A MOMENT OF REFLECTION

The following lesson is meant to shed light on the beautiful gift of ShareLife. For the Catholic community in the Archdiocese of Toronto, ShareLife provides an authentic, transparent and reliable structure for charitable giving. ShareLife supports numerous outreach groups and is dedicated to the poor and marginalized people in our communities. Your sharing of this gift, by means of educating and igniting students, is fulfilling your baptismal call to spread the Good News and know that you are an integral part of body of Christ. Blessings to you as you embark on this journey.

Official Website: http://www.sharelife.org

A TEACHER’S PRAYER

Lord Jesus,
You place before me students who are eager to do your will.
Fill my words and actions so that they might come to share in the life of the community by caring for those who need support and assistance. May we collectively focus our attention on the dignity of the human person at all stages of life and may we work tirelessly to serve you in love.
AMEN

ABOUT SHARELIFE

MISSION: To live the Gospel by providing for those in need.
VISION: The Catholic community and its partners responding generously with justice and love.
PRINCIPLES:
• Reverence for life at all stages
• Commitment to Catholic Social Teaching
• Collaboration with stakeholders
• Responsible and accountable for resources
### LESSON NAME
Deacons: Community Helpers, God’s Helpers

### FOCUS QUESTION
How do Deacons serve as Responsible Citizens in our Catholic Communities?

### CLASSROOM PLANNER

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<th>Day 2</th>
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| **Learning Goal:**
We are learning what a Deacon is and recognizing them as Community Helpers. | **Learning Goal:**
We are exploring how Deacon Michael acted as a responsible citizen by showing Mike that he was forgiven and welcome as a member of God’s family. |
| **Materials:** | **Materials:** |
- 4-5 Photos of Community Helpers (including a picture of a Deacon.)  
- Chart Paper & Markers or Interactive White Board  
- Appendix 7 | - Bible(s)  
- Appendix 8 (optional)  
- Computer access for students (optional) |

### LEARNING FOCUS

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<th>Religious Education Expectations</th>
<th>Assessment for Learning</th>
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<td>Specific Expectations</td>
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**ML3:**

*Gr. 4 Big Ideas:* God’s merciful forgiveness is manifested in the words and actions of Christ Jesus.  
We are called to engage in a journey of interior transformation as Christians, to grow in holiness of life, and to express this in a life of charity and perfection.

*Gr. 5 Big Idea:* The Church can assist us in developing an informed conscience in order to live a moral life and in seeking forgiveness and reconciliation after we have sinned.

**Students will/I can:**
- Explain how Deacon Michael shows love and demonstrates forgiveness to others. Connect his actions to the transformation that took place in Mike’s life.
- Relate this to the story of Jesus forgiving the Good Thief from the Gospel of Luke.
| **Gr. 6 Big Idea:** The human person who is made in the “image of God” is called to live and act in ways that reflect human dignity. | **Students will/I can:**  
- Show how ShareLife helped Deacon Michael serve as an example of how members of the community of faith give hope and inspiration to others who are struggling to live a virtuous life.  
- Connect the way that Deacon Michael welcomes all people to our role as members of the community of faith.  
- Explain that the Communion of Saints includes each of us and all of the people of God. |
|---|---|
| **LC1, LC2:**  
*Gr. 4 Big Idea:* Scripture, Church Tradition and the example of the Saints, and the current community of faith are sources of hope that inspire a virtuous life of holiness and justice.  
*Gr. 5 Big Idea:* The doctrine of the Communion of Saints describes the unity of the Church as two-fold; a community of holy things and a communion of holy people.  
*Gr. 6 Big Idea:* Each person is called to a role of service in the life of the Church community as witnesses to Christ in the world (laity, consecrated religious life, and ordained ministry). | **Students will/I can:**  
- Demonstrate how Deacon Michael, supported by ShareLife, is a responsible citizen who lives out the corporal works of mercy.  
- Explain how Deacons recognized and honoured the dignity of each person. |
| **LS2:**  
*Gr. 4 Big Idea:* Scripture reveals the dignity of the human person, the goodness of all creations and the responsibility of persons and society to protect what God has created and the common good of all.  
*Gr. 5 Big Idea:* The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human is the foundation of a moral vision for society.  
*Gr. 6 Big Idea:* Jesus taught us about the dignity of all people and how we are to identify with and to love our neighbour. |
ONTARIO CATHOLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE EXPECTATIONS

A responsible citizen who:

- c. Seeks and grants forgiveness.
- d. Promotes the sacredness of life.
- e. Witnesses Catholic social teaching by promoting equality, democracy, and solidarity for a just, peaceful and compassionate society.

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

Matthew 25: 31-40  I was a stranger and you welcomed me.
Luke 23:32-43  “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”
Colossians 3:12-17  Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Life and Dignity of the Human Person: Deacon Michael has made a conscious effort to work with people who are on the outskirts of the community. Deacon Michael sees the dignity in the prisoners he works with and continues to invite them into a relationship with Jesus.

Call to Family, Community, and Participation: Deacon Michael has created a safe, warm, welcoming place for the community to share and break bread. Together they form part of God’s family and through the efforts of ShareLife more people can become deacons and create safe, caring and loving communities.

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTION

Language

- Oral Communication
  1.6 Extending Understanding
- Writing
  1.2 Developing Ideas
- Media Literacy
  1.3 Responding to and Evaluating Texts
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

"Deacons play a vital role in evangelizing both to the gathered and the scattered in our community. Their ministry is of great importance to our archdiocese answering the call of Jesus to love and serve."

The sacrament of Holy Orders has three levels: deacon (servant), priest (elder), and bishop (overseer). In the early days of the Church all three levels were active in the service of the Christian community, but after several centuries the order of deacon largely disappeared, except as a stage on the way to the priesthood, especially in Western Christianity. The Second Vatican Council decided that the order of deacon should be revived as a permanent order in the life of the Church. Since then thousands of deacons have been ordained, and most dioceses in Canada and the United States benefit from their service.

Deacons are meant to work together with lay people, religious, and priests, and to support them in their mission. If we want to get a sense of the mission of the deacon, we should start with the Acts of the Apostles, where we read of the choice of seven men to help in the practical works of service in the community so that the apostles would be freed to devote themselves to prayer and the service of the word (Acts 6:1-6). The apostles ordained these men (Acts 6:6), and two of them are highlighted in the Acts of the Apostles: Stephen became the first martyr (Acts 6:8-8:1), and Philip did effective work in evangelizing (Acts 8:5-8; 8:26-40). In these passages we get early indications of two vital elements that have always been part of the deacon's vocation: it involves a proclamation of the Gospel, but is especially connected to works of practical service to the community.

"It is a deacon's task, as authorized by the competent authority, to administer Baptism solemnly, to reserve and distribute the Eucharist, to assist at and to bless marriages in the name of the Church, to take Viaticum to the dying, to read the Sacred Scripture to the faithful, to instruct and exhort the people, to preside over worship and the Prayer of the Faithful, to administer sacramentals, and to officiate at funeral and burial services. Dedicated to works of charity and functions of administration, deacons should recall the admonition of St. Polycarp: 'Let them be merciful, and zealous, and let them walk according to the truth of the Lord, who became the servant of all'' (Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, 29).

Cardinal Thomas Collins
Archbishop of Toronto

GET STARTED: Day 1

LEARNING GOAL

We are learning what a Deacon is and recognizing them as Community Helpers.

BEFORE (10 minutes)

4 Corners Activity

Post pictures of 4 community helpers in various spaces in the class.

Ask students to stand beside the picture which represents an important Community Helper. You might say, “Go and stand beside someone who you think is an important helper in our community.” After selecting their community helper, students will discuss 1 or 2 of the following and report back to the group:

- How do they help the community?
- What training do they have?
- How are they different from other community helpers?
- Is it a job or something that they volunteer to do?

After a few minutes, each group can share why they chose the person they did and answer the guiding question(s) that you provided.

It is possible that the children will not recognize the Deacon as a community helper, and very few people will select this picture as their first choice. If this is the case, ask the students why they did not select the Deacon.

Before showing the video, you may need to briefly explain the role of a deacon (this is outlined in the movie but younger students who do not have prior experience may confuse deacon for priest.)
**DURING (20 minutes)**

Before watching the video tell your class that some people have said that a Deacon is not really a community helper. Ask them to look for evidence that Deacon Michael is a responsible citizen who helps the community and also helps God.

**Brainstorming**

When the video is over, have students “popcorn out” the evidence they collected that proves that Deacon Michael is a community helper and God’s helper. Record their responses on chart paper or on an interactive white board.

**AFTER (15 minutes)**

Students are invited to indicate their learning of what it means to be a Deacon, the role and responsibility of being a Deacon as well as his commitment to the community. These are some suggestions as to how you might be able to assess student learning.

Using Appendix 7 and samples from the local paper, students can prepare a Job Posting complete with a job description for a deacon.

**OR**

Working in groups students can prepare commercials recruiting deacons and outlining the importance of the role.


Students can list ways in which they have helped ShareLife.

Connect their participation in ShareLife fundraising to helping Deacon Michael help others.

**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**

Students who struggle with writing can complete the Job description using assistive technology or a scribe. Students can be paired with a partner to complete the commercial.
GET STARTED: Day 2

LEARNING GOAL

We are exploring how Deacon Michael acted as a responsible citizen by showing Mike that he was forgiven and welcome as a member of God’s family.

BEFORE (10 minutes)

Visualizing

Say to the students: Think of a time when you did not feel part of the group, maybe because you made a mistake that hurt someone. They may have been mad at you and did not want you in the group. Picture yourself in the situation.

- How did you feel? Did you tell someone?
- Was there someone who forgave you and told you it was okay?
- How did they communicate that you were forgiven?
- How did they welcome you back to the group?
- How did you feel?

DURING (15 minutes)

Read From the Bible

Say to the class, “Let’s find out what the Bible tells us about forgiving and welcoming others.” Then read aloud from Matthew 25: 31-40, preferably from a Children’s Bible, such as The Catholic Children’s Bible by St. Mary’s Press. If you wish to extend the lesson, you could also read the other Bible passages and following the Responding to Text part of the lesson for each story.

Responding to Text

Ask the class, “What do you think this story teaches us?” What does Jesus ask of us? Prompt the students to identify our call to welcome, love, forgive, clothe and feed one another.

Making Connections

How did Deacon Michael help Mike and other people feel welcome and forgiven? How did he follow what Jesus said or what the apostles taught in the other readings? Can you think of a time when you were like Deacon Michael? How can we be more like Deacon Michael in our classroom community? In our families? In our parish community?
AFTER (20 minutes)

Representing

Provide students with Appendix 8.

Ask students to illustrate a story of a time when they were a Responsible Citizen who welcomed and forgave another, either at home, at school or in the community.

Ask students to draw a picture of the initial event that caused the problem in the “First” box.

Students will need to decide on 2 events that followed which led to the problem being solved, and themselves or the other person being forgiven.

They will draw a picture of how the person was welcomed back to the group in the “Finally” box.

Teachers may wish to have students publish their work using an app such as Comic Life or Strip Designer.

Explain to students that by supporting ShareLife we are all ‘responsible citizens.’

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Students who have difficulty organizing ideas can use story boards.

Students can use pictures only to tell their story.

Students can orally tell their story and teacher or a peer can assist them to select the 3 key events.
My Job Description for a Deacon

Name: __________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job title</th>
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<td>Reports to</td>
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Job purpose ________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Duties and responsibilities ___________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Qualifications _______________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Working conditions __________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Appendix 7