then move into the mysteries of Holy Week, the Passover in the Jewish tradition. All of these mysteries are acknowledged and taught during the Holy Week celebrations, especially during the Triduum. Jesus’ resurrection is our reason to celebrate Easter. His ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost conclude the Easter season and we move back to Ordinary Time. **It would be marvellous if students move**

away from this expectation with more detail on the timeline of Jesus' life, that is knowing more than birth and death.

BL 2.2 – Through an examination of the account of the Incarnation in Scripture, identify the role of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and describe the meaning and significance of the Incarnation (i.e. the Son of God became human). [CCC nos. 461-494] PART ONE

I would read the two accounts of the Incarnation in Matthew's and Luke's gospels. Invite the students to identify the role of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Matthew's account of the Incarnation is 1:18-25. "the child conceived in [Mary] is from the Holy Spirit." Mary remains a virgin in the process. God's Son becomes human through the help of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary. In Luke's gospel the birth of Jesus is foretold in the Annunciation. Mary is asked by the angel Gabriel if she will allow Jesus to be born of her. She is told that the Holy Spirit will come upon her and the power of the Most High will overshadow her. It is a challenge to put into words the significance of the Incarnation in a meaningful way. In the Creed we summarize the significance of the Incarnation in the words "He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary." Maybe these words would help: All of God wanted to be in a deeply physical way connected to our humanity. One person was able to help God make that happen. "The Word became flesh so that thus we might know God's love." [CCC 458] "The Word became flesh to be our model of holiness." [CCC 459] "The Word became flesh to make us partakers of the divine nature." [CCC 460] Ask your students to describe the meaning of the Incarnation [the Son of God became human] and then ask them what is the significance of that event. It would be interesting for me to hear from you what they say. If you are comfortable sharing with me, send me an email.

BL 2.2: Through an examination of the account of the Incarnation in Scripture, identify the role of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and describe the meaning and significance of the Incarnation (i.e. the Son of God became human).PART TWO "Taking up St. John's expression, "The Word became flesh," [John 1:14], the Church calls this action "Incarnation", the fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it. In a hymn cited by St. Paul, the Church sings the mystery of the Incarnation: "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of [humans.] And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." [Phil. 2:5-8]" [CCC 461] In the words of the Creed we pray "conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary" when we are referring to how Jesus came to be incarnated. **Mary's role:** Mary is invited by the angel Gabriel to be the mother of God. Her response to this request is "How can this be, since I know not man?" **The Holy Spirit's role:** The angel responds, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you." The **meaning and significance of the Incarnation** is that Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his agony and his Passion and gave himself up for each one of us: "The Son of God...loved me and gave himself for me." [John 19:34] He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation, is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that...love with which the

divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings without exception.” [CCC 478]

BL 2.3 Describe through examples how the Church has handed on Revelation regarding the Incarnation through Tradition (e.g. preaching of the Word, celebration of the sacraments, catechesis, prayers and devotions.) [CCC nos. 456-511] You are welcome to think about examples that you know to convey this expectation. We pray in the **Apostles' Creed** every Sunday “[I believe] in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.” This Creed is the oldest Creed handed down to us from the time of the Apostles. So we have been reminded of this Revelation in our Sunday worship.

Every Christmas we hear the **Christmas story** and our pastors preach on this Word of God. We spend twelve days celebrating the birth of Jesus as a human baby. It is important to make the distinction between the Church’s celebration of the Incarnation at Christmas time and the cultural preoccupation with gift giving and Santa Claus (which ends on December 25th when the feast of Christmas is just getting started.)

We also celebrate the Incarnation at Easter when the **Word who was flesh died** so that we might know God’s love for us.

The celebration of the **sacraments** is a means for us to celebrate the Incarnation ~ through Baptism we participate in Jesus’ death and resurrection to new life; through Reconciliation we participate in Jesus’ forgiveness and healing in our lives; through Eucharist we hope to become what we eat; through the Sacrament of the Sick we participate in the healing touch of Jesus; through Confirmation, Marriage and Holy Orders we invite Jesus Christ to witness our commitment and be a guide in our life choice. **Catechesis** is the means by which believers can grow in their understanding of the faith and their ability to articulate it. Catechesis takes place in a believing community. So catechesis may take place in a classroom or it may only be religious education.

Every time we pray the **Sign of the Cross** we celebrate Jesus as the second person of the Trinity. There are many **prayers and devotions** that remind us of the human presence of God on earth.

BL 2.4 Explain the significance and meaning of the names – Jesus, Christ, Lord and the only Son of God – as revealed in Sacred Scripture. These names are specific to different facets of who Jesus is. I looked them up in the Catholic Dictionary for your use. Mary and Joseph were given the name **Jesus** for the child that was to be born to them. The angel Gabriel told Mary at the Annunciation that the baby was to be called Jesus. The name Jesus means “Yahweh is salvation.” *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, page 293. **Christ**, “the Anointed One” is a Greek translation [Christos] of the Hebrew word Messiah. The Jewish people were waiting for a Messiah, one who would restore a time of righteousness and conquer sin and evil. *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, page 348. When we use the title Jesus we usually refer to the Jesus of history, the man who walked on earth; when we use the title of Christ we usually refer to the Christ of faith, the second person of the Trinity who has always existed. **Lord**, a title commonly used of God in the Jewish Scriptures, (Adonai), and commonly applied to Christ in the Christian Scriptures (Kyrios). *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, page 323. **The only Son of God** – second person of the Trinity, whose

personage entitles us to be called sons and daughters of God too. **Ask your students if they are more comfortable using one of these names more than the others.**

BL 3.1: Define the term “Catholicity” and explain how it is understood in relationship to Christ’s presence within the Church (i.e. fullness of the means of salvation) and secondly with respect to its missionary mandate of being sent out by Christ (i.e. mission is to the whole human race).

As defined by the Modern Catholic Dictionary, Catholicity means “universality of the Church founded by Christ. In the Nicene Creed, the Church is said to be “one, holy, *catholic*, and apostolic.” The Church’s catholicity is first of all spatial, on account of her actual extension over the whole earth. The kind of catholicity may be actual, when the Church is actually extended everywhere; it is virtual in that Christ’s intention was to have the Church present among all peoples. (page 88) Christ’s presence within the Church is real. Christ’s spirit is in the people of God baptized into one body. Christ is present in the Eucharist. Christ is present in the word of God proclaimed. Christ is present in the fullness of the means of salvation (we are baptized into Christ’s death so we may share in his resurrection from the dead.) When we live as we ought, a life of loving service, we bring Christ’s presence into the world. When people see us living a life of love, it may cause them to question, what motivates that person/group of people? They may come to see or ask. At the end of Mass we are sent into the world to bring Christ to the world. We are sent out to the world to proclaim Christ with our lives.

BL 3.2: Identify and explain using examples how the signs of “Catholicity” (i.e. Petrine ministry, apostolic succession, orders – ministry, sacraments, creed and teachings, discipline (canon law) are present in both the universal Church (i.e. universal world-wide Catholic Church) and in the particular Church (i.e. diocese, parish). [CCC 830-856] I will create a chart to give you guidance about these examples.

Signs of Catholicity	Worldwide Roman Catholic Church	Particular Church
Petrine ministry (pope)	The pope is the head of the universal Church. All Catholic people around the world acknowledge Pope Francis as our leader.	Pope Francis is prayed for every Sunday in the Prayer of the Faithful. He gives us leadership that we want to follow in our local situation.
Apostolic succession	The bishops are the successors to the apostles. The Bishops meet in large groups for synods on various topics of faith. They report to the pope how things are going in their countries.	Each diocese has a bishop who is the teacher of the faith for the diocese. Each church in the diocese is connected to the bishop through the priest who has a vow of obedience to the bishop. If the bishop wants to teach the churches in his diocese something, he usually writes a letter to the people of God. (a pastoral letter)

Ministry	There are many ministries in the church. There are world-wide organizations who participate in the ministries in the church. One of the organizations is Holy Childhood – it is associated with the Pontifical Missions. Children in Canada raise money for children in developing countries.	Local churches respond to the needs in their local neighbourhood or city. When we have a canned food collection in the church we give the food to the Food Bank so it can be shared with people who need it. Our schools are part of the mission of the local church. That is why the parish priest comes into classes to connect the parish with the school. The Catholic school is an extension of the parish.
Sacraments	The sacraments are the same throughout the whole world. If you go to a different country, the mass may be celebrated in a different language but it will be celebrated in the same order.	The sacraments are celebrated in a local parish and records are kept so if there is a need to check if someone has been baptized, their baptismal record/confirmation record/marriage record is stored in the Church locally.
Creed and teachings	The Creed and the teachings throughout the Church are the same. We do not have different teachings. This is why the bishops meet in Rome occasionally to study and discuss the teachings of the Church.	The Creed is prayed every Sunday and it is the same creed that is prayed throughout the world. Usually in Canada we pray the Apostles' Creed at Sunday mass. In the USA, they usually pray the Nicene Creed. Both are official creeds in the Church. The official teachings are the same no matter which parish you attend.
Discipline (Canon law)	The law of the Church is called Canon law. It is the way situations are handled when legal issues require attention. For example, if a priest is ordained in the Church, he is a priest for life. He may have his faculties suspended (not allowed to say mass, hear confessions, marry people etc.) if he wants to leave the priesthood and get married. He is not able to be married in the Catholic	We all have to live by Canon Law, the same Canon Law that everyone in the Church lives by.

	Church because he is still a priest in the eyes of the Church.	
--	----------------------------------------------------------------	--

I would not over emphasize this expectation. The point is that for most of these examples what is done universally, is done locally and that is how the unity of the Church stands firm.

BL 3.3: Identify the major religions in the world today and the bonds which Christianity has with them (i.e. common origin and end of the human race – dignity of the human person, human freedom; the search for God – religious freedom and search for the truth) and communicate how this is a credible sign of “Catholicity”. [CCC 830-856]

The major religions in the world today are Christianity, Judaism and Islam. We share similar begins in Judaism with Abraham. Abraham is considered the father of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith. Read the story of Abraham in Genesis 15, have students outline what took place in the story in their own words. Continue reading the story of Abraham in Genesis 16-18. After a chapter have students outline what is happening between the characters in the story. Continue reading the story of Abraham, Sarah and Isaac in Genesis chapter 20 – 21. The story of Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac is a challenging one for students but read it as this story is a crucial one in the Jewish faith. Abraham so loved and obeyed God that he was willing to sacrifice his son. [It foreshadows God’s willingness to sacrifice Jesus for us.] In the Muslim faith, the same story of the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice Ishmael is a pivotal story. We do not have an account of the story in our scriptures but it is in the Muslim scriptures. In the times of Abraham a man’s wealth was acknowledged by how many children he had. Sarah, his barren wife, told Abraham to sleep with their Egyptian slave girl Hagar and Hagar had a son named Ishmael. Sarah, became jealous and told Hagar that she had to leave their family grouping. So Hagar and Ishmael were sent away. And so starts the Muslim tradition. Despite what we may understand from the media, all three traditions have similar beliefs: We all believe in the dignity of the human person. We all believe in human freedom. We all believe in the search for God, for religious freedom and the search for truth. This is a credible sign of Catholicity [universality] among the major religions in the world today.