



## Finding God in our Environment

*Grade 9 Religious Education (HRE1)*

(Photo Goes Here)

This photograph was taken during research for this project  
at the Marysville dump site on Wolfe Island.

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## Preamble

The key aim of this project was to integrate the expectations of the Ministry of Education document, *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow*, into the Grade 9 Religious Education curriculum. The format of the unit follows a day-by-day approach, and outlines six possible lessons, in sequence. However, we plan to use these lessons as a springboard for further development, and expect that teachers will experiment with aspects of the unit to suit their needs. As such, we have also included a list of thoughts, ideas, and source materials that will hopefully engage other teachers in a dialogue about environmental education in religious education classes.

We envision that this unit of work will be taught in one of four ways:

1. As a stand-alone series of lessons
2. Concurrently with other curriculum materials
3. As a culminating project
4. In adapted form to meet the needs of teachers and students

## Background Information and Connections

### Rationale:

*"You must provide for the redemption of the land" (Leviticus 25:24)*

*"Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions." (Luke 12:15)*

*"The Church must defend earth, water and air as gifts of Creation that belong to everyone." Pope Benedict, Integral Human Development.*

*"A true education in responsibility entails a genuine conversion in ways of thought and behavior." (Pope John Paul II, Vatican City, December 8, 1989)*

This is an introduction to environmental justice. Students will discern the Christian call for environmental stewardship, and consider how materialism – both their own and society's at large – is counter to the teachings of Christ and leads to environmental degradation. Students will follow the prophetic model, and seek solutions to environmental problems through the study of scripture and Church teachings. Students will become empowered to make change in their everyday lives and live the virtue of hope.

### Enduring understandings:

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world... Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead*

- Students will understand that the call to environmental justice is rooted in Sacred Scripture and Church Tradition
- Students will understand the connections between our consumer culture and environmental injustice
- Students will understand the urgency of the call to environmental stewardship
- Students will understand that they have the power to make change
- Students will understand the need for collective action that is rooted in authentic Christian love

### Essential questions:

Students and teachers will devise questions based on the above enduring understandings, such as:

- What am I doing to harm the environment? (What is my environmental footprint?)
- How do the choices I make affect my environment?
- How can the things I do really make a difference?
- Where can I find inspiration?
- How can I affect change through authentic Christian love?

## Curriculum Connections (Grade 9 Religious Education): SCRIPTURE

*Students will attend to scripture as a guide for seeking truth and making moral decisions in the spirit of discipleship*

### **Overall expectations:**

Explain how the message of scripture informs and challenges society

### **Specific expectations:**

Critique contemporary values with the teachings found in the Gospel

Communicate a genuine understanding of the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments and their relevance to Christian life

### ***Profession of Faith:***

*Students will recognize that the love of God for all people demands justice*

### **Overall Expectations:**

Describe what it means to believe and to live in Christ. Name some of the joys and demands involved.

### **Specific Expectations:**

Recognize discipleship as the call to follow Jesus in word and deed

Evaluate how live in and challenge society based on the model of Jesus

### ***Christian Moral Development:***

*Students will take on the attitudes of Christ*

### **Overall Expectations:**

Demonstrate knowledge of how Church teaching informs moral decision-making.

### **Specific Expectations:**

Describe how the love of God for all people demands justice

Define hope and its role in Christian living, identifying people who model Christian hope

### ***Prayer and Sacramental Life:***

*Students will take up the challenge of living a life of prayer in contemporary culture*

#### **Overall Expectations:**

Demonstrate knowledge of the connections between a life of prayer and the challenge of the Christian call to be loving in contemporary culture

#### **Specific Expectations:**

Demonstrate the connections between a life of prayer and the challenges of Christian life in contemporary culture

### ***Catholic Graduate Expectation Connections:***

*Each student will strive to become a discerning believer formed in the Catholic faith community who*

**CGE1c** - actively reflects on **God's Word** as communicated through the Hebrew and Christian scriptures; **CGE1d** -develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic **social teaching** and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good; **CGE1f** -seeks intimacy with God and celebrates **communion** with God, others and creation through prayer and worship.

*Each student will strive to become **an effective communicator** who*

**CGE2a** - listens actively and critically to understand and learn in light of gospel values; **CGE2e** - uses and integrates the Catholic faith tradition, in the critical analysis of the arts, media, technology and information systems to enhance the quality of life.

*Each student will strive to become **a reflective and creative thinker** who*

**CGE3b** - creates, adapts, evaluates new ideas in light of the common good; **CGE3d** -makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience; **CGE3f** -examines, evaluates and applies knowledge of interdependent systems (physical, political, ethical, socio-economic and ecological) for the development of a just and compassionate society.

*Each student will strive to become **a self-directed, responsible, life long learner** who*

**CGE4c** - takes initiative and demonstrates Christian leadership

*Each student will be encouraged to become **a collaborative contributor** who*

**CGE5c** - develops one's God-given potential and makes a meaningful contribution to society; **CGE5d** - finds meaning, dignity, fulfillment and vocation in work which contributes to the common good; **CGE5f** -exercises Christian leadership in the achievement of individual and group goals.

*Each student will be strive to become **a responsible citizen** who*

**CGE7a** - acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions; **CGE7e** -witnesses Catholic social teaching by promoting equality, democracy, and solidarity for a just, peaceful and compassionate society; **CGE7i** -respects the environment and uses resources wisely;

# Environmental Education Connections

## (Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow)

### ***Schools will:***

- provide opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and skills related to environmental education in all subject areas, and encourage them to apply their knowledge and skills to environmental issues (e.g. loss of biodiversity, climate change, waste reduction, energy conservation) through action-based projects;
- develop learning opportunities that will help students understand the underlying causes, the multiple dimensions, and the dynamic nature of environmental issues;
- create opportunities for students to address environmental issues in their homes, in their local communities, and at the global level;
- enrich and complement students classroom learning by organizing out-of-classroom experiences and activities.

### ***Students will:***

- recognize the need to incorporate an environmental perspective in decision-making models;
- detect and assess bias and evaluate different points of view;
- appreciate the challenges faced by the human community in defining and implementing the processes needed for environmental sustainability;
- maintain a sense of hope and a positive perspective on the future.

### ***Catechism Connections:***

**Number 282:** Catechesis on creation is of major importance. It concerns the very foundations of human and Christian life.

**Number 299:** Because creation comes forth from God's goodness, it shares in that goodness -- "And God saw that it was good...very good."

**Number 307:** To human beings God even gives the power of freely sharing in his providence by entrusting them with the responsibility of "subduing" the earth and having dominion over it. God thus enables men to be intelligent and free causes in order to complete the work of creation, to perfect its harmony for their own good and that of their neighbours.

**Number 373:** In God's plan man and woman have the vocation of "subduing" the earth as stewards of God. This sovereignty is not to be an arbitrary and destructive domination. God calls man and woman, made in the image of the Creator "who loves everything that exists," to share in his providence toward other creatures; hence their responsibility for the world God has entrusted to them.

**Number 1147:** God speaks to man through the visible creation. The material cosmos is so presented to man's intelligence that he can read there traces of its Creator. Light and darkness, wind and fire, water and earth, the tree and its fruit speak of God and symbolize both his greatness and his nearness.

**Number 2456:** The dominion granted by the Creator over the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be separated from the respect for moral obligations, including those toward generations to come

# Lesson Plans

## DAY 1

**Lesson Title:** An introduction to the religious dimension of environmental sustainability



*"Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."* Genesis 9:16

### Aims/Objectives:

Students will identify where and how everyday objects are made.

Students will trace the environmental impact of these objects.

Students will distinguish between the materialism of popular culture and Jesus' call to stewardship of the earth.

### Resources required:

computer, digital projector, student backpacks, list of Bible verses

### Procedure:

- 1) Students will catalogue a list of the different everyday items they find in their backpacks. Which items will they still own in one week? One month? One year?

Questions for further thought:

- When did you get your pencils, binders, etc.?
  - How often do you lose/throw away your pencils?
  - Where did you buy your school supplies?
  - Why do people buy **new** supplies for school?
- 2) Have students count the number of disposable items in the backpacks in the classroom. Multiply this number for every student in the school.... Perhaps even in Canada! What would that amount of waste look like? What does that tell us about our impact on the environment?
  - 3) Show the PowerPoint presentation, *The Story of a Pencil*, and ask students how it relates to the backpack activity.
  - 4) Ask pairs of students to list items in their homes that are disposable but not recyclable. Compile a list as a class, and discuss the implications.
  - 5) Finally, have pairs of students select the Bible passage that speaks to them most clearly in the light of today's class. Why?



## **The Environment in Holy Scripture**

1. *And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky."*

Genesis 1:20

2. *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

Genesis 1:26

3. *The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.*

Genesis 6:5

4. *Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.*

Genesis 9:3

5. *"Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."*

Genesis 9:16

6. *"The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants. Throughout the country that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land"*

Leviticus 25:23-24

7. *"You shall not pollute the land in which you live... you shall not defile the land in which you live, in which I also dwell."*

Numbers 35:33-34

8. "You are the Lord, you alone; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. To all of them you give life..."

Nehemiah 9:6

9. *"But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being."*

Job 12:7-10

10. *"I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land"*

Jeremiah 2:7

11. *"Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made"*

Psalms 145:13

12. *"The earth and its fullness are the Lord's."*

1 Corinthians 10:26

## **Day 2**

### **Lesson Title: Are my choices really choices?**

*"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."  
(Matthew 5:6)*

### **Aims/Objectives:**

To encourage reflection on the sources of influence in our lives

To make connections between these influences and the choices we make

To think critically about personal decision-making and its impact on our world

To bring about change through reflection

### **Resources required:**

The Story of Stuff documentary: <http://www.storyofstuff.com/>

### **Procedure:**

- 1) Individually, students consider the question, "Who influences my decisions?" (Responses will include family, friends, TV, Church etc.)
- 2) In pairs, students then consider: "Which of these influences have a positive impact on my environmental footprint, and which have a negative impact?"
- 3) As a class, students take-up their responses and consider the following question: "Overall, does my culture have a positive or negative influence on my environmental footprint?"
- 4) Next, students watch "The Story of Stuff" (20 minutes). They consider their own roles in the cycle of consumption:
  - Do they love to shop?
  - Do they need to buy things to make them happy?
  - Do they feel pressured to have the latest stuff?
  - What do they have in their homes that's recently been bought or thrown away?
  - How does all of this harm our environment?
  - How do they feel if they *don't* participate in the cycle of consumption?
  - Are their choices *really* their choices?
- 5) Students consider the challenge of Christ: "Do not bring a second tunic," he said' (Mark 6:9). Following a discussion on the implications of this verse, students write a journal entry: "How can Jesus help me to make choices that protect the environment?"

### **Day 3**

Lesson Title: The Media and the Environment

An analysis of how the environment and environmental sustainability are portrayed in the media

*"You shall not pollute the land in which you live... you shall not defile the land in which you live, in which I also dwell."* Numbers 35:33-34

#### **Aims/Objectives:**

The students will recall that God asks us to be stewards of the Earth.

The students will analyze of a variety of media ads to determine what they really tell us about the environment and/or environmental sustainability.

The students will distinguish between the materialism of popular culture and Jesus' call to stewardship of the earth.

#### **Resources required:**

laptop computer, internet connection, digital projector, a generous selection of newspapers and magazines, list of articles from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

#### **Procedure:**

- 1) The lesson will begin with an environmental prayer service (see PowerPoint file)
- 2) The students will form groups of three or four and look through a variety of advertisements. They will consider the following questions:
  - What does each ad promote? How is the object promoted?
  - Is this being sold as a green product? How can you tell?
  - Do you think this is a green product? Why/why not?
  - Does this advertisement encourage you to replace something you already own?
  - How does this ad promote the cycle of consumption?
  - What would Jesus say about the materialism found in the ad?
  - Students will come together as a class to discuss their findings. Each group will submit a written account of their work.

## **Day 4**

### **Lesson title: What does God teach us about environmentalism?**

*"The land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants. Throughout the country that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land." (Lev. 25:23-24)*

### **Aims/Objectives:**

- Students will be informed of the call to Christian Stewardship
- Students will understand the contextual message of specific parables
- Students will be informed of the duties of Christian Stewardship
- Students will reflect on the consequences of poor Stewardship

**Resources required:** Bible and handouts (see below)

### **Procedure:**

- 1) Provide students with a brief character sketch of Jesus (see handout). In pairs, students will read a Biblical passage and complete the accompanying questions, then briefly report their findings to the class. Possible passages could include: The Creation story (Genesis 2-3); The Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20, Matthew 13:1-23, and Luke 8:1-15); The Rich Young Man (Matthew, 19:16-30); The Parable of the Rich fool, Luke 12:16-21; The Mustard Seed (Luke 13:18-19, Mark 4:30-32; Matthew 13:31-32); The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-28); The Parable of the Lost Sheep (Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7); Noah (Genesis 6-9). (Additional passages listed in Appendix)

### **Student handout for Lesson 4**

Please see next page

## **Handout for Lesson #4**

### **What does God teach us about Environmentalism?**

**Story Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Biblical Passage reference:** \_\_\_\_\_

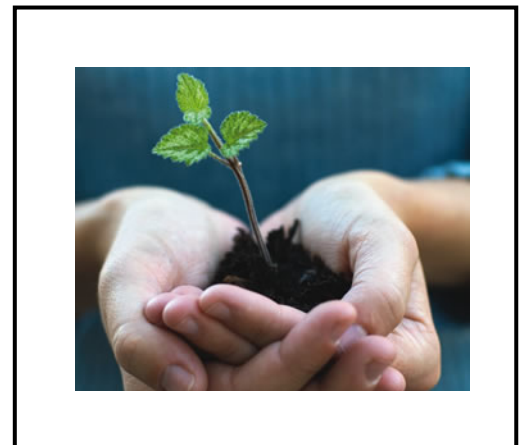
After reading your Biblical passage, answer the following questions. Be sure to consider what the passage can teach us today.

*The Holy Trinity defines three parts of God; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus shared our humanity, walked the earth and challenged people of his social era. He came to teach us about God and show us ways to live that honour God. The lifestyle he suggests is practical yet radically different from the 'me first' attitudes we are used to. Jesus says we must value all life, listen to women, care for the sick, and share with the needy.*

1. Briefly note what happens in this story.
  
2. What is the responsibility of humans?
  
1. Does it offer any criticism of our lifestyles?
  
2. How does this speak to the Christian call to stewardship?
  
3. How does it model Christian stewardship?
  
4. What is the overall lesson/moral of the story?

### **Extension Questions**

5. How can we apply the teachings in the story to the protection of our environment?
  
6. How do we hurt God's creation if we do not follow Jesus's teachings?



## **Day 5**

**Lesson Title: What's the global problem, and what's the Christian solution?**

*"Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and do it." Ezra 10:4*

### **Aims/Objectives:**

Students will solve an environmental issue drawing upon Christian teachings. They will reflect upon a Biblical story or passage and relate it to the modern world. Students will offer a solution to a modern environmental problem and/or attitude(s).

**Resources:** Bible, The Catechism of the Catholic Church, lists of Christian Virtues, the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments.

### **Procedure:**

- Students should be split into groups of 4 or 5
- Using some of the Bible passages from day 4, students will prepare and present a Skit or interview
- The dramatization should be set in modern times and apply Christian attitudes. Christian stewardship should be evident in its resolution.
- Suggested time allowance is 3 days - one day preparing the story, one day rehearsing (and organizing any necessary props) and one day for the performance(s).

### **Student Handout:**

(Please see next page)

## Handout #1 for Lesson #5

### What's the global problem, and what's the Christian solution?

*Student planning sheet for dramatization*



Group members: \_\_\_\_\_

Biblical passage: \_\_\_\_\_

Use this template as a framework for your scene or interview. Some lines may be scripted while others may be improvised. You will have 4 minutes to perform your work.

What modern problem relates to your Biblical passage?

\_\_\_\_\_

Title of your scene/ interview: \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction: (set scene, introduce characters...)**

**Set plot in motion:**

**Rising concerns:**

**Conflict:**

**Conclusion: (lesson in stewardship)**



## Handout #2 for Lesson #5

### What's the global problem, and what's the Christian solution?

#### Assessment Rubric for Dramatization

Group members: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of scene/interview: \_\_\_\_\_

|                            | <b>Level 1</b>   | <b>Level 2</b>  | <b>Level 3</b>   | <b>Level 4</b>   |
|----------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Knowledge</b>           | <p>Scene shows limited understanding of the contextualist message of the story</p> <p>Shows limited understanding of Christian teachings</p> | <p>Scene shows some understanding of the contextualist message of the story</p> <p>Shows some understanding of Christian teachings</p>  | <p>Scene shows considerable understanding of the contextualist message of the story</p> <p>Shows considerable understanding of Christian teachings</p> | <p>Scene shows exceptional understanding of the contextualist message of the story</p> <p>Shows exceptional understanding of Christian teachings</p> |
| <b>Thinking</b>            | <p>Scene does not flow</p> <p>Scene does not address modern issue/ global problem</p>  | <p>Scene flows somewhat</p> <p>Scene attempts to address modern issue/ global problem</p>   | <p>Scene has considerable flow</p> <p>Scene addresses modern issue/ global problem with considerable effectiveness</p>                                 | <p>Scene flows exceptionally well</p> <p>Scene addresses modern issue/ global problem with a high degree of effectiveness</p>                        |
| <b>Communi-<br/>Cation</b> | <p>Language used by characters does not reflect Christian values</p> <p>Actors do not use expression in their voices or movements</p>        | <p>Language used by characters Somewhat reflects Christian values</p> <p>Actors use some expression in their voices &amp; movements</p> | <p>Language used by characters reflects Christian values</p> <p>Actors use considerable expression in their voices &amp; movements</p>                 | <p>Exceptional use of language &amp; reflection of Christianity</p> <p>Actors use exceptional expression in their voices &amp; movements</p>         |
| <b>Application</b>         | <p>No evidence of collaboration</p> <p>No evidence of stewardship in solution/ conclusion</p>  | <p>Some evidence of collaboration</p> <p>Some evidence of stewardship in solution/ conclusion</p>                                       | <p>Considerable evidence of collaboration</p> <p>Considerable evidence of stewardship in solution/ conclusion</p>                                      | <p>Exceptional evidence of collaboration</p> <p>Exceptional evidence of stewardship in solution/ conclusion</p>                                      |

## **Appendix for Lesson 5:**

The following Passages could be used for this project. They are sourced from, and categorized by, **Restoring Eden: Christians for Environmental Stewardship** ([www.restoringeden.org](http://www.restoringeden.org))

### *God's wisdom and powers are seen in nature*

**Romans 1:20** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

**Psalm 104:24-25** How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number--living things both large and small.

**Psalm 145:3-7** Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds. They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

**Job 9:2-7** Indeed, I know that this is true. But how can a mortal be righteous before God? Though one wished to dispute with him, he could not answer him one time out of a thousand. His wisdom is profound, his power is vast. Who has resisted him and come out unscathed? He moves mountains without their knowing it and overturns them in his anger. He shakes the earth from its place and makes its pillars tremble. He speaks to the sun and it does not shine; he seals off the light of the stars.

### *God teaches through nature*

**Job 12:7-10** But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

**Psalm 19:1-6** The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

**Romans 1:19-20** What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

## **The Bible warns us about materialism, greed, and gluttony**

**Matthew 22:37** Jesus replied- "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

**Luke 12:15, 23, 34** Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.... Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

**John 2:15-16** Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world.

**Isaiah 5:8** Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land.

**Job 27:14-18** However many his children, their fate is the sword; his offspring will never have enough to eat. The plague will bury those who survive him, and their widows will not weep for them. Though he heaps up silver like dust and clothes like piles of clay, what he lays up the righteous will wear, and the innocent will divide his silver. The house he builds is like a moth's cocoon, like a hut made by a watchman.

**Luke 16:2, 10, 13** So he called him in and asked him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer." ... Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.... No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

**Matthew 6:24** No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

**Mark 4:19** But the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

**Timothy 6:6-10** But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

## Humans Are Responsible for Creation as Caretakers

**Genesis 1:26-31** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them/ God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."/ Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

**Genesis 2:15-17** The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat if it you will surely die

**Genesis 2:19-20** Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

**Psalms 8:6-8** You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

**Isaiah 24:4-6** The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.

**Hosea 4:1-3** Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying."

**Ezekiel 34:17-18** As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?

**Jeremiah 2:7** I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable.

**Revelation 11: 18** The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great-and for destroying those who destroy the earth.

## **Gratitude and humility are proper responses to our responsibility to creation**

**Matthew 24:45-46** Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.

**Luke 22:25-27** Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."

**Mark 10:45** For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

## **Day 6**

### **Lesson Title: The Small Footprint Field Trip**

#### **Aims/Objectives:**

- To encourage students to reflect on the materials from the unit
- To encourage students to see connections between consumption and environmental degradation in a local context
- To consider green, sustainable alternatives to wasteful models of energy use and consumption
- To travel with a minimal impact on the environment

#### **Procedure:**

In this final lesson, we envision a field trip without school buses that exposes students to both positive and negative aspects of our relationship with the environment. A key aim is that students walk rather than rely on buses. This will be one of the key challenges of the trip! What follows is a description of the itinerary we have planned for our students in Kingston, Ontario. Obviously, students in different locations will make use of their unique local resources and challenges.

- Walk from school to Wolfe Island Ferry dock
- Take ferry to Marysville, Wolfe Island
- Take horse-drawn wagon to wind turbine interpretation centre (Wolfe Island has a new wind farm with over 80 turbines)
- Return to Marysville, Wolfe Island, and visit the dump site in the village
- Attend Mass in Marysville
- Return on the ferry to Kingston for lunch at the downtown farmer's market
- Walk back to school via back alleys where commercial dumpsters are stored

**Possible discussion questions/journal entries for debriefing:**

- At what point in the trip did you feel closest to Jesus? Why?
- What were the challenges/rewards of travelling on foot?
- Did our trip have any negative impact on the environment? Why?
- In what ways, if any, did the trip serve as a wake-up call?
- Will your visit to the dump change your habits? How?
- Is wind energy worth the change in the landscape?

**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

The following ideas/tasks could be used to supplement/replace some of the activities described above.

- Have students plant a tree or garden and care for it; focus on off-setting carbon emissions.
- Tour the school. Have students identify an environmental problem—garbage, oil leaks in the parking lot, too many cars on site, lights or monitors left on – and develop a program to address the issue.
- Take students to the local church. Look for ways to green the parish.
- Have students interview a custodian. What is his/her perspective on waste in schools?
- Have students save and document their personal garbage for a week, and/or deposit their lunch garbage in a class garbage bag.
- Research environmental problems in Canada, such as the Alberta tar sands.
- Teach students about 'green washing'. When are green products really green?
- Have an in-class reconciliation, in which everyone – including the teacher – discusses their personal failings regarding environmental sustainability.
- Organize a class Mass/prayer service for the environment

## RESOURCES

### ***Books:***

Cavanaugh, William, Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008

Cavanaugh argues that consumers are detached from materialism due to over purchasing and an obsession with “keeping the wheels of commerce rolling”. A Christian should be concerned with all aspects of production to truly live by the ‘golden rule’. There is no justice as long as we remain ambivalent. Cavanaugh makes reference to the traditions of Augustine, Aquinas, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Pope John Paul II. The author discusses the concept of Eucharistic justice.

McDonough, William and Braungart, Michael, Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the way we Make Things. North Point Press, 2002

This book argues that a new design and manufacturing paradigm is needed to ensure a sustainable cycle of production, manufacturing and consumption. The book itself is printed on synthetic ‘paper’, made from plastic resins, and is recyclable.

Robinson, Tri, Saving God's Green Earth: Rediscovering the Church's Responsibility to Environmental Stewardship. Ampelon Publishing, 2006

Robinson defines Christian environmental Stewardship. He discusses ‘affluenza’, and suggests that it is the cause of many current global problems.

Suzuki, David. The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering our Place in Nature. Grey Stone Books, 2002.

After much scientific reflection on the intricate workings of nature, its elements and the human body, Suzuki explains that farming and industrialization is depleting the planet in many ways... Humans have lost their connection with nature and neither nourish nor understand our inter-dependency. He points to evidence that the destruction of the planet has already begun to cause the destruction of ourselves. With religious reflection (specifically through Native spirituality), he is hopeful that sacred dwelling will maintain the planet.

## **Church Documents**

An Anthology of Catholic Teaching on Education, Editor Leonard Franchi. Scepter. 2007

These documents outline the importance of school in Catholic formation; The document *Gravissimum Educationis* states that Catholic schools should interpret and give order to human culture in light of faith. In simple terms, school should provide opportunities for students to learn and practice authentic Christian Stewardship.

Our Sunday Visitor's Encyclopedia of Catholic Doctrine. Edited by Russel Shaw.

Christian moral responsibility requires one to ensure that future generations will not be adversely affected by the current use of the earth. The following subject areas are discussed in terms of stewardship and shared responsibility for each other and the environment: the Common Good; the physical environment; the preferential option for the poor; stealing; stewardship; subjectivism; subsidiarity; and the universal destination of goods.

The Documents of Vatican II, Walter Abbott, S.J. Editor. Herder and Herder Assoc. Press. 1966.

The following sections are helpful in understanding the role of humans as commanded by God: God's plan gives man's vocation a communitarian nature and reverence for the human person (page 222); human activity has intrinsic value (page 232); and the circumstances of culture in the world today present challenges (page 260).

## **Articles:**

Caldecott, Stratford, "Editorial: Caritas In Veritate and Integral Human Development", *Communio* 36. 2009

Reflecting on Pope Benedict XVI's most recent encyclical, Caldecott reminds the environmentalist that "stewardship of the environment cannot be separated from respect for human life, sexuality, and the family." The Pope encourages Christians to "defend earth, water and air ... gifts that belong to everyone... [and] help prevent mankind from destroying itself."

"Our Relationship with the Environment: The Need for Conversion". Commission for Social Affairs Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Concacan Inc. 2008

The reader is invited to rethink and renew Catholic responsibilities to neighbour, Nature and God. Supporting documents for this piece include Pope John Paul II's address for the World Day of Peace, 1990, and the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2001 and 2007.

## **Songs to stimulate discussion:**

"Paved Paradise" by Carly Simon

"Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong