

Teaching Units for Lasallian Schools

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De La Salle Christian Brothers

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PROVIDE A HUMAN,
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
TO THE YOUNG...

PREFACE

A team of educators from around the country produced these teaching units for Lasallian Schools during a workshop week in July 1998 at De La Salle Institute in Napa, CA, and July 1999 at Saint Mary's University in Winona, MN, under the auspices of the Regional Education Board of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The participants of the workshop were:

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Greg Kopra, Associate Coordinator of Lasallian School Programs for the Office of Education in the District of San Francisco, edited the lesson plans during the summer of 2000. We still consider this a work in progress. Comments, additional resources, and questions are very welcome. Please e-mail your comments to Greg at gkopra@dlsi.org or call him at 707-252-3723.

NOTE: A supplemental student resource about St. John Baptist De La Salle is highly recommended. Since these students are not familiar with the Lasallian heritage, such a resource will provide some background for the information given in class. Reading assignments throughout the week may also be chosen from such a resource. There are three student resources that may be useful:

Brother Luke Salm's 3-page article *Who is Saint John Baptist de La Salle?* It can be found on the Internet at <http://www.delasalle.org>. Once you get to the home page for the web site, click on "Resources" and then click on "Articles on Lasallian Spirituality." Brother Luke's article is listed there among many others.

Leo Kirby's *I, John Baptist de La Salle*, a short 45-page booklet for high school students. It may be ordered from the Christian Brothers Conference, 4351 Garden City Drive, Suite 200, Landover, MD 20785-2248

Damian Lundy's *St. John Baptist de La Salle: the Teachers' Saint*, a 64-page booklet written by Lawrence O'Toole and rewritten by Damian Lundy. This booklet is available from the Director of Publications, De La Salle Brothers, 140 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7BP, Great Britain.

GENERAL OUTLINE

Freshmen Level: You Belong

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Objectives:

1. To orient students to high school, to this school, and to the Lasallian heritage.
2. To help students fit in and feel that they belong within a particular school community.
3. To highlight that the dignity of persons is central to the core of the school and at the heart of the school's heritage.
4. To help students affirm their talents and realize education as a privilege that requires commitment.

Components:

1. Day One: You Belong to the Human Family.
2. Day Two: You Belong to a Learning Community.
3. Day Three: You Belong to a School Community.
4. Day Four: You Belong to a Worldwide Lasallian Community.
5. Day Five: You are Invited to Belong to a Community of Faith.

Sophomore Level: Your Dignity

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Objectives:

1. To bring students to an appreciation of their dignity as God's creation.
2. To help students realize the means by which they cultivate the dignity of themselves and others.
3. To appreciate how family, the school community, and the larger society contribute or take away from the dignity of themselves and others.
4. To see how politeness, decision-making, and the quality of relationships contribute to the development of dignity.

Components:

1. Day One: Dignity – You Got It.
2. Day Two: Dignity – It Matters.
3. Day Three: Dignity – Find It.
4. Day Four: Dignity – Affirm It.
5. Day Five: Dignity – Share It.

Objectives:

1. To bring students to an appreciation of their integration within God's creation.
2. To help students understand their school's mission statement and their part in it.
3. To deepen their understanding of the poor in their community and in the world at large, along with their responsibilities toward everyone in terms of charity and justice.
4. To begin a development of their own leadership potential, especially in the area of social justice.
5. To let students see how they can make a difference, and how it takes courage to do so.

Components:

1. Day One: Vision
2. Day Two: Identity of the Lasallian School
3. Day Three: Justice
4. Day Four: Courage

Objectives:

1. To reflect upon the key events and experiences of each individual's faith journey at this time of transition
2. To recognize examples of God's presence in one's life
3. To offer guides for the journey
4. To provide a Lasallian frame of reference which might motivate the student to become actively involved in serving others after graduation
5. To prepare a Mission Statement which expresses how the Lasallian experience can be integrated into one's personal identity.

Components:

1. Day One: Sharing Our Story: Remembering the Presence of God
2. Day Two: Growing Pains: Examining the Struggles We Encounter on Our Journey
3. Day Three: Faith: The Role of God's Providence in Our Lives
4. Day Four: Called to Be Ministers of Grace: Examining Our Faith Response
5. Day Five: Living Jesus in Our Hearts, Forever: Examining the Call to Serve

YOU BELONG

A Five-Day Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools – Frosh

Objectives:

1. To orient students to high school, to this school, and to the Lasallian heritage.
2. To help students fit in and feel that they belong within a particular school community.
3. To highlight that the dignity of persons is central to the core of the school and at the heart of the school's heritage.
4. To help students affirm their talents and realize education as a privilege that requires commitment.

Components:

1. Day One: You Belong to the Human Family.
2. Day Two: You Belong to a Learning Community.
3. Day Three: You Belong to a School Community.
4. Day Four: You Belong to a Worldwide Lasallian Community.
5. Day Five: You are Invited to Belong to a Community of Faith.

Background:

The first days, even weeks, of ninth grade can be a bewildering, frightening experience for young people. They may know almost no one; the subjects they are expected to study may seem beyond their ability. They are in an alien world.

This unit, "You Belong," attempts to help smooth the transition for ninth graders by orienting them to the philosophy, spirituality, and heritage of the school, the beliefs we hold about their dignity, the community of learning, and the world wide Lasallian family to which they now belong. Finally, this unit invites these ninth graders into a faith community, with its rights and responsibilities.

The first day's lesson seeks to help these young people affirm their gifts and remember what sorts of behaviors nurture dignity and what sorts of actions destroy dignity. Then students will be oriented to the beliefs about the respect due each person in a Christian, Lasallian school, a school to which they now belong.

Day two's activities should awaken in students an appreciation of the privilege that education is and of the importance of collaborating with other learners. A Christian, Lasallian school should foster collaboration and form a community of learning. We are not islands sufficient unto ourselves. As ninth graders at your school, they now belong to a community of learning.

On the third day of the orientation, students learn about your particular school community and what belonging to your school means. So they will learn information about your school's founding, heritage, traditions, and mission. They will have a chance to discuss their expectations of belonging to your school and those of their parents. In addition, the Lasallian character of the school will be reviewed in preparation for Day Four when they will see that your school is actually part of a worldwide network of Christian, Lasallian schools.

Educational institutions sponsored by the De La Salle Christian Brothers are found all over the world. Students just like yours are being taught by lay teachers, Brothers, Sisters and priests who continue the mission of Christian education inspired by John Baptist de La Salle. Ninth graders in your school should know that they are part of, they belong to, a tradition and work that has been going on for over 300 years all over the globe.

Day Five reminds students that "belonging" comes with responsibilities. We want each student to feel welcome, to know that their dignity will be preserved and nurtured by the community of learners in your school with all its rich heritage, and to realize that they belong to a much larger enterprise than just their individual school. To fully belong, though, means that they need to commit themselves to respect each student's dignity, to help one another learn, to develop skills and attitudes of service to the whole human family. The closing ritual asks for such a commitment.

All the days' activities are designed to be active learning experiences. So know that you may need to encourage timid students to participate. The interaction has an additional benefit besides the learning that results: students who are strangers at the start may become acquainted by the end.

Prayers open and close each session. They were written presuming that you would lead them. However, if you feel that your students might be comfortable leading the prayers, by all means invite them to do so.

Remember and keep reminding the students: they belong now to your community--a community of learners, a community rooted in Christian values and a Lasallian tradition.

Teacher's Prayer before School -- written by St. John Baptist de La Salle, Patron Saint of All Teachers:

You, my God, are my strength, my patience, my light, and my counsel; it is you who open the minds and hearts of the students confided to my care. Abandon me not to myself for one moment. For my own conduct and for that of my students, grant me the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of prudence and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the faith in your constant presence, and zeal to procure your glory. Amen.

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools — Day One

You Belong to the Human Family

*Love the poor, for it is in them
that you will meet Jesus Christ.*

-- Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Objectives:

1. To remind the students of their essential dignity as human beings.
2. To reassure the students that they have a place, even in this time of transition in their lives.
3. To remind the students that they are created in God's image.
4. To examine what nurtures human dignity and what destroys it.
5. To highlight respect for persons as an essential characteristic of a Christian, Lasallian school.

Opening Prayer:

Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. [Pause for a moment]

God, you made us in your image and likeness; the Bible makes this clear. Even though we often doubt that we could possibly be made in your image, help us to believe it. The Bible also says that we are "God's work of art, created in Christ to live the good life" (Ephesians 2:4-10). So no matter how tall or short, wide or thin, smart or challenged, we are all God's work of art, all members of the human family, created in dignity and worthy of respect. God, help us feel that we belong here, we belong and have the dignity that you gave us. May we give others the same respect and dignity that we want others to give to us. Thank you, God, for making us in your image, works of your art. Amen.

Engagement Activity:

Instructional Purpose: So many young people find it easy to pass judgments on others based solely on the "externals." It is easy to quickly label people on what is seen externally. Students can be "destroyed" when they feel left out or excluded. Their self-worth is shattered and

their dignity can be deeply wounded. No one benefits from this. This exercise is to help students overcome the stereotypes—to look beyond the surface so that all realize that they are good, valuable and worthy of belonging.

Time: (40 min)

Materials: The student handout (1.1) for each of the students.
A 3x5 card for each of the students.

Procedure: As a student begins freshman year, the fear of feeling that one does not belong may be rather intense. The young man/woman may wonder, “Will I ever fit in? Will I ever belong?” The reality, however, is that they definitely do belong—whether they fully realize it or not. Just by beginning their freshman year they have already opened up a whole new world for themselves.

- Place on the board the incomplete sentence: “I am _____”
- Ask the students to complete the sentence using 20 different ways that they belong to various groups. These can be groups over which they have no choice (e.g., “I am an only child,” “I am a Freshman,” “I am Polish-American,” “I am in HR 307A.”) or these can be group they have chosen to be part of (e.g., “I am a Boy Scout,” “I am a cheerleader,” “I am a rap singer,” etc.).
- Ask the students to circle 3 to 5 of their answers that they consider to be the most important. Remind them that even in this time of transition, they DO belong, even if they feel that they don’t.
- Ask the students the following questions and briefly summarize the answers you receive. Don’t spend too much time on this.
 - How do you see yourself belonging here at school?
 - What groups do you belong to here at school? (Freshman, Religion 1.3., etc.)
 - What groups do you want to belong to? (Yearbook staff, Student Council, Volleyball, etc.)
- Ask the students the following questions and list the responses on the board.

Question: When you are with a group, what things make you feel good about yourself?

Possible Answers: People talk to you
People listen to you
People include you in decisions

Question: When you are with a group, what are things that can hurt your pride and fracture your sense of dignity?

Possible Answers: People don't look at you
People keep you at a distance
People make fun of you

- Pass out the Student Profile Handout (Handout 1.1). Explain to the students that the handout lists four imaginary freshmen who have had a schedule change in their science class. They have just entered your class section, and you have to pick one of them as your new lab partner. Which one would you choose as a partner? Why would you choose that person? Be prepared to discuss why you chose the person you did.

After working with the student profiles, ask the class:

- Why did/didn't you choose (Cindy, Ralph, Courtney, Randy) as a lab partner?
- What is it about each that attracts you or distances you from him/her?
- On what are your judgments based?
- Have you noticed other students making the same kinds of judgments? Explain.
- Why do you consider this kind of judging fair or unfair?
- How might you remedy the situation?

Using the chalkboard to organize responses, the teacher will lead a more general discussion:

- What helps to preserve a person's dignity?
- What destroys a person's dignity?

Lasallian Connection: (5-10 Minutes)

The teacher makes the following comments to the students:

- In a Lasallian school like ours, every person would belong and have a place.
- In a Lasallian school, we look beyond the surface, beyond the superficial.
- In a Lasallian school, everyone is included.
- In a Lasallian school, people know people as individuals.

The reasons for these convictions come from our history. (Relate the following points in a narrative fashion, pausing to ask students to paraphrase the direct quotes from the Founder given in italics below)

- **St. John Baptist de La Salle was a French priest who opened Christian Schools in Reims, France, over three hundred years ago.** De La Salle wanted to provide a Christian education for the children of the poor and the working class. He wanted to provide possibilities for children of parents who are so engaged in survival that they cannot rear and educate their children on their own. His work led him to organize a religious group of teachers who later became known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools. St. La Salle is the patron saint of all teachers.
- **De La Salle told his teachers that they should know their pupils individually—***“One of the essential qualities required of those who instruct others is that they must know their pupils and discern the manner in which to act towards them. Some require great mildness, while others need to be directed with firmness.”*
- **Students and teachers have the obligation to see below the surfaces:** *“Show much kindness and love to the students you teach. The more tenderness you show them, the more they will see God in you.”*

--“Watch students of lesser ability. You must see to it that you instruct as diligently as possible all of the students entrusted to you; that you neglect none and that you apply yourselves equally to all, even more to the more ignorant and more negligent.”

--“You must help students to be kind to one another, compassionate, mutually forgiving, just as God has forgiven them in Jesus Christ, and loving one another as Jesus loved.”

Closing Prayer:

Before the closing prayer, hand out one 3x5 card and one small envelope to each student. Then give the students the following instructions:

- Write your name on the front of the envelope.
- On the 3x5 card, write at least 2 affirmations of yourself: for example, “I affirm my sense of humor and that I can make people laugh without hurting anyone’s feelings.” /or/ “I affirm that I try to avoid conflict and do not argue over unimportant things.”
- Okay? Now write the two or more affirmations.
- Put them down while we offer the closing prayer.

Let us again remember that we are in the holy presence of God. (pause) God, we offer this prayer written by Lisa Alef of Bishop Foley High School in Michigan as our class prayer: “Jesus, give me the conviction to believe in myself, to love myself, and to give of myself. I have many good qualities, so help me not to envy the qualities of other people or friends. Instead, help me to admire and respect those qualities, as I respect my own. Jesus, give me the confidence I need to be the best I can be to myself and to others.”

(p. 15, *Dreams Alive: Prayers by Teenagers* Saint Mary’s Press, Winona, MN)

Now, silently, read the affirmations of your good qualities on the card and thank God for the qualities that you affirmed in yourself.

Amen.

Ask your students to seal the cards in the envelopes and pass them forward.

NB: The envelopes with the affirmations should be given back to the students at the end of this orientation week so that they may be used during Day Five ritual. Then, keep the envelopes until the end of the school year at which time you can give them back to the students and ask them to add new affirmations based on what they accomplished this first year of high school.

Your New Partner

Cindy

Cindy cautiously walks into the classroom. She doesn't seem to know where to place herself. Her head goes down as she moves to the last seat in the last row. She wears little make-up. She gives new meaning to the word "plain." She squeezes into the seat painfully. You see, Cindy is a bit "chunky" and her desk and her school uniform don't seem to be made for Cindy's "full-figure." Being short doesn't help the situation either. Every time she moves, which is an effort in itself, her nylons make this scratching sound. Because she is so self-conscious of her weight and of making a mistake in class, she speaks in a whisper and often stutters. However, her homework is always neat, complete and over-conscientiously done.

Ralph

Ralph struts "his stuff" into class confident as a peacock. He sports a "Buzz" cut, a gold chain, and a stud earring. As he works his way to the seat in the middle of the class, chewing his stick of "Cinnamint," and smelling of "Grey Flannel," he winks at the cute freshman girl sitting in front of him who can't keep her eyes off of him. Ralph smirks at the guys around him as he tugs at his shirt sleeve exposing his USMC tattoo.

Courtney

Courtney dashes into class one-and-a-half minutes late. By her looks, her family must have stock in mascara and lip-liner. Short, thin, and with that gelled look, she wiggles her way to the front seat in the front row, constantly smiling and twirling her hair with her index finger. Braces frame her flirtatious smile as she doesn't seem to have a clue as to where she has placed her homework. She bats her eyelashes at everyone in sight hoping eyelashes at everyone in sight hoping that her smile will get her out of any difficult situation.

Randy

Randy stumbles into class, shirt untucked, shoes scuffed, tie dangling from the loose knot, and matted hair that hasn't seen a comb since his grandmother's funeral. Randy is constantly sniffing, and doesn't appear to know the meaning of Kleenex or Mennen's Speed Stick. Clearasil would go out-of-business if it was up to Randy. During class you can see him constantly squirming in his seat looking into space and seldom knowing the page the class is on.

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools — Day Two

You Belong to a Learning Community

You have an obligation to win the hearts of people. Often reflect that if you fail to win their hearts, you will drive them from God rather than draw them to God.

-- Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Objectives:

1. To appreciate the value of being a learner and being schooled.
2. To examine what helps people learn and what prevents them from learning.
3. To understand how community is the best context for learning.
4. To understand how De La Salle created a community of teachers and learners to enhance the learning experience of his students and what he learned in the process.

Opening Prayer:

Let us remember that all of us live in the holy presence of God. (Pause)

God, you made us to live with other people. You give us relationships so that we can help one another. As we transition into high school, we have the privilege of belonging to a community of learners, and we are given the privilege of an invaluable education. For these gifts, we thank you. Since we belong to this community of learners, help us follow the advice of the Bible, which tells us to “be at peace among ourselves. . . . encourage those who are fearful, support those who need help, and be patient with people who are different. . . . Aim at what is best in each other” (see 1 Thessalonians 5:5-19). If we can act like this, then we will help each other learn and be the best that we can be. Amen.

Engagement Activity:

Instructional Purposes: This activity has a two-fold purpose. It tries first to give the students an experience of what life would be like if basic literacy was lacking, as it was for most young people in De La Salle’s time. Second, it introduces the concept of the learning community. It gives them the experience of how learning can be more successful when people work together to accomplish a common goal.

Time: 20 - 30 Minutes

Materials:

- The Student Handout (2.1) in 3 versions that mix questions in English, French and German. These are labeled 2.1 a, b, and c.
- The student handout in one version (2.1d) that is in a Greek script/font that will be unfamiliar to most students.
- The teacher's master copy of the handout in English (2.1e)

Procedures:

1. Duplicate copies of each handout 2.1 a-d sufficient for 1/4 of the class.
2. Pre-sort the handouts so that each student will have a random version of the handout different from that which most of his/her neighbors have.
3. Instruct the students that each religion teacher has been instructed to gather data for the diocese about each new freshman's background and interests. Tell them that they are to complete these forms carefully and completely during the next five minutes of class.
4. The students will doubtless experience some confusion and consternation at the foreign languages that are used. Allow them to experience this for a few minutes. Play dumb for a while, as if this could be no problem.
5. After a few minutes, tell the students they may work at this activity in groups of four or five. In each group there may be students who have the various questions in English. Allow the students to share the English translations of the questions with each other and to answer the questions.
6. If the group does not have all the questions in English, they may send out a scout to one of the other groups to check for what the untranslated questions mean.
7. When the activity is completed, gather the attention of the group and discuss the following points:
 - We take basic literacy for granted in our world. What would it be like to be unable to read or write in the language of our country? What other tasks would be difficult or impossible to fulfill?
 - In St. La Salle's day, most ordinary people were illiterate. He founded the Christian schools to attempt to give poor children the basics of literacy. What sorts of things did this innovation make possible in the lives of the children.
 - St. La Salle's schools were also different because they taught in the **vernacular**, the ordinary language of the times (French). The schools that existed for the upper classes taught in Latin. Help the students to see the difficulty of trying to learn another language besides their own before learning to read and write.
 - Ask the students what the differences were between working alone on the assignment and working with others. Make the point here that much of our best learning is done in a community where we can help and support each other. Tell the students that St. La Salle's schools helped to pioneer a **simultaneous method of education**. Students learned as a group, helped each other with certain lessons and the teacher with classroom

tasks. Modern educators are rediscovering many of these ideas in the cooperative learning and group work we do today.

Lasallian Connection:

Make the Following Points to the Students:

- The Situation in 17th Century France
 - Over three hundred years ago, in De La Salle's day, a large number of students could not read.
 - No school system existed for the poor and the working class.
 - No middle class really existed in that time.
 - The children of the poor and the working class were not valued
 - Illiteracy was one factor that could destroy the self worth and dignity of poor youth
 - As an example, the teacher may include in class oral or silent reading of the article excerpt "The Life of the Poor" (Handout 2.3) which may be duplicated for the students
- As a response to situations like this, De La Salle created the Christian schools with the following goals:
 - to provide a Christian education for the Children of the poor and working class, convinced that God wants all young people to know that they are loved and are of inestimable worth because of their creation in God's image.
 - to give a decent education in the fundamentals needed to make a living and, at the same time, to become a convinced, active believer.
- De La Salle also provided **collaborative schools**. Everybody had a job. Students helped each other in and outside of class. The reasons for this approach were:
 - to provide students with experiences of unselfish, disinterested love through the service of Christian adults who are caring and cooperative in their dealings with one another and willing to serve pupils unselfishly;
 - to provide structures that promote healthy student/teacher and student/student relationships that could help the young to discover their own worth and self-esteem and to live and work together in harmony. For example,
 - Students brought breakfast with them to school; this was a way of teaching them proper nutrition, manners, and the importance of sharing with those who hunger (a basket was passed so that those with extra could give food to those in want).
 - Students were encouraged to share their talents through **peer tutoring**, thereby discovering their own potential and the dignity of work.
 - student-student relationships were to be fraternal, with no distinction of persons.

Homework Assignment:

Instructional Purposes: Handout 2.2, “Not So Trivial Pursuit” is a homework assignment. It helps the freshman student to become more familiar with the history and traditions of his/her school and some information that may help him/her adjust to the school. It prepares students for the next class in this unit which will deal with their specific school community. It also reinforces the idea of the learning community by the way in which the assignment is given out and structured

Time: Five minutes of class time; five to ten minutes of homework

Materials:

- Student Handout 2.2
- A copy of the student handbook.

Procedures:

- Distribute a copy of handout 2.2 to the students. Remind them that answering these questions is their homework for the next class (You will probably have already instructed them about this at the beginning of the period).
- Give the students a chance to look at the questions.
- Explain to the students that the answers can be found in their student handbook or by asking adults or older students at the school.
- Ask the students to look back on their work with the “data form” activity earlier in this period. Invite them to consider if there is any way this assignment could be made easier if they used the lesson they learned from that activity and the theme of this class.
- Some students should conclude that this assignment might go easier if they shared the work and each brought the answer to one or two questions to the class the next day. Help them to this conclusion if they do not reach it on their own.
- Assign students to one or more questions (depending on the size of your class).
- Make a note of the student who has been asked to do each question.

Closing Prayer:

This prayer was written by Sarah Neppi, a high school student at Saint Edmond High School in Iowa. It reminds us of our need to help each other: “Dear God, help me to keep my dreams alive, my ideas burning bright. Help me not to give up, no matter how crushed. Help me to have faith in others and faith in you. Help me to work with others to accomplish my dreams, to make their dreams my dreams. Nothing is impossible, as long as I have faith and hope in God and my friends.” Amen.

(Dreams Alive, p. 22)

Diocesan Data Form for New High School Students

Directions: Answer each question in the space provided.

1. Write out your full name.
2. What is your date of birth?
3. How many brothers do you have?
4. How many sisters do you have?
5. What are your parents' first names?
6. What school did you attend last year?
7. What school do you attend for grade nine?
8. Who is your homeroom teacher?
9. What is your favorite subject?
10. What subject do you find most difficult?
11. What foreign language do you study, if any?
12. Do you bring or buy your lunch?
13. Do you want to join any sports teams this year? Which?
14. Do you want to join any clubs or activities this year? Which?
15. How do you get back and forth to school each day?

Diocesan Data Form for New High School Students

Directions: Answer each question in the space provided.

1. Ωριτε ουτ ψουρ φυλλ ναμε.
2. Ωηατ ισ ψουρ δατε οφ βιρτη?
3. Ηω μανψ βροττηερσ δο ψου ηαπε?
4. Ηω μανψ σιστερσ δο ψου ηαπε?
5. Ωηατ αρε ψουρ παρεντσΠ φιρστ ναμεσ?
6. Ωηατ σχηοολ διδ ψου αττενδ λαστ ψεαρ?
7. Ωηατ σχηοολ δο ψου αττενδ φορ γραδε νινε?
8. Ωηο ισ ψουρ ηομεροομ τεαχηερ?
9. Ωηατ ισ ψουρ φαποριτε συβφεχτ?
10. Ωηατ συβφεχτ δο ψου φινδ μοστ διφφιχυλτ?
11. Ωηατ φορειγν λανγυαγε δο ψου στυδψ, ιφ ανψ?
12. Δο ψου βρινγ ορ βυψ ψουρ λυνχη?
13. Δο ψου ωαντ το φοιν ανψ σπορτσ τεαμσ τηισ ψεαρ? Ωηιχη?
14. Δο ψου ωαντ το φοιν ανψ χλυβσ ορ αχιτιπιτιεσ τηισ ψεαρ? Ωηιχη?
15. Ηω δο ψου γετ βαχκ ανδ φορτη το σχηοολ εαχη δαψ?

Diocesan Data Form for New High School Students

Directions: Answer each question in the space provided.

1. Ecris ton nom en entier.
2. What is your date of birth?
3. Wieviel Brüder hast Du?
4. Combien de soeurs as-tu?
5. What are your parents' first names?
6. In welche Schule bist Du letztes Jahr gegangen?
7. Dans quelle école entres-tu en 9ème?
8. Who is your homeroom teacher?
9. Was ist Dein Lieblingsfach?
10. Quelle sujet trouves-tu le plus difficile?
11. What foreign language do you study, if any?
12. Bringst Du Dein Mittagessen von zu Hause mit oder kaufst Du es?
13. Voudrais-tu joindre cette année un activité sportive? Laquelle?
14. Do you want to join any clubs or activities this year? Which?
15. Wie gehst Du jeden Tag vor und zurück zur Schule?

Diocesan Data Form for New High School Students

Directions: Answer each question in the space provided.

1. Write out your full name.
2. Wann bist Du geboren?
3. Combien de frères as-tu?
4. How many sisters do you have?
5. Was sind die Vornamen Deiner Eltern?
6. Sans quelle école étais-tu l'année dernière?
7. What school do you attend for grade nine?
8. Wer ist Dein Hauptlehrer?
9. Quel est ton sujet favori?
10. What subject do you find most difficult?
11. Lernst Du eine Fremdsprache? Welche?
12. Emmènes-tu ton déjeuner ou l'achètes-tu?
13. Do you want to join any sports teams this year? Which?
14. Möchtest Du dieses Jahr Clubs oder Arbeitsgemeinschaften beitreten? Welchen?
15. Comment vas-tu à l'école chaque jour?

Diocesan Data Form for New High School Students

Directions: Answer each question in the space provided.

1. Schreibe Deinen vollen Namen.
2. Quelle est ta date de naissance?
3. How many brothers do you have?
4. Wieviele Schwestern hast Du?
5. Quels sont les prénoms de tes parents?
6. What school did you attend last year?
7. In welcher Schule bist Du in Deiner 9. Klasse?
8. Qui est ton professeur principal?
9. What is your favorite subject?
10. Welches Fach ist am schwierigsten?
11. Etudies-tu une langue étrangère et si ou, laquelle?
12. Do you bring or buy your lunch?
13. Möchtest Du dieses Jahr einem Sportsteam beitreten? Welchem?
14. Voudrais-tu rejoindre cette année un club ou des activités? Laquelle?
15. How do you get back and forth to school each day?

Not So Trivial Pursuit: The History and Traditions of our School

Directions: Answering each of the following questions will help you learn more about the history and background of our school. You may use your student handbook, the library, or other adults and fellow students around the school to help you find the answers to these questions.

1. In what year was this school founded?
2. What are the school colors?
3. What is the school motto? If it is in Latin, copy it and try to find out what it means in English.
4. What does the school seal (coat of arms) look like?
5. Who is the principal of this school?
6. How many assistant principals does the school have?
7. What is/are the name(s) of the assistant principal(s)?
8. Why does the school have this name? Who does the name honor?
9. When was the school established at this location?
10. Has the school ever been on another campus?
11. What religious orders of priests, brothers and sisters are or have been involved with this school besides the De La Salle Christian Brothers?
12. If the school is co-ed, has it always been so? If not, when were students of both sexes first admitted? If the school is single-sex, have students of the opposite sex ever been admitted?
13. Who is the president of the student council?

14. Are there De La Salle Christian Brothers at this school? If so, how many? If not, when did the Brothers cease to be present on the staff of this school?
15. Did the school put on a musical play last year? What was its name?
16. Does the school have a football team? If so, what was its record last year?
17. What was the last school sports team to win a league championship for the school?
18. When was the last time the uniform was changed at this school?
19. What are the words to the school alma mater (song)?
20. If this school is single-sex, does it have a sister school? If it once was single-sex, what was the sister school then?
21. What are some sports this school has which you did not have in grade school?
22. What are some activities this school has that you did not have in grade school?
23. What is the name of the school newspaper?
24. What is the name of the school yearbook?
25. What is the mascot of this school?
26. What is the name of your freshman guidance counselor?
27. What languages are taught in this school?
28. How many years of science are required at this school?
29. Who is the campus minister at this school?
30. Does this school have a priest chaplain? What is his name?

The Life of the Poor: The Seed of Revolution

While the aristocracy, the growing middle class, and many of the clergy in France lived well, the vast majority of the French had a hard, often desperately bitter life. Such poverty and injustice were the seeds of the coming French Revolution. One man's experience illustrates the hardships of the poor:

Jean-Roch Coignet grew up in rural France in the decades before the French Revolution. Later in life, he wrote his memoirs, a tragic story hardly unique for a peasant farmer's son.

Jean-Roch's father's first two wives died young. The third wife, who was only eighteen years old, beat and abused her stepson Jean-Roch so badly that at age eight he ran away from home. Because he was one of thirty-two children, his absence was hardly noticed.

A farmer hired Jean-Roch to guard sheep. Jean-Roch says in his memoirs, "I acted as dog to the shepherdess for the whole year." Like a dog, he slept wherever he could curl up and be protected from the elements. Later, he worked for two landowners who sold lumber, and he was paid next to nothing. "In winter I would flail the grain in the barn and sleep on the straw. I was covered with vermin and deep in misery." Jean-Roch lasted three years at that job. Finally, after he had grown enough to be unrecognizable, he decided to return to his village:

Anyway, the bells ring for Mass, and I go towards the church, my little handkerchief in my hand, for my heart was very heavy, but I hold myself in. I go to Mass. I kneel down, I say my little prayer and glance around a bit. Nobody paid any attention to me. Yet I hear a woman who says "There's a little boy who prays to God with a good heart." I was so well disguised that nobody recognized me. I don't say anything to anybody. The Mass is finished, I come out of the church. I had seen my father singing in the choir; he had no idea that he had one of his children near him, whom he had abandoned.

Jean-Roch, still unrecognized, took a servant's job with his stepsister. His mission was to find his younger brother and sister. Eventually, he discovered what had happened to them. In his memoirs, he recounts the actions of the abusive stepmother:

She takes out the poor little ones, takes them by the hand, in the evening as night was falling, and takes them into the forest, led them as deep into it as she can, and says, "I am coming back." But not at all. She leaves them to the mercy of God. . . . They remain three days in that deplorable state, living only on wild fruit and crying, and calling for help. Finally God sends them a savior [a local miller who rescues them]. . . . I couldn't keep the tears out of my eyes.

This horrifying incident, sounding like something out of *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, was not unusual in the life of the poor peasants in eighteenth-century France.

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools — Day Three

You Belong to a School Community

Jesus Christ is the one who enlightens everyone coming into the world. So he is the one who gives light to people and he leads them to love and practice the good you are showing by your example.

-- Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Objectives:

1. To acquaint students with the unique history and traditions of the school they attend.
2. To help them appreciate the development of the school community by contact with a person who shares membership in that community at a different stage.
3. To help students become aware of the school's religious heritage.
4. To seek parental input about their hopes and aspirations for their sons and daughters going to this school.
5. To look at the students' expectations of the school and their education.

Opening Prayer:

Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. (pause)

God our friend, we have been invited to belong to this high school. Help us to understand what that means, and help us learn about its history, traditions, and expectations. Let us be clear about our expectations, too. And, as Brian Chmiel, a high school student prayed, "Dear God, help my classmates and me do our best today. Let us never give up or quit. We know we may be tempted to do something wrong, but we promise to try to do what we think is right. Keep us safe during any activities that we may perform today. Help us settle any disagreements we have with friends. . . . Let us be fair in judging others, and let us enjoy life more today." Amen.

(p. 33, *Dreams Alive: Prayers by Teenagers* Saint Mary's Press, Winona, MN)

Engagement Activity:

Instructional Purposes: This day's lesson asks the students to move from considering what it means to be educated in general to some awareness of their particular high school. They consider three things about their school: what they want from it, the values and principles it is founded and maintained upon (what others have wanted for it), and something about its history and traditions. Throughout these activities, then, the focus is on **the school as a community of memory and hope**.

| | | |
|---------------|--|------------|
| Times: | Opening and Closing Prayers, Classroom Business | 5 minutes |
| | Review of Homework | 5 minutes |
| | Values Auction | 20 minutes |
| | Discussion of the School's Tradition and Lasallian Character | 15 minutes |

Materials: Student Handouts:

- 2.2 for homework review
- 3.1 (Values Auction)
- 3.2 (Parent Interview--for homework)

Markers
Newsprint
Masking Tape
School Publications (Handbook, old yearbooks or newspapers, archival material)

Procedures:

1. Homework Review:
 - Have the students take out Handout 2.2 on which they have answered their individual question(s).
 - Review the answers in rapid-fire fashion, correcting any inaccuracies students may present.
 - If homework is undone by some students, try at the end without embarrassing them to return to the issue of community learning. Stress that obligations as well as benefits come from working in community and that an entire group is disadvantaged when someone fails to fulfill his/her responsibility.
 - This activity may be recorded as a credit assignment if you wish.

2. The Values Auction (Distribute Handout 3.1)

- This activity is one students generally enjoy, but the directions are complicated and hard for some to understand. Review them carefully and verbatim with the students at the beginning of the lesson. Expand the directions with practical examples where this is needed to promote student understanding.
- After all questions have been answered, instruct the students to spend their \$1,000 on the left hand blanks of their handouts. Allow them to use their calculators if they have them at hand. Watch for those not following directions as you circulate and correct their mistakes.
- Once the students have finished, place them in groups of four or five. In these groups they are to compare their answers and arrive at a workable consensus for their group.
- Make the point that people who work and live together in communities all come in with their own different values and interests. Yet they have to arrive at a **consensus** (define the term) by which the whole group can function. That consensus-building is the students' task here.
- While the students are working, distribute a marker and a piece of newsprint to each student group. When they have arrived at their consensus statement, they are to write the values they selected and the amount they chose to spend on each on the newsprint and to post it along the front board.
- When each group's sheet is posted, ask the students to generalize:
 - What things are most important to this entire class?
 - What things are relatively unimportant to this class?
 - Why do you value what you do?
 - Did anyone have to give up something important to them so that the group could function?
 - What would this list look like if teachers or parents compiled it?
 - From what we learned of St. La Salle in the past two days, which statements would he be most likely to value?

3. The Broader School Community and its Lasallian Roots

- Use your school's Mission Statement as a jumping off point for a teacher-led but interactive reflection on the broader school community, its values and history. You will need to do some searching around for materials. At a minimum, you should be able to find the Mission Statement of the school and its philosophy. Hopefully you will also find some information about the school's history. This information may be made into transparencies or handouts for the students.
- Review such documents briefly, connecting it to the values auction. Ask the students which of the statements from the auction they see implied in the mission statement or the philosophy. Are any of the values on the handout contradictory to what the school is about?

- Talk briefly about the history of the school: its foundation, the tradition of the De La Salle Christian Brothers and other orders who are involved in the heritage of the school, some of its better known old scholars and the areas of their achievement.
- Stress how the school strives to fulfill its Lasallian mission, how it reaches out or has reached out to disadvantaged elements of society.
- Discuss the importance of visual and oral reminders of the values of the school. Draw examples from the school of images and practices that remind us of who we are. Examples would include:
 - The *Signum Fidei* (Star of Faith) in the Coat of Arms of the School. Explain to the students that the order uses this symbol to remind its members and students that St. La Salle emphasized **faith and zeal** (define the second term) as the spirit of the Brothers;
 - statues and pictures of St. La Salle, the saintly Brothers, and other religious figures;
 - pictures of early school leaders and patrons (Bishops, etc . . .) that may be around the school or in a hall of fame gallery. Where religious garb is unfamiliar to the students, explain the traditional habit that these former principals are wearing and the function it served;
 - the classroom prayers and the remembrance of the presence of God that begin most days and classes in the Lasallian tradition;
 - the name of the school and/or of its various buildings (e.g. “Benilde Hall” being named for the first canonized Brother).

4. Homework Assignment:

- Remind the students that they have homework for tomorrow, and that they need to bring home the values auction sheet to complete it.
- Distribute Handout 3.2 (Parent/Caregiver interview). Instruct the students to ask these questions of an adult they live with and to record their answers for the next class.
- Because of the scheduling demands families work with today, some may find it difficult to get their assignments back to you in the very next session. You may want to be flexible with these students if they come to you in advance with a good reason for their inability to complete the work.

Optional Activities:

If you wish to spend another day expanding upon the ideas represented in this lesson, you might do one or both of the following activities:

1. Yearbook Search:

- Bring in yearbooks from ten-year intervals going back to the class you are dealing with (i.e. if you are working with the class of 2004, get the yearbooks from 1994, 1984, 1974, 1964, etc.).
- Put the students in groups of four or five. Give each group a yearbook and ask them to imagine what it would have been like to be a freshman in those days at your school. They should be able to look at the yearbook in order to develop an oral report which includes topics like:
 - uniform, dress and hair code;
 - the faculty;
 - course of studies and classroom activities;
 - sports;
 - religious activities/spiritual life;
 - social life
- Contrast these arrangements with the way things are in school today. For example, the students might notice a greater number of religious on the faculty, students in suit coats and ties, the formality of dances, activities like a living rosary or the “Archconfraternity of the Divine Child” or the “Benilde Club.” You could use these discoveries as an opportunity to explain some changes in the Church and also draw their attention to certain constants in the experience of attending your school.
- Most students will take delight in finding pictures of present faculty members when they were much younger, teachers when they were students, etc. . . . You might point out several of these to them or even post enlargements of such pictures around the room to make visible the idea of “a community of memory.”

2. Guest Speaker/Panel Presentation:

- This activity would take an entire period to perform and some time in an earlier period to explain and prepare for (brainstorming questions).
- Invite a speaker or a panel of two or three speakers to your class. They should be people who have an involvement with the school that represents a substantial commitment and has evolved over a fairly long history. Some examples might be:
 - a retired Brother who attended and taught at the school;
 - a parent who serves on the board;
 - a senior faculty member;

- a local pastor with a substantial interest in the school who may have attended it as well;
- an alumnus who has gone on to achieve something remarkable in the community.
- If you choose to have several guests on a panel, one might be a very young alumnus or even a senior who has held a significant leadership role (i.e. student council, head of Lasallian youth, etc. . .).
- Ask these guests to reflect with the students on topics such as:
 - the way the school operated in their day (schedules, expectations, studies, etc.).
 - some traditions or other aspects of the school that have endured over the years;
 - the people who made the school a special place for them;
 - why they choose to remain involved with and committed to the school community today. What good does it seem to provide for the people who engage with it over the years?
- Ideally, these people will be able to tell a number of stories that are both entertaining and make the point about the evolution of the school community and its enduring value. The students should be encouraged to participate actively by asking the questions that they have prepared earlier or those that occur to them at this time.
- The last 10 minutes of the session might include an informal social with some snacks and drinks so that the students can speak informally with these alums or school supporters.
- **Note: These arrangements will need to be made long in advance of beginning the activities of this unit.**

Closing Prayer:

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We end this class today with a better sense of belonging to our school. With all the talents and gifts that each of us has may we make a good contribution to the school community so that in the future we will be remembered as people of respect and people who made a positive mark on the school's history. First, our God, help us, as the Bible says, be "united, heart and soul" (Acts 4:32). Amen.

Values Auction: The Good High School

Directions:

- Imagine that you are at an auction. You have \$1,000 to spend in order to purchase the qualities you would like to experience in the high school you attend.
- The smallest amount you can spend is \$50. You can spend money only in amounts divisible by 50 (\$50, \$100, \$150, \$200, etc . . .).
- Purchase those qualities of a school that are important to you.
- Spend an amount of money on each characteristic which indicates its importance to you. The more important something is to you, the more money you place on it. If something is of minor importance to you, you might spend \$50 or \$100 on it. Something that is very important to you might be worth several hundred dollars.
- You need not spend money on each item. If it is not important to you, leave the line before the statement blank.
- Write your individual amounts spent in the blank to the left before each statement. Make no marks in the second blank to the right at this time.
- Check your math to make sure you have spent \$1,000 in total when you are done.

A Good High School is

- _____ 1. A place where every person's uniqueness and individuality are valued.
- _____ 2. A school with a winning sports tradition.
- _____ 3. A school that prepares me to get into a good college.
- _____ 4. A place where the rules mean what they say and are enforced for everyone.
- _____ 5. A place where people from different backgrounds get together and get along.
- _____ 6. A place where the students' faith in God grows and knowledge of religion increases.

- _____ 7. A place where I have a lot of friends.
- _____ 8. A place where we are protected from some of the difficulties of life in public schools.
- _____ 9. A place where teachers are patient when we don't understand the work or make mistakes.
- _____ 10. A place where there isn't much work given out of school time.
- _____ 11. A place where most of the kids are people like me.
- _____ 12. A place with the best facilities for sports and the latest technology.

Interview with Parent/Caregiver

Directions: Make a few minutes to talk with your parent or another adult who has responsibility for your education. Ask them each of the following questions and record the response. **You will need to have your Values Auction handout with you to complete the assignment.**

1. For what reasons did you choose to send me to this high school? What hopes and dreams do you have for my future?

2. What role do you see this high school playing in helping me to achieve those goals?

3. Look at the values represented on this activity we completed in class today. If you were to pick the two that are most important to you and the one you care least about, what would they be?

Thank you for your help in completing this assignment!

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools — Day Four

You Belong to a Worldwide Lasallian Community

You are co-workers with God in God's sacred work, and the souls of people you meet are the field that God cultivates through your labors.

-- Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Objectives:

1. To show in a graphic way that they are part of a worldwide community of Christian Schools with a similar tradition.
2. To help them understand the diversity inherent in that.
3. To begin a process of connecting their experiences with those of other countries.
4. To introduce students to the concept of mission and its practical application in the Institute. The mission of Christ is being played out all over the world in Lasallian Schools.

Opening Prayer:

Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. (Pause)

God of life, Jesus told his followers to “go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). And they did. So now those of us here at our high school belong to a worldwide network of Christian schools where students like us learn values, skills, and the Good News. Help us to realize that we are not alone in what we are trying to become here at our school. Guide us in becoming good members of a world community. Amen.

Review Homework

- Have the students take out the homework handout with the interview of their parents.

- Ask those students who feel comfortable doing so to share some of the responses that they received from their parents. Summarize some of the points that were made by parents with questions such as the following:
 - What do you think about the responses that your parents gave? Were you surprised, impressed, confused, embarrassed, or was it pretty predictable?
 - What one thing surprised you in what they said?
 - Are your parents' expectations of a good school the same or different than your own expectations?
 - Are their expectations reasonable, based on what you've seen of this school so far?
- Make the point that the different responses that the students have heard in class represent only those of one class among many classes, in one school among many schools, in one country among many countries, within one section of many sections of the worldwide Lasallian community. Expectations in other parts of the world may be quite different from those of their parents or from their own expectations. But the hopes of parents world-wide for their children is similar to the call of the Gospel, a Gospel that is being lived out among millions of people all over the world. And just as that Gospel is being lived out in various parts of the world in various ways, so also do you now belong to a Lasallian community that is answering the hopes and expectations of parents around the world.
- Today we will be looking at what that worldwide community looks like and who those other students, teachers, and parents are who share in the educational heritage that you now belong to.

Engagement Activity

Instructional Purpose: This activity is designed to make the students familiar with the wide spectrum of educational institutions that are part of the Lasallian worldwide community. It is also designed to help students begin to see themselves as individuals who now belong to that community and who may make connections with others around the world who are similar to themselves.

Time: 30 - 40 minutes

Materials:

- The Lasallian World map or any world map that can be displayed in front of the classroom.
- The Student Handout (4.1) with the instructions for the activity and the empty charts that are to be filled in.

- The Team Handout (4.2) that contains web addresses of Lasallian schools throughout the world.
- The Supplementary Handout (4.3) for those students who wish to further the lesson as an optional homework assignment or to alter the class activity.

Procedures:

- Have the Lasallian World Map posted in the front of the classroom.
- The following directions assume that you have direct Internet access that you can use in class time. If this is not the case, these exercises can be given as out of class assignments to be done in study hall or at home where students' families are on line. Or, prepare for this lesson by getting yourself online and printing out all or part of the web sites listed in Handout 4.2. Use the printouts for this activity.
- Place the students in working groups of 4.
- Give each group one school's web address from among the ten provided. These web pages represent the international nature of the Institute. Where students have a **reading** knowledge of Spanish, you may wish to assign a school from Latin America or Spain from those links provided at the URL mentioned on Handout 4.3.
- The first task the students have is to read and discuss the web pages. Circulate and answer questions about customs (e.g. white robes), expressions (e.g. "blocks" for school buildings), or priorities (e.g. pictures of the "toilet blocks" at St. Joseph's) that the students may find confusing or amusing.
- Distribute **Handout 4.1**. Have the groups answer the questions together. Instruct the groups that they will be presenting their school to the class, but they should do it in a unique way. They are to pretend they are a group of exchange students from that school visiting your school:
 - Each student must contribute something to the presentation;
 - Stress that the presentations, while they can be entertaining, need to be respectful of other cultures.
 - Each group must be able to locate their home school on the world map. Invite someone up from each group while they are planning their presentations, because they may need some help with this task.
- Call the groups up for their brief (2-3 minute) presentations.

- If the students do not make these points in their presentations, highlight them:
 - The traditional Brothers school is like Christian Brothers Academy: all boys, with a Brother principal. Many other models have developed though, in recent years;
 - Size does not matter. Some schools have many thousands of students, while others, like San Miguel in Camden, may only have a handful of students;
 - Religious diversity exists. Note the emphasis on educating the Muslim students in Malaysia;
 - A school does not need to have Brothers on staff to be Lasallian. Note how the school in Malaysia is entirely run by lay people and all the Brothers are retired.
 - Emphasize the option for the poor where it exists in new ventures like Camden and existing schools;
 - Explain that most of the Brothers work is in secondary schools today. This is a change from the primary schools of the Founder's day. But the Brothers also work in higher education, in schools like Christ the Teacher. Note how a school like this provides teachers for a poor and less educated population, something St. La Salle himself sought to do when he founded the community of Brothers.
- Invite the students to look at the Lasallian World Map with you. Mention some of the other places in the world where Lasallian schools exist.

Lasallian Connection: As time permits, speak about the following points that connect this activity to the heritage of De La Salle:

- The word “mission” means “being sent.” When someone is being sent on a mission, it means that they are being sent to share a gift, or charism, that they have. Such a gift, or charism, is a talent or gift that is to be shared with others.
- Those involved in Lasallian education throughout the world have a mission of education; they are sent to share their gift as teachers, administrators, and staff among many schools in many situations around the world. It could mean teaching adults in Kenya, teaching Muslims in Malaysia, teaching high school freshmen in [your town/city], or teaching inner city grammar school kids in Chicago.
- This mission that people have is one that shares in the larger mission of the all Christians, which is the mission that Jesus gave to his disciples: the mission to preach the Gospel, the Good News of God's real love for us.
- Saint John Baptist de La Salle speaks about this mission when he calls those who teach others “ambassadors of Christ.” De La Salle speaks poetically about how God diffuses the fragrance of his knowledge throughout the world by means of human ministers. We might not use the same language today, but his point is well taken. God works most directly through those who are sent to speak about God within the world.
- You belong to this vast group of people who are sent by God into the rest of world. You have a mission too. Your mission is unique to you. No one else can do it. God is working

with you and through you to be present to people. There are some things that only you will be able to do. Are you willing and ready to take that mission seriously?

Closing Prayer:

In preparation for the closing prayer, distribute 3 x 5 cards or quarter or half sheets of paper. Tell the students that these will be used during the closing prayer.

Let us remember again that God is here with us. (Pause) Let's make this prayer by Elizabeth Mee of Saint Basil Academy in Philadelphia our own: "God, our world is in a desperate search for hope. We seek peace in the world and an end to cruel injustices. Show us how to be leaders in the struggle for a peaceful world. Help us to be able to truly say, 'Yes, I can make a difference'" (p. 41, *Dreams Alive: Prayers by Teenagers* Saint Mary's Press, Winona, MN)

May we remember that we are not alone in these prayers, but share them with high school students all over the world. On these cards/or/sheets write a prayer for the students in the school that your group studied today; ask God for blessings on these students all over the globe. (Pause, giving a few moments for the students to write.) Now, silently offer your prayer to God who listens with a generous heart. (Pause) God, we ask all of these prayers in Jesus' name. Amen.

NB: Tell the students to write their name at the top of their prayers and pass them in to you. Again, these may be used in the week's closing ritual.

Belonging to the World-Wide Lasallian Community

Directions: The members of your group are being directed to a web page or a part of a web page from one of the many Lasallian institutions around the world. As a group try to learn as much about the school as you can by reading the web page. **At a minimum you should note some of the following things:**

1. Who is the principal?
2. How big is the school?
3. What grades attend this school?
4. Is it single-sex or co-ed?
5. How old is the school?
6. Does it have a history of being at different locations?
7. Who does the school serve (What kinds of people tend to go there?)?
8. What does the local community around the school appear to be like (use pictures and text for evidence)?
9. How do you know from the web page that this is a Lasallian school?
10. List two things about the school that appear to be similar to your school.
11. List something about the school that appears to be different from your school.

Lasallian Web Pages

Here are some addresses for Lasallian web pages that are to be used with the instructions for Day Four of the “You Belong” Orientation Program.

- **La Salle Green Hills**
<http://www.lsg.edu.ph/lsg.html>
- **San Miguel School**
<http://www.delasallebrothers.org/smiguel/smsch.htm>
- **Christ the Teacher Institute
for Education**
<http://www.lasalle2.org/English/Apost/Lwan/chritea.html>
- **St. Joseph’s Boys’ Village**
<http://www.lasalle2.org/English/Apost/Lwan/stjoseph.html>
- **De La Salle College**
<http://www.delasalle.melb.catholic.edu.au>
- **St. Patricks Grammar School**
<http://www.stpatricksdowpatrick.org.uk>
- **Calvert Hall College High School**
<http://www.calverthall.com>
- **Driscoll Catholic High School**
<http://www.driscollcatholic.com>
- **St. Patrick’s School**
<http://socrates.moe.edu.sg/schools/stpat/>
- **Christian Brothers Academy**
<http://www.cbalincroftnj.org>

Finding Out More

You will need to have internet access to do this activity.

There are about 1200 Lasallian institutions around the world. Most of these are schools of one kind or another. This activity is a way that you can find out more about these other institutions, and how they are different or the same as your own school.

Procedure:

- Log on to the Internet and open your web browser.
- Within the web browser, go to the URL <http://www.delasalle.org>
- Spend a few minutes making yourself familiar with the site by clicking on the various icons or underlined words. You can go back to where you were by clicking the “Back” button on your browser.
- Once you are a little familiar with the site, do one or more of the following options:
 - A. Go to the page that has the names and addresses of Brothers throughout the world. Find one that you find interesting in a country outside of the United States. Compose a very short message in which you do the following:
 - State your name and school.
 - State that you are doing a homework assignment to make you familiar with other Lasallian schools around the world.
 - Ask the Brother to tell you a little bit about his school or the school system in his country. Tell him a little about your own school here.
 - Ask him to respond as soon as possible, since you need his response to finish your assignment.
 - Thank the Brother for his help.
 - If you’re interested, you could ask him to give your email address to a student in his school with whom you would like to communicate over the Internet. If this happens, you will be able to find out much more about that school and country.

B. Go to the page that has the list of Lasallian schools in the United States. Find three schools in different parts of the country. Examine their statistics and their web sites. Keep notes on what you find. Pay particular attention to the following:

- Number of students & teachers
- Ethnic diversity
- Kind of area where the school is located
- Programs that seem important based on the web site
- Things that make the school different from others

Write a paragraph or two about each school. If you use a computer to write these paragraphs, you could put one of the graphics from the web site on the same paper as your paragraphs. Try to include anything that will help someone appreciate what that particular place is like.

C. Go to the page that has the list of Lasallian schools as clickable links. Find three schools in different countries that look like they might also be very different from each other. Check out each school. Examine their statistics and their web sites. Keep notes on what you find. Pay particular attention to the following:

- Number of students & teachers
- Ethnic diversity
- Kind of area where the school is located
- Programs that seem important based on the web site
- Things that make the school different from others

Write a paragraph or two about each school. If you use a computer to write these paragraphs, you could put one of the graphics from the web site on the same paper as your paragraphs. Try to include anything that will help someone appreciate what that particular place is like.

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools — Day Five

You Are Invited to Belong to a Community of Faith

Help each other to be kind to one another, compassionate, mutually forgiving just as God has forgiven us in Jesus Christ, loving one another even as Jesus has loved us.

-- Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Objectives:

1. To present one's gifts and talents to the larger community
2. To make a commitment to develop those gifts during the next four years.
3. To receive a symbol from the school as a sign of the school's commitment to them.

Opening Prayer:

Our opening prayer is simple today: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Engagement Activity:

“Commitment Cross Exercise”

- You may use this introduction for the Commitment Cross Exercise: We've talked all week about belonging, and you belonging to (name of your school). You are welcome here. You really do belong to something big -- something good -- rich in history. But to belong to any community brings with it a set of responsibilities. We've talked about your dignity as a good member of this school. Now what do you see as the obligations that come with membership in this community? How will you be a contributing member of this group?
- Pass out the Commitment Cross handouts. **When you duplicate these, duplicate the same image on both sides of the paper.**
- Tell the students that they are to create a Commitment Cross dealing with their responsibilities as a member of this school community. See the Commitment Cross handout.

- Give them these directions:
 - In section 1, write out a sentence stating your commitment to your own dignity as a person: for example, “I will try to be honest.”
 - In section 2, write out a sentence stating your commitment to the learning community: for example, “I will try to not exclude anyone.”
 - In section 3, write out a sentence dealing with your commitment to this school community: for example, “I will try to respect my teachers and classmates.”
 - In section 4, write out a sentence dealing with your commitment to the world community: for example, “I will try to be like Jesus wherever I am.”
 - Give the students 5 to 10 minutes to do these steps.
 - Now turn the Commitment Cross sheet over. On this side you will see the exact duplicate of your Commitment Cross. On this side, you are to represent each commitment stated in a sentence on the other side with a symbol. So, for example, if you said in section 1, “I will try to be honest,” you might draw in section 1 on this side a set of eyes looking straight ahead. Or, if you said in section 2, “I will try to not exclude anyone,” you might draw two hands clasping in the space for section 2. Give the students 5 to 10 minutes to draw in the symbols.
 - These Commitment Crosses will be posted in the classroom around a picture of Saint John Baptist de La Salle as part of our commitment ritual.

NB: To add color to the Commitment Crosses, try duplicating them on paper of different colors.

Week’s Closing Ritual:

Setting -- Whether you have the closing ritual in your classroom or in chapel, create a prayerful space. Have candles lighted, a Bible opened, a picture of John Baptist de La Salle (and the founder of any other order who work in the school and/or the saint after whom the school is named) displayed in the front, some flowers arranged in a vase. Make sure there is room on the front wall for students to post their commitment crosses.

Materials:

- the envelopes containing the affirmations written on Day One
- a basket into which the students can place the envelopes
- masking tape or some other easily removed tape
- copies of the prayers written on Day Four for students around the globe
- a copy for each student of the “My Commitment” cross and one copy that all students will sign
- a pen with which the students will sign the commitment cross.

- some gift from the school to the students that symbolizes their belonging to the school and the worldwide network of Christian Lasallian schools: for example, a school decal or bumper sticker, a special pin with the name of the school.

Other preparations before the ritual:

- Make sure that you have invited the principal, president, student council president, and a well-known student leader to attend the ritual and to take the part of committing the school to the students
- You will need to give each student their affirmations envelope, the prayer written for the students at a foreign school, and a piece of tape with which they are to hang their Commitment Cross on the front wall.
- The basket for the affirmations should be positioned on a table at the front of the room; next to it should be one copy of the Commitment Cross that all students will sign and a pen with which the students will sign it; and the gift from the school should be placed here, too.
- Before the ritual begins, the groups from Day Four’s exercise should select one member of the group to read his or her prayer for the students in the Lasallian school that they reported on.

Closing Ritual: “You Belong” Orientation Week

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. (Pause.) God, you created us with dignity and goodness. We are your work of art. You want us to learn and grow to our full potential as human beings. You have given us a community of learning in which to do this best. Our school has a rich tradition to which we now belong. Thank you for our school. We also belong to a worldwide network of schools in which people like us learn the Good News and develop their gifts for the service of all the human family. Thank you for them. Finally, thank you for inviting us to belong to a community of faith.

Since belonging comes with responsibilities, we now commit ourselves to develop our own dignity and that of our community, to contribute our talents to our school, to develop our connections to the worldwide community, and to continue our quest for faith.

My Commitment

Leader: Belonging to the human family, the children of God, means that we develop and use our talents to the full, that we treat others and ourselves with respect and care. Do you commit yourself to these responsibilities?

All: As works of God's art, made in God's image, we assume the responsibilities of respecting one another and acting in ways that help each other grow to our full potential. We offer these affirmations of ourselves and commit ourselves to keep these affirmations alive.

(Pass the envelopes forward; one class member gathers them and puts them in the basket.)

Leader: Belonging to a worldwide network of Lasallian Christian schools reminds us that we are members of not only our family, our school, our country, but the whole human race. Do you assume responsibilities to the good of the human family all over the globe?

All: We commit ourselves to learning about people everywhere and about how we might be good members of the global community. In particular, we will keep in our minds and prayers the students at the schools we studied.

(One member of each group reads his or her prayer for the students from the school that they studied on Day Four.)

Leader: Belonging to the community of learners, especially belonging to this high school, brings responsibilities: to work hard at our studies, to be curious, to use our creative ability, to help our classmates learn and grow. We are also invited to help one another grow in faith. Do you accept these responsibilities that come with belonging to this school?

All: As the Bible and Saint John Baptist de La Salle said, we do commit ourselves to be of "one heart" and to "grow in faith." Knowing that we cannot learn and grow without help of other people, we commit ourselves to helping one another. As a pledge of these commitments, we give public witness by posting our commitment crosses and signing our class commitment.

(Each student hangs her or his Commitment Cross on the wall and signs the class commitment.)

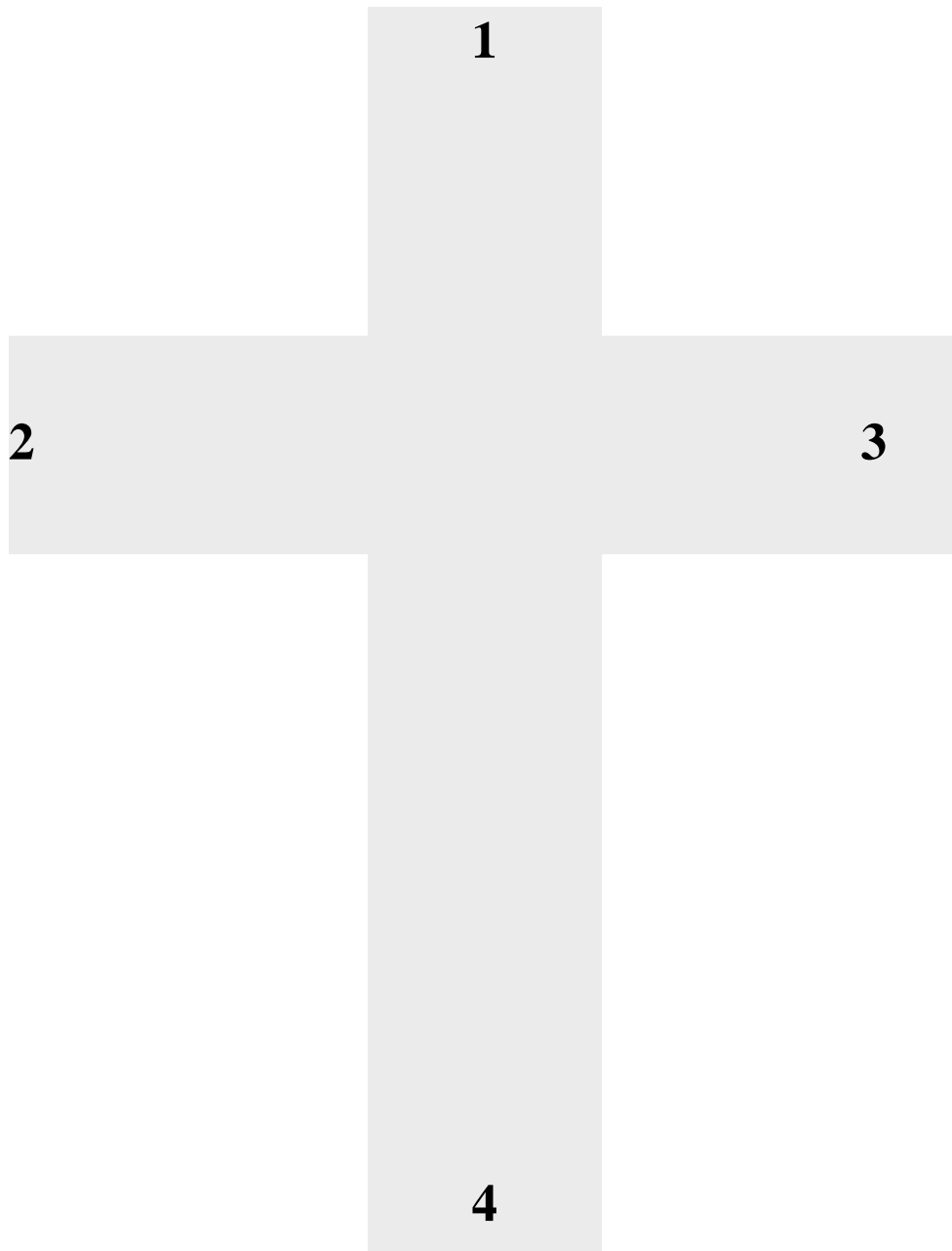
School Representative: Just as you have committed yourselves to this community of learners and to the welfare of each other, the school pledges to you that it will help you fulfill your commitments. We will strive to insure your dignity, to build an atmosphere of collaborative learning, to be a just and peaceful community, and to help you learn how to use your gifts for the good of the human family. Finally, we will help you understand the Good News and grow in your

faith. As a sign of your belonging to this community and as a pledge to you we offer each of you this token of our welcome.

(Distribute the token.)

Welcome! You do belong to this community, and we are glad for you and for our school. Amen.

Commitment Cross



YOUR DIGNITY

A Five-Day Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools - Sophomores

Objectives:

- To bring students to an appreciation of their dignity as God's creation.
- To help students realize the means by which they cultivate the dignity of themselves and others.
- To appreciate how family, the school community, and the larger society contribute or take away from the dignity of themselves and others.
- To see how politeness, decision-making, and the quality of relationships contribute to the development of dignity.

Components:

- Day One: Dignity – You Got It.
- Day Two: Dignity – It Matters.
- Day Three: Dignity – Find It.
- Day Four: Dignity – Affirm It.
- Day Five: Dignity – Share It.

Background:

At the beginning of the sophomore year, the novelty of a new school will have passed and the students are beginning to feel part of the school's educational community. Yet at the same time, they are beginning to struggle with a sense of where they "fit in" and the extent to which they are able to influence their own future and that of others.

This unit, "Your Dignity," addresses some of these issues directly from the perspective of the nature of their identity as human beings and children of God. At a time when they may feel pulled in many directions, this unit highlights the basic components of their own dignity and that of others. Through an appreciation of that dignity, the challenges and opportunities of their experiences may be seen in a new light.

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools — Day One

Dignity – You Got It

*The most excellent and important creatures
God brought into being are angels and human beings;
in fact it was for their sake that He created all the rest.*

-- Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Objectives:

1. To engage students in thinking about how they see themselves.
2. To help students have a clearer understanding about what dignity means.
3. To bring students to an appreciation of societal structures that advance human dignity.
4. To engender an interest in the ways that their schooling fosters student dignity.
5. To begin work toward a student commitment to building the dignity of self and others.

Opening Prayer:

Let us remember.... That we are in the holy presence of God.

Creator God, you created all living beings and created humankind in your image and likeness. Upon my birth you appointed me, you called me by name and you gave me the dignity of a child of the Creator. Sometimes I lose sight of this because I make a mistake or someone puts me down, but today I choose to affirm that no matter where my journey has been thus far, I have the dignity of the Creator-God. Amen.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle . . . Pray for us.

Live Jesus in our hearts . . . Forever.

Introduction to the Week:

We are part of a school community that stands in the midst of a long tradition of Catholic Christian education, a tradition that has a particular personality and a set of particular characteristics. Our specific heritage comes from the Brothers of the Christian Schools and their founder, Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the Church's patron of all teachers of youth.

One very important aspect of this tradition and this school is the dignity of all those who are part of the community—the community of this school, of this town/city, of this country, and of the world. This week we will be taking a closer look at this idea of human dignity. The perceptions that we have of ourselves give us some insight into our dignity and the dignity of others, but there are many other ways that we can become aware of our God-given dignity. By the end of the week, we should be able to see more clearly what kinds of things we are doing, and can do, to build up the dignity of ourselves and of others within our community.

Engagement Activity 1: Preference Profile

Instructional Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to engage the students in thinking about how they see themselves by comparing themselves to unrelated items or characteristics. It provides a relatively non-threatening way to address issues of perception and differences in individuals and the contributions of these perceptions and differences to the dignity of the person.

Time: Approximately 20 minutes (The time allotment can be longer or shorter depending on the time constraints and/or class response.)

Materials: Preference Profile for the teacher
Paper and pen or pencil for students

Note to the Teacher: You may use this activity as is or you may select some of the pairs. Additionally, you may create others that are more closely aligned with the life and experience of the students.

Procedure:

- Provide each student with a copy of the Preference Profile Handout (Handout 1.1)
- Ask students to choose one of the options in each pair that best describes him or her.
- Have them circle their choice and then write a short explanation of why he or she made the choice.
- After students have completed the preference profile, go through each pair on the profile and ask for a show of hands for each option. Then ask for volunteers to identify the reasons for the choices.
- Especially note differences between reasons for the same choice of option.

Processing:

Begin by asking these or similar questions to involve the students in the discussion:

- Would you agree or disagree with most of the choices made by the members of the class? Do you think that people selected fairly accurately based on your perceptions of them? Give some examples from the responses of people in the class.
- What do you think about the reasons that people gave for their choices? What kinds of differences or similarities did you see in the responses of your classmates?
- What conclusions can you draw based on these observations? What do people's reasons for their choices tell us about the way they perceive the kind of person they are?

Note to the Teacher: Hopefully, these questions will lead to the discovery of some of the concepts below. If so, the teacher may wish to just summarize these discoveries as a way to lay the foundation for the week. If not, the teacher should find a way, in these words or in his or her own words, to communicate the following concepts:

Most of us did not have much difficulty choosing between the options provided. That's because we all have ideas or perceptions about the kind of person that we are. We make judgments about ourselves and what we are like.

Also, when we look at the reasons that we made these choices, we discover that two people may choose the same option but for very different reasons. (Try to use specific examples from the exercise that support this).

The question we have to ask ourselves is "Why did I choose what I did and what does my reasoning say about how I perceive myself?" The way we see ourselves has a great deal to do with the kind of person we think we are. We seldom really think about this, but it is important that we begin to realize that those perceptions are there whether we are aware of them or not. These perceptions come from many different sources and we will explore them throughout this week.

Engagement Activity 2: Dignity Cluster

Instructional Purpose: The topic for this week is personal dignity, whether that of oneself or that of others. Prior to spending more time investigating and probing this dignity, one needs to have a better understanding of what it is and what is involved in dealing with it. This activity elicits word associations from the students and begins to form a working definition/understanding of what dignity is and what it entails.

Time: (10 min)

Materials: Blackboard or whiteboard.

Procedure:

- Draw a circle on the chalkboard or overhead and write in the word “Dignity.”
- Ask students: “When you think of the word “dignity” what ideas, words, or images come to mind? What ideas, words, or images do you associate with the notion “dignity?”
- Call on students. When they suggest a word, write it on the board, circle it, and draw a connecting line from their word to the central word, “dignity.” In some instances you may want to ask a student to explain or amplify why they suggested a word.
- When the students have run out of words or you have run out of time, read out loud each word or term that the students used. If possible, try to string them together to form a definition or description of “dignity.”
- Now offer a dictionary definition: dignity is “the quality or state of being worthy, honored, or esteemed.” Try to draw any parallels between the dictionary definition and their description.
- Then offer this explanation or comment in your own words:
 - What you understand about dignity is supported all throughout the Bible: in the Old Testament and in the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.
 - Can you think of any examples from the Bible in which Jesus tells people that they have dignity, that is that they are worthy, honored, or esteemed?
 - Here are some important passages: “Jesus said: ‘I do not call you servants . . . but I have called you friends. . . . You did not choose me but I chose you. . . Love one another.’” (John 15:16-17)
 - “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, and patience. Bear with one another. . . . Clothe yourselves with love. . . And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.” (Colossians 3:12-15)

- John Baptist de La Salle recognized that all students have dignity. He reinforced this in the way he told teachers to teach. Here is what he said about students and their dignity:
 - “Teacher should urge [students] to show others those signs of consideration, honor, and respect appropriate to members of Jesus Christ and living temples of God, enlivened by the Holy Spirit.”
 - “If all Christians make it a practice to display goodwill, esteem, and respect for others . . . they will sanctify all their actions. . . Thus they will live like true Christians.”
 - Remind the students that all of God’s creation has dignity – this includes all of them. The Gospel and de La Salle call each of us to treat one another as we would Jesus Christ.

Engagement Activity 3: Brainstorming

Instructional Purpose: With a working knowledge of what dignity means and how it might be shaped by the way in which a person view himself or herself, this activity now looks at the ways in which various social structures assume, engage, and build up the dignity of those within society.

Time: (10 min)

Materials: Blackboard and brains.

Procedure:

Investigate with the students the following question: What are some of the things around us that tell us that we have dignity?

- How do society’s laws support the dignity of people? Examples?
- Is the welfare system supporting or degrading the dignity of people?
- What are some family rituals, habits, or rules that tell us we have dignity?
- What are the kinds of things that friends do for one another that build dignity?
- How does this school effect the dignity of students, teachers, parents, and so on?

As students give answers, write them on the board. Probe a little bit with each answer to get an example of how that particular thing of area tells us that we have dignity.

If possible, answer this question as a class [write the answer on the board]: What are three specific ways in which we tell each other that we have dignity? (They could be seemingly insignificant things.)

Lasallian Connection: [If there is time, you may point out the following:]

Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the person who organized the Brothers more than 300 years ago in France, and the person who started schools like the one we are in right now, knew that the dignity of people was one of the most important things they had. The poor people of that time were often too involved in simply surviving to even think of their dignity, let alone know what it involved. As part of the education that De La Salle and the Brothers introduced, they included all sorts of ways of bringing students and parents to realize their dignity. For example:

- Each student was interviewed with his parents before being able to come to school, so that the teachers would be able to respect the uniqueness of that students and his family situation.
- The first book that students read after learning to read was a book on politeness and civil behavior, so that they could gradually feel comfortable in all sorts of social situations and know how to treat others with dignity (which would lead to themselves being treated with dignity).
- Students were expected to treat one another with respect and dignity. Classrooms were arranged so that all social distinctions were removed; everyone sat together according to their ability in class, not according to their rank in society; students were placed in charge of class responsibilities based on their character, not based on their possessions; teachers were never to receive any gifts from students, so that they would not have favorites or show preference to some students over others; and so on.
- Before a correction or punishment was given for some misbehavior, the teacher had to make sure that it was fair and wasn't given out of anger, and the student had to agree that he had misbehaved and that the punishment was deserved.
- If a student gave the wrong answer in class, teasing and laughing were not tolerated. Instead, the teacher had another student give the correct answer and would then return to the first student to have him answer a question very closely related to the first one, so that each student could achieve something positive and learn in the process.

Through school structures like these, it quickly became clear to both new students and parents that in *this* school, the dignity of the person was something real, something worth building up, and something that was part of what it meant to be a child of God.

Optional Activity: Lasallian Dignity Pledge

Time: (10 min.)

Materials: Individual copies of Handout 1.1

Procedure:

1. Pass out copies of Handout 1.2 and read over it in class. Students should know that the various statements are only suggested statements and could be edited or crossed out depending on their individual convictions.
2. Take a few minutes to fill in the blank portions of the Lasallian Dignity Pledge.
3. After not more than three minutes, ask the some students to share with the class any particulars that they have filled in and would be willing to share in public.
4. These pledges could now be signed and kept in an easily accessible place so that they might be referred to at some later date.
5. The pledges could also be made part of a liturgical celebration or class prayer service.

Closing Prayer:

Let us remember.... That we are in the holy presence of God.

Creator God, in Genesis you reveal that you created us in your image and likeness, in Isaiah you say that you have called us by name, in the Gospel of John you call us friends and tell us to bear fruit, and in Paul you tell us that each has a special calling. Help us to accept the dignity you have given us and to rejoice in the uniqueness to which you call us. Amen.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle . . . Pray for us.

Live Jesus in our hearts . . . Forever.

Preference Profile

Read the word pairs below and circle the word in each pair that best describes you.

Are you more...

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| <i>Tidy?</i> | <i>or</i> | <i>Messy?</i> |
| <i>Calm?</i> | <i>or</i> | <i>Excitable?</i> |
| <i>Funny?</i> | <i>or</i> | <i>Serious?</i> |
| <i>Unchanging?</i> | <i>or</i> | <i>Flexible?</i> |
| <i>Talkative?</i> | <i>or</i> | <i>Quiet?</i> |
| <i>A morning person?</i> | <i>or</i> | <i>A night owl?</i> |
| <i>Systematic?</i> | <i>or</i> | <i>Go with the flow</i> |

Which describes you better?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| <i>I think before I talk.</i> | <i>or</i> | <i>I talk before I think.</i> |
| <i>I like to do new things a lot.</i> | <i>or</i> | <i>I prefer to find something I like and stick with it.</i> |

Lasallian Dignity Promotion Pledge

Recognizing that I am created by God as a person of dignity, and that the dignity with which I am recognized depends on the dignity that I show to others, I make the following declarations:

- I declare myself to be a world citizen and a member of the educational community at _____.
- I commit myself to look for the best in other people and to avoid things that I sometimes do that belittle others, such as _____
- I commit myself to pay attention to my own dignity and to say or do something when others say or do things that belittle that dignity.
- I commit myself to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. The group for which I will take special responsibility this year are those who _____.
- I commit myself to actively promoting the dignity of others, especially those within this educational community.
- I commit myself to think about, to talk about, and to pray about the ways in which I hurt the dignity of others without realizing it.
- I commit myself to follow the example of Jesus and to treat others in the way that I would want to be treated.

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools – Day Two

Dignity – It Matters

Jesus Christ, having been appointed by God to be your judge, will say to you as the owner said to his manager, “Give me an account of your administration.” He will then look into the very depths of your heart to examine whether you have been faithful managers of the wealth he has entrusted to you and of the talents which he has given you to work in his service.

-- Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Objectives:

1. To define the personal vocation to the fullness of life with God
2. To explore personal qualities and gifts that lead to the fullness of life
3. To recognize the role of present choices in determining the future of the individual

Opening Prayer:

Let us remember.... That we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: God of my life, create in me the heart of one who seeks you. Do not let me become so accustomed to my daily tasks that I miss your voice calling me to grow in the way you want me to. Give me the courage to celebrate my own unique talents even when it is hard. Allow me to see your vision for me and to dream the dreams that will bring me to the fullness of the life you have for me. May I not be overwhelmed by the struggles and setbacks along the way. Grant me the courage to change, both inside and outside, and make me more aware of your presence in my life and the help you offer me along the way. Amen.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle ... Pray for us.
Live Jesus in our hearts Forever.

Engagement Activity 1: My Yearbook Page

Instructional Purpose: This activity is designed to identify individual qualities that contribute to the attainment of the human vocation. Additionally, it provides the student with an opportunity to examine others' perceptions of their personal qualities.

Time: 20-25 minutes

Materials: Yearbook page handout
Handout with list of qualities

Procedure:

1. Hand out the Yearbook page and the list of qualities to each student.
2. Give the following instructions:
 - You are going to create your own page in your senior yearbook.
 - Write what you would like to have said about you in your senior yearbook. Choose at least three of the qualities from the list. Then you may write whatever other things you would like about yourself.
 - Then, write in what you think your parents would say about you in your senior yearbook.
 - Write what you think your best friend would say. Include at least one of the qualities from the list. Then you may write other things you think he or she would say about you.
 - Write what you think your favorite teacher would say about you. Again, use at least one quality from the list and then add what other things you would like for him or her to write about you.
3. Divide students into pairs. Ask them to share their yearbook page with their partner. After they have shared what is on the yearbook page, ask them to discuss the following questions with their partner:
 - Are these comments a good reflection of this person? Do they give a good picture of what this person is like or seems to be working toward?
 - What is this person doing right now that would make these comments a realistic picture or who he or she will be as a senior?
 - What could this person do that would make these comments a better reflection of who he or she will be as a senior?
4. Following the partner discussions, ask the students to volunteer to share some of the observations that they made about themselves and/or their partner.
 - Focus the discussion toward the understanding that the things we do now are important for the future as well.
 - Establish that we can change our behaviors and our attitudes in order to make it more possible to be the kind of person we want to be.
 - God has given us the free will and the ability to make these changes and to reach the fullness of life that God wants for all people.

- God does not leave us alone in this effort. God is with us and guides us
 - through prayer
 - through the people in our lives
 - through the things we read, watch, and listen to

Lasallian Connection

For the Teacher:

St. John Baptist de La Salle was very concerned that his students and his brothers be treated with dignity and respect. Many of the students who came to study had few opportunities to realize that they were unique creatures endowed with qualities that draw them ever closer to fullness of life with God. As a result, de La Salle spent a great deal of time instructing his Brothers in how to realize their own dignity and the dignity of their students.

Directions for Students:

For each of the quotations that I read aloud, write in your journal, a few words or phrases from your own experience that reflect the contemporary application of the words of de La Salle.

Note: You may use any or all of the following quotations from de La Salle or you may substitute others from his works that might fit the particular classroom situation.

- “You encounter so many obstacles to salvation in this life that it is impossible to avoid them if you are left to yourselves and your own guidance.” (*Meditations for the Time of Retreat, 197.3*)
- “You are never allowed to amuse yourself at the expense of others. The respect you should have for your neighbor requires that you never take pleasure in anything that might cause pain to anybody.” (*The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility, 5*)
- “It is surprising that most Christians look upon decorum and politeness as merely human and worldly qualities and do not think of raising their minds to any higher views by considering them as virtues that have reference to God, to their neighbor, and to themselves. (*The Rules of Decorum and Civility, Preface*)
- “Be satisfied with what you can do, since God is satisfied. . . be convinced that with divine help you can do more than you imagine.” (*Collection*)
- “Are you led by your natural inclination rather than by the Spirit of God. . . ? (*St. John Baptist de La Salle*)

- “Consider how important it is to use time well. To do so, you must live in an ordered manner.” (*Collection, 150*)
- “There is nothing we should more insistently impress on our students than the necessity of forming friendships only with such of their companions as are good.” (*Meditations for Sundays and Feasts, 126.1*)

Homework Assignment:

Instructional Purpose: This activity serves as the basis of the class activity for Day 3. It provides the opportunity for students to become aware of affirming and destructive influences in their daily encounters.

Directions:

- As you go through the rest of your day and evening, listen for and observe comments or statements made by yourself and others.
- Record at least five comments or statements that affirm the dignity of another and at least five comments or statements that destroy the dignity of another.

Closing Prayer:

- Provide each student with a copy of Handout 2.3.
- Ask for a student to be the leader to open the prayer service.
- Divide the class into two groups for the intercessions.

My Yearbook Page

My Thoughts

**F
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S**

**What My Best Friend
Says**

**WHAT MY
FAVORITE
TEACHER SAYS**

Personal Qualities

Below you will find some suggested qualities that you will use to decide what to write on your senior yearbook page. You may add to this list if you choose.

| | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| quiet | kind | outgoing |
| good student | hardworking | leads by example |
| aggressive | independent | gentle |
| compassionate | athletic | willing to take a stand |
| opinionated | assertive | self-reliant |
| sympathetic | tender | sensitive to others |
| understanding | warm | ambitious |
| organized | creative | cooperative |
| encouraging | accepting | confident |
| works alone | shy | impulsive |
| persuasive | thoughtful | easy to get along with |
| trusting | honest | trustworthy |
| concerned | radical | prayerful |
| dependable | loyal | spiritual |

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us again remember that we are in the holy presence of God. Let us pray to God who supports and nourishes us along the path of life and be thankful for the signs of care and loving providence that we find as we journey toward the fullness of life.

All: God of hope, accompany us along the way.

Intercessions:

A: In the uncertainty that we experience in our lives as we learn to follow you. . .

All: God of hope, accompany us along the way

B: In the wonder and insight that dawns on us as we seek to follow you. . .

All: God of hope, accompany us along the way.

A. In the pain and restlessness that we experience as we follow you. . .

All: God of hope, accompany us along the way.

B. When we grow tired and weary and we want to stop. . .

All: God of hope, accompany us along the way.

A: When we grow in wisdom and knowledge of what to do and what not to do. . .

All: God of hope, accompany us along the way.

B: When we are aware of your presence in our lives and your will for us. . .

All: God of hope, accompany us along the way.

Concluding Prayer: God of hope,
sometimes we are unsure
but we strive to learn.
Help us to remember that you are with us
and to rest secure in your presence.
Help us to see the signs of hope in our lives
and to respond to new invitations to move ever
closer to the fullness of life with you.
Amen

St. John Baptist de La Salle, pray for us. Live, Jesus, in our hearts forever!

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools – Day Three

Dignity – Find It

Most Christians regard decorum and civility only as human qualities, and do not realize that these virtues can relate us to God, to our neighbor, and to ourselves.

-- Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Objectives:

1. To help students understand the forces in their lives that empower them and support their dignity and the forces that eat away at their dignity.
2. To encourage them to name people who help form their character in positive ways: especially family members and friends.
3. To offer students a chance to model statements that recognize the dignity of others and statements that tear down others and then talk about their feelings about the experience.
4. To pray and reflect about how their sense of their own dignity has been influenced both by denigrating forces and empowering forces.

Opening Prayer: (offered either by the teacher or a student)

Let us remember.... That we are in the holy presence of God.

God our creator. You did not make garbage. You created us in dignity. We are your image and likeness. Other places in scripture call us temples “of God with the Spirit of God living in us . . . God’s holy temple” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17) or “God’s work of art, created in Christ Jesus for the good works which God has already planned to make up our way of life” (Ephesians 2:10). We don’t always believe that we have dignity, that we are God’s temple, or God’s work of art. As we think about the dignity that we have, help us, God, be convinced that we really are made in your image and likeness. Amen.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle . . . Pray for us.

Live Jesus in our hearts . . . Forever.

Engagement Activity: Circles of Power and Destruction

Materials: Handout 3.1A: Circles of Power
Handout 3.1B: Forces of Destruction
(Photocopy these back-to-back on one sheet of paper)

Procedure:

1. Open by explaining the purpose of today's class and this first activity; you may want to say something like this:

This week we are talking about your dignity as a human being. The first day we discussed why you have dignity and what it means. Yesterday we talked about why having a sense of our own dignity matters. Today's topic is finding our dignity. In other words, we want to identify people and other forces in our culture that support our dignity and, on the flip side, people and forces in our culture that tear down or eat away at our dignity as human beings, as people made in God's image. This first activity is called Circles of Power and Forces of Destruction. (Hand out a copy of Handouts 3.1A and 3.1B now)

2. Read the instructions on each side of the handout. Ask the students if they have any questions. Clarify any issues, and then give the students about 10 to 15 minutes to fill out the worksheet.
3. [Option 1] Divide the class into triads. Tell the students to compare notes on both forces of power and forces of destruction. Instruct them that one student should record any forces that at least two of them had in common.
4. [Option 2] Complete step 5 as a whole class.
5. Ask the students to name forces of empowerment. Write these on the chalkboard or overhead. Then, do the same with the forces of destruction. Ask the students if any forces of power or destruction are missing; if so, ask them to name additional items.
6. Pick three or four (depending on time) forces from each list and ask the students why they named these and how each item is either empowering or destructive.
7. You might then ask: Can you think of any stories in the news or happenings around school that demonstrate these forces of power or forces of destruction? (Here are some examples of what you might be looking for: for power – "The awards program for the debate team going to state was empowering to them"; for destruction – "ever time I walk by this certain table in the cafeteria, these guys are bad-mouthing one of the coaches or some students.")
8. Conclude this part of the activity by making these comments and/or asking these questions: Let's face it, every day people and other elements in our culture affirm and destroy our dignity. It's important to be conscious of what builds us up and what tears us down; otherwise it's easy to let the negative get the best of us. We are sort of conditioned to listen to the negative stuff. We have to learn to listen to the positive stuff, too, and basically what we need to listen to most is the positive. I'm not saying that we can't use comments that suggest

ways to improve. But, that's positive stuff if it's done in the right spirit. How many of you included friends on your circles of power? Why are friends especially helpful in affirming our dignity? (Encourage students to discuss this.)

9. Conclude this part of the class, with this or some comment like it: We build up or tear down each other. We do have a choice whether to accept or reject these influences. Hopefully, we learn to accept affirmation. The most common way we find affirmation or get torn apart is through what people say about or to us. This next exercise explores words that build up or tear down.

Engagement Activity 2: Role Playing

Materials: A skeleton from biology lab or a CPR dummy or some other dummy or skeleton that can be set up in a chair.

Procedure:

1. For homework last night, students were instructed to bring in a list of five affirming comments that they heard people make and five destructive comments. The students should bring these out now for use in the exercise.
2. If your classroom is not already arranged this way, have the class form their desks in a circle or semi-circle around an open chair.
3. In the open chair sit the skeleton or dummy (if you can dress the skeleton in a baseball cap and some other items of clothing that suggests a sophomore, do so; the students will like it.) Introduce the students to Sadie Skeleton or Marvin Manikin.
4. Divide the class into two groups. Group 1 will give Sadie or Marvin only affirmations from the list of affirmations the students wrote for homework. Group 2 will tell Sadie or Marvin the destructive things that the students overheard and put on their lists.
5. Call on someone from Group 1 to read an affirmation, then someone from Group 2 for a destructive comment. Continue until each student has had a chance to read one comment.
6. Process the experience with these or similar questions:
 - Group 1: How did it feel to say affirming things to our friend here?
 - Group 2: What was it like to say the destructive things?
 - If you were in the empty chair instead of our friend, how would you have felt?
 - Which comments would have had the strongest impact? Why so? (Explore with the students the fact that most of us tend to pay closer attention to negative comments. Ask them why this is so? What makes it hard to hear good things? Why should we pay even more attention to them?)
 - If Jesus walked into the room right now, which set of comments would he want us to listen to most?

Lasallian Connection:

To wrap up this lesson on empowering each other, you might offer these comments or ones like them:

Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the patron of teachers, one of the founders of modern education, and the founder of the De La Salle Christian Brothers made it clear that in the Lasallian school the students and the teachers should affirm the dignity of everyone and definitely not destroy the dignity of anyone. He wrote an entire book about how students should treat one another. Three hundred years later, it still makes sense. Here is some of what he said about affirming and not destroying:

“If you do not wish to say anything good about [others], you should say nothing.”

“If you have heard something unfavorable about your neighbor, . . . let the story be buried in your own heart.”

“It is . . . a great fault against charity . . . to remind someone of events in which he did not do very well, or to say things which can disturb or embarrass the person you are speaking to.”

“Speak only of people you know and only if you have something good to say of them. There is no one, however bad, that you cannot say something good about.”

“Compliments should be offered in a natural and easy manner.”

What we say counts. What other people say about us counts too. If we want to find affirming power, we need to give it, too.

Homework Assignment: Give each student a copy of Handout 4.1. Ask students to complete the chart tonight and to bring the completed chart to class tomorrow.

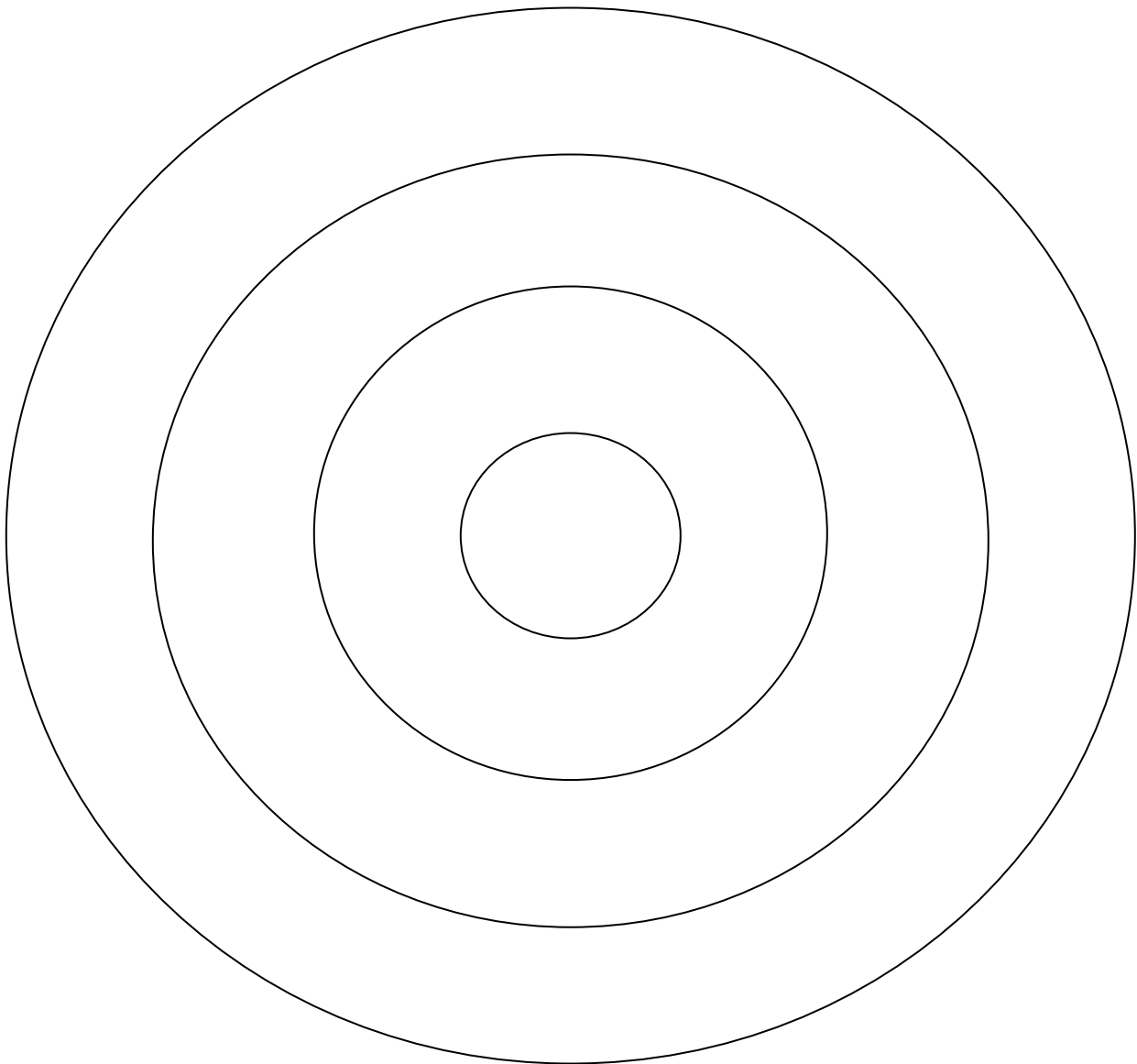
Closing Prayer:

- This closing prayer is called “Palms Down, Palms Up.” Tell the students that this prayer can help them let go of destructive forces and ask God for graces to find the affirmations they need to grow.
- Tell the students to sit up straight with both feet planted on the floor and with their backs and head alert, but relaxed. Tell them to rest their hands on their lap with the palms of their hands facing down. Invite them to close their eyes and then take some deep breaths. Repeat that they should breath deeply and slowly, just relaxing for a few moments.
- Then say, “Placing your hands palms down indicates your desire to turn over anything that has hurt your dignity, any worry, or fear to God. Let anything that people have said that has hurt you or caused some anger come to mind; then hand each hurtful comment or worry over to God in a prayer, such as “Dear God, I give you this destructive thing which they said . . . “ Whatever is weighing your spirit down, release it, with your palms down, as if you were dropping it into God’s hand. Let God take it.
- “When you have handed over each destructive comment to God, turn your hands palm up as a sign of your desire to receive from God. Ask God for the graces you need right now to hear and accept affirmations of your dignity. Listen to God affirm your dignity as God’s daughter or son, made in God’s image and likeness.”
- End with this prayer: “God, we are your works of art, temples of your spirit. Help us find our dignity as your daughters and sons. Amen.”

Circles of Power

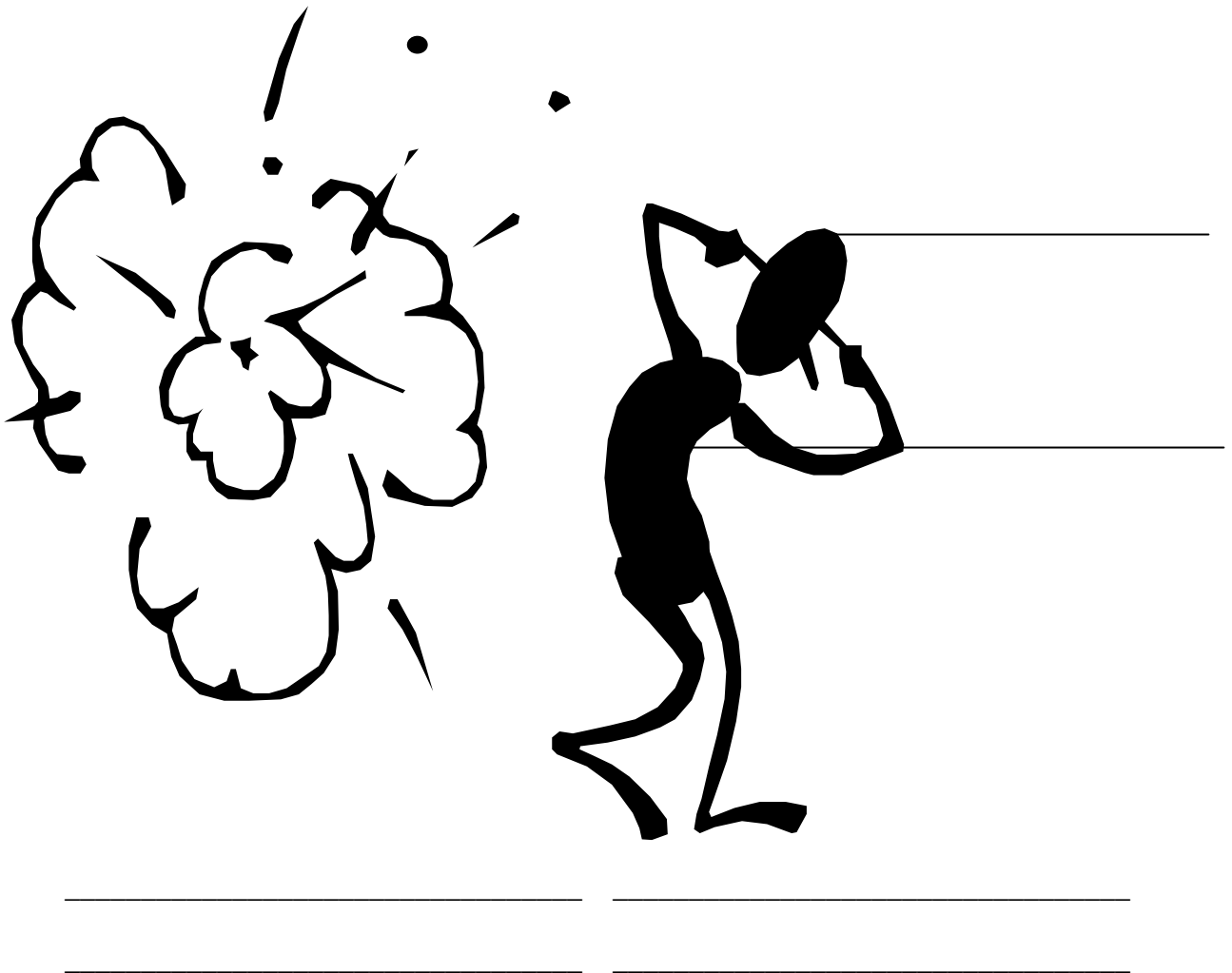
Many people support and affirm our dignity as persons: by praising our accomplishments or just greeting us or giving us helpful feedback. Other elements in society support our dignity too. Each circle below represents one circle of power.

In the innermost circle write the name of a person who is most important as a source of support for your dignity as a person: the most affirming person in your life. Moving out from the center, continue filling in the other circles with important sources of power and affirmation of your dignity.



Forces of Destruction

The figure below represents you (us) being torn apart by destructive people and/or forces in our culture. Just as there are people and cultural forces that affirm our dignity, there are people and forces that try to destroy our dignity. On top of the lines connected to the head and the heart, name the two person(s) or force(s) that most seem to destroy your sense of dignity. Then label the other forces or people that tend to pull you (and most of us) apart or rob us of our dignity.



Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools — Day Four

Dignity – Affirm It

Everything in you should denote a certain air of nobility and greatness, a reflection of the power and majesty of God whom you serve and who gave you being.

-- Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Objectives:

1. To show by experience how they affirm their dignity
2. To contrast the last class experience with their daily experience.
3. To realize that affirmation of self dignity frees us to affirm others
4. To understand that a code of politeness allows us to affirm another's dignity.

Opening Prayer:

Let us remember.... That we are in the holy presence of God.

Creator God you have chosen me this day to affirm your presence in me and all with whom I shall be in contact. Sometimes I may fail but with your help I will be a witness of the great love you have for each person. Amen.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle . . . Pray for us.

Live Jesus in our hearts . . . Forever.

Engagement Activity: My Day/My Dignity

Instructional Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to allow students to see beyond the obvious to how what we seem to be doing is a source of affirmation of our own dignity.

Time: 15 to 35 minutes, depending on class, teacher interest and discussion time.

Materials: Handout 4.1 — given as homework last evening
Handout 5.1 — one copy for each person in class

Procedure:

1. As we go through a normal school day from waking until sleeping there is a lot of subtle affirming of who we are and who others are for us. For example, I am here before you reasonably well groomed, punctual and prepared. In doing so, I affirm my dignity as teacher and your dignity as student. What you see now started at a point in time and each point in time my actions affirm this sense of dignity.
2. Have students take out Handout 4.1 given for homework.
3. Process: Break class into five groups with each group comparing a part of their day:
 - Group One: Waking to leaving for school
 - Group Two: Arrival to first class
 - Group Three: First class to Lunch
 - Group Four: After lunch to supper
 - Group Five: After supper to retiring.
4. Each group reports back on the affirmation of dignity they saw in the actions/events of the day.
5. Summarize: In all you do you are by your very being affirming the dignity you have from God and the dignity you owe to others.
6. Courtesy/politeness is a way of acknowledging the dignity we have. St. La Salle wrote a book: Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility. **Your homework tonight** is to rewrite these rules in modern language. (Handout 5.1)

Closing Prayer:

Let us remember.... That we are in the holy presence of God.

Thank you for my body and mind, which help me perform my tasks in life. I ask that you sharpen my senses so that I can feel the pain of others, the pain I have become numb to because of today's society. I ask for the power to resist pride that is undeserved. Let me accept responsibility and independence fully. Please give me the wisdom to accept help from others when I need it. Thank you God for everything. Amen.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle . . . Pray for us.

Live Jesus in our hearts . . . Forever.

My Day / My Dignity Chart

Instructions: On the chart below indicate the time you begin a particular segment of a normal school day use this day going through tomorrow. Behind the visible and obvious action there is an affirmation of your dignity and, perhaps, that of another. Can you find it?

| <i>TIME PERIOD</i> | <i>MY DAY CHART OBSERVABLE ACTIVITY</i> | <i>AFFIRMING</i> |
|---------------------------|---|------------------|
| <i>I</i> | | |
| <i>Waking</i> | _____ | _____ |
| <i>Leaving for school</i> | _____ | _____ |
| <i>II</i> | | |
| <i>Arrival at school</i> | _____ | _____ |
| <i>First class</i> | _____ | _____ |
| <i>III</i> | | |
| <i>First class</i> | _____ | _____ |
| <i>Lunch</i> | _____ | _____ |
| <i>IV</i> | | |
| <i>After Lunch</i> | _____ | _____ |
| <i>Supper</i> | _____ | _____ |
| <i>V</i> | | |
| <i>After Supper</i> | _____ | _____ |
| <i>Retiring</i> | _____ | _____ |

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools – Day Five

Dignity – Share It

Show others those signs of consideration, honor, and respect appropriate to members of Jesus Christ and living temples of God, enlivened by the Holy Spirit.

-- Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Objectives:

1. To understand the deeper motives behind courtesy and politeness.
2. To delineate ways in which one affirms the inherent dignity of self and others.
3. To generate specific principles and behaviors that sustain true dignity.
4. To begin to see the value of personal integrity and the means to build it.
5. To make a commitment towards encouraging the dignity of all people.

Opening Prayer:

Let us remember.... That we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: An old Jewish rabbi named Zusha was the master of a group of disciples. One day he became ill, and within a week he was on his deathbed. His disciples gathered around him to pray the Psalms to comfort him in his dying moments.

As the end drew near, the disciples heard Zusha utter his last words: “In the next world, they will not ask of me, ‘Why were you not *Moses*?’ They will ask of me, ‘Why were you no *Zusha*?’”

[Pause]

One way we have of evading who we are as human beings and as unique children of God is to try to be someone else; to try to be Moses instead of just Zusha. Take a moment to think of something that you do that allows you to hide yourself, to cover up the gift of yourself to others. [Pause]

Reader: Creative God, you made me one of a kind. Maybe I don't understand the reasons behind being the way I am, but help me to accept, to appreciate, and to love myself. I don't want to show up on Judgment Day only to have you ask, "Why were you no [your name]?" Help me embrace myself, help me develop the me that you have made me to be, and help me learn to love myself fully as me and not someone else. After all, you only expect me to be me. May I be satisfied with that. You are.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle: Pray for us.

Live Jesus in our hearts: Forever.

Engagement Activity: Short Student Skits

Instructional Purpose: The rules of politeness and civility that students apply in their everyday lives reflect the attitudes that they have towards the dignity of others and demonstrate their own dignity as persons capable of treating others in a certain way. In this exercise, the students look at their own behavior and that of others as reflecting the dignity of everyone.

Time: 25 minutes

Materials: The students' homework from last evening (Handout 5.1).

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity by briefly reviewing the relationship between personal dignity and the social behaviors that support that dignity, especially in terms of politeness and civility. Say something like: The things that we do to one another, and the ways that we behave around one another, have a real effect on how people see themselves. I'm sure that you can think of a time when others said or did something that made you feel less about yourself, or times when you know that what you said or did belittled another. Sometimes it's something small and insignificant, while other times it's something rather major and important. In each case, we are building up or tearing down the dignity of others. . . and ourselves.
2. Read several examples of St. John Baptist de La Salle's rules for politeness and explain their context in 17th century France. [See below: Lasallian Connection.]
3. After each example, solicit modern interpretations of that same rule from the homework of the students in the class.

4. Choose several of De La Salle's rules to use as the basis for a student skit. You should choose these before class but also be willing to change your choices based on the conversations you have in class at this point.
5. Divide the class into groups of four or five.
6. Assign a politeness rule to each group.
7. Have the students develop a very short skit that would illustrate impolite behavior and polite behavior regarding the modern version of that politeness rule or principle. Tell them that they have four minutes to prepare the skit.
8. After three minutes, tell the groups that they have one minute left.
9. Have the groups present the short skits, making sure that students understand the point behind each rule. Do this by asking them the following after each skit:
 - What principle of politeness is at work here in this situation?
 - How is a person's dignity being preserved or enhanced by this?
10. At the end of the skits, if time remains, have some of the students read out their "modern" versions of the politeness rules and answer questions similar to # 9.

Engagement Activity : Identifying Means of Dignity

Instructional Purpose: Just as there are specific rules of politeness and civility that others have written, each of which enhances a person's dignity, so also are they personal rules that allow us to enhance people's dignity. This activity lists these for personally for the student.

Time: 8 minutes

Materials: 3x5 cards

Procedure:

1. Hand out the 3x5 cards.
2. Ask each student to write down on the card, based on the previous exercise, one way that they can affirm the dignity of others. They should do so in two parts:
 - Write down a specific action or behavior that is realistic in their lives/experience.
 - Write down how that specific action affirms the dignity of another.
3. Collect the 3x5 cards; read one or two of them out loud as examples; and quickly choose one to use during the closing prayer for today.

Lasallian Connection:

When De La Salle wrote his book on politeness, he wrote it specifically for the ten- to fourteen-year-old boys who populated the schools that he and the first Brothers had started. De La Salle had found that the poor and working classes in 17th century France were generally badly brought up, and most of these boys would never be able to be accepted in middle class society. Their manners and social habits were rough and even disgusting. In a society that saw social class and social behavior as extremely important, the students in De La Salle's classes were largely powerless to freely move within society because of their poor social understanding and behavior. In order to remedy this situation, De La Salle wrote this book of politeness as the first full book that his students would read in class. After they had learned how to recognize syllables and read words and phrases, they began reading this book. While they were learning to read, they were learning how to behave. By the end of the book, they would know how to behave within most of the social classes of the time and not feel like a fish out of water if they were invited to a dinner or rode in a carriage with someone from the upper class.

The key to this radical idea was the importance of personal behavior. Society is glued together with the ways that we treat one another, and different parts of society treat one another in different ways. Just think of the times when you have been in situations or groups that were very different from your own. You must have carefully watched others so that you would fit in and not stand out as someone who didn't have a clue. The story behind *My Fair Lady* talks about the same thing, and there are probably other examples from the movies or television where people try to learn how to behave in situations that are different from what they are used to.

The important thing to remember is that there is a certain positive power, a sort of liberation or freedom, that happens if you know how to affirm the dignity of someone else by what you say or do. It's something that reflects back on your own dignity, so that by behaving well towards others, you end up being treated well yourself. We can too easily say or do things that hurt or belittle others. By making an effort to learn about how we can make others feel at ease and respected, we grow in our ability to do so. De La Salle knew this and we will know it too when we pay attention to what we say and do.

Closing Prayer:

Let us remember.... That we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: The point behind politeness and dignity is finally a matter of love; of loving someone else just enough to see them as God sees them. St. Paul said it pretty well when he wrote the following:

Reader: If I speak in human and angelic tongues, but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. [1 Corinthians 13: 1-3]

Leader: It just takes a little love to make someone feel better, to make someone be better. Sometimes the little things that we do – our greeting, our gestures, our eye contact, our smile, our small kindness, our forgiveness – these little things can and do build up the dignity of another person. One way that you came up with today was this: [Here you can read one or more of the 3 by 5 cards that were done during today's class.]

You may find yourself during the next few days thinking of other ways in which you have the power to build the dignity of others. These are your own rules of politeness, your own principles of civility. They become the way by which the love of God is lived out in your life.

God of life, you have given us the power of your own love – a power that can build the dignity and influence the lives of others if we only choose to use it well. Help us to understand how little effort it takes to change one another's lives by the way that we treat them. Give us the courage to build up the dignity of others and so to find that our own dignity is built up in the process. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle: Pray for us.

Live Jesus in our hearts: Forever.

Rules of Politeness & Civility

Instructions: Each of the rules of politeness and civility below comes from a textbook that St. John Baptist de La Salle wrote for his students in 17th century France. Choose ten of the following rules and write down a similar rule for today's world. In other words, if De La Salle were writing this rule today, what would it look like? Make sure that you indicate which of the rules you chose.

- It is highly unbecoming to comb your hair in public, but the offense becomes quite intolerable if you do so in church. That is one place where you should be very neat and clean out of the respect you have toward God.
- Neatness demands that you wipe your face every morning with a white cloth in order to clean it. It is not good to wash with water because this makes the countenance more sensitive to the cold in winter and to sunburn in summer.
- It is against decorum to spit in front of yourself while with others, or to spit too far, so that you have to go looking for the spittle in order to step on it. In places that are usually kept clean, turn aside slightly and spit into your handkerchief, then fold it immediately without looking at it, and replace it in your pocket.
- It is a sign of friendship and special regard to place your hand in another's as a gesture of politeness. Therefore, as a rule do this only with a person of the same social rank. If you owe respect to a person, you are never permitted to offer your hand as a sign of esteem or affection. This would be to fail in the respect due to that person.
- If you wish to be dressed appropriately, follow the customs of the country and dress more or less like people of your rank and age. Still, it is important to take care that your clothes have nothing luxurious or anything superfluous about them. And you should avoid whatever suggests ostentation or worldliness.
- Here are the circumstances in which you should remove your hat: 1) in a place where there are important people; 2) when you greet someone; 3) when you give or receive anything; 4) when you are being seated at table; 5) when you hear the names of Jesus or Mary; 6) when you are in the presence of persons to whom you owe great respect.
- It is not appropriate to wear a feather behind your ear or to put flowers in your ear or to have pierced ears with earrings. This is most inappropriate for a man, for it is a sign of slavery, which is not at all becoming.
- Never place your stick or cane on the bed before sitting down to table. That is uncivilized; rather place it out of sight. If you have a heavy cane, you may lean it against the wall. Both stick and cane must be laid aside when you take off your gloves and sword.

- At table, it is rude to use your napkin to wipe your face, even more so to rub your teeth with it. It would be gross and uncivilized to blow your nose in your napkin. It is also unbecoming to wipe plates and other dishes with your napkin.
- Just as it is rude to ask for anything at table, so it is also required by decorum that you accept whatever is presented, even if you feel some repugnance for it. Unless you take such precautions, you run the risk of being very disagreeable to others at table, especially to those who entertain you.
- It is entirely contrary to decorum to grow overexcited when you play. Still, you should not play in a careless manner nor lose deliberately as a way of flattering your opponents. This would make the person with whom you are playing think that you care little about contributing to his enjoyment in a well-played match.
- If you are entertaining friends at home, you should give the first places to your equals. When you are not at home, you should never accept the first place unless it is offered to you two or three times.
- It is a good time to leave from a visit when the other person remains silent, calls someone, or gives some other indication that he has something else to do.
- When you hear someone spoken ill of, civility requires that you try to excuse his defects and say something good about him by showing him in a favorable light and by speaking with appreciation of something he did.
- Those who have nothing to relate except gossip and frivolous, silly stories, and those who affect introductions so long that nobody else can speak, would do better to keep quiet. It is far better to gain a reputation for being a person of few words than to bore people with nonsense and stupidities or always to have something to say.
- When you are advised or reproved by another, it is a matter of decorum to receive the admonition graciously and to show much gratitude. The more gratitude you show, the more you will act like a true Christian and the more highly you will be regarded.
- Before receiving some object, except food when you are at table, you should make a bow, remove your glove, kiss your hand and receive the object, which you then gracefully and slowly bring close to your mouth as though you wish to kiss it. Do not bring it all the way to your lips, but simply act as if doing so.
- It is impolite and even ridiculous for you to watch the people passing by in order to see if they will greet you. You should always be the first in offering greetings as well as in other matters of courtesy, as Saint Paul advises. For you honor yourself when you honor others.

JUSTICE

A Four-Day Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools – Juniors

Objectives:

1. To bring students to an appreciation of their integration within God's creation.
2. To help students understand their school's mission statement and their part in it.
3. To deepen their understanding of the poor in their community and in the world at large along with their responsibilities towards everyone in terms of charity and justice.
4. To begin a development of their own leadership potential, especially in the area of social justice.
5. To let students see how they can make a difference, and how it takes courage to do so.

Components:

1. Day One: Vision: Am I My Brother's Keeper?
2. Day Two: Identity of the Lasallian School: Who Are We?
3. Day Three: Justice
4. Day Four: Courage: What Can I Do?

Background:

During the Junior year, many students are beginning to experience their capacity for making a difference in the world around them. They are developing an appreciation for what they can do to address some of the crying needs in their communities and in the world at large.

In this four-day unit, there is a progression from clearly identifying who they are and what they are called to be, to developing a further sensitivity to the social situations in which they dwell, and realizing the concrete ways that they can, and are called to, address situations. Throughout, the context of the larger church community and the Lasallian mission's priorities are brought to bear on the question of social justice.

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools—Day One

Vision: Am I My Brother's Keeper?

*God is so good that He not only brings us into existence
by His act of creation but also desires that all of us
come to the knowledge of the truth.*

-- Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Objectives:

1. To understand the creation story in Genesis in terms of Original Justice
2. To reflect on how the truth of this story applies to today
3. To distinguish types of sin: personal, social, sins of omission
4. To recall how De La Salle had a vision that inspired his work of justice

Opening Prayer:

Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God (Pause for a moment)

Lord, you created the world with a vision of peace, justice, equality, and joy for all creation. Even though at times we have strayed from that vision, You have not abandoned us. Throughout the Bible you have called us to restore that original vision. Your sacred word concludes with a vision in the Book of Revelation: "Then I saw a new heaven and new earth. Then a loud voice from the throne said, 'Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sadness, crying or pain, for the old order has passed away.'" God, help us to see the goodness that lies beneath suffering and evil. Guide us in acting in the ways of justice so that we might help others, just as Saint John Baptist de La Salle worked to help those in need. Thank you Lord for giving us an image of what creation could be like and a person like De La Salle who showed us what is possible.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle. . . Pray for us.

Live Jesus in our hearts . . . Forever.

Activity 1:

1. Briefly explain that people have different ways of looking at things.
2. Distribute a copy of Handout 1.1 to each student.
3. Explain that each column contains words that might be used to describe HUMANS, the WORLD and GOD.
4. Instruct them to read through each category. There is a space at the bottom for one write-in word. Allow 5 minutes.
5. When the students have finished, divide them into pairs and have each student give their choices to the other and explain why they see it that way.
6. After the pairs are finished, call the class together and discuss the following questions:
 - How many pairs had exactly the same 9 words circled?
 - Why do you think that people have different perceptions? At this point, you may want to point them towards a consideration of how our minds acquire information, how we process it as acceptable or unacceptable and how that becomes a filter through which we look towards the future and how that shapes our actions.
 - What role do our families, schools, neighborhoods, friends, television, movies, music, newspapers, etc. play in shaping the way in which we look at the world?
7. Distribute copies of Handout 1.2 to each student.
8. Have various students read the summary texts from the Book of Genesis. Pause in between the passages to discuss the questions that are printed in the handout. Some points that should be developed include a **positive** view of the world and humanity that is the foundation for the entire Scriptures: God's desire for peace, joy and love in the world; the empowerment of humans by God to care for creation according to the original desire; the reality of human confusion, that is, not seeing clearly, and thus straying from God's desire and plan and falling into sin; our journey throughout history to restore that original vision of God by helping one another and in a special way the needy as living examples that we are our brother's and sister's keepers.
9. On a blackboard, overhead projector, or newsprint, write the following:
 - **PERSONAL SIN**
 - **SOCIAL SIN**
 - **SIN OF OMISSION**
10. Ask the students what each one means. Personal sin should include an individual's acts that are hurtful, destructive, disrespectful or unfair; social sin is when groups or institutions are hurtful or unfair in politics, economics, cultural rules, norms or practices (for example: racism, sexism, tax policies, housing discrimination, environmental practices); sins of omission are those times like in the story of the Good Samaritan when we could have helped another but chose not to become involved.
11. Ask the students to recall the opening prayer that quoted the Book of Revelation. Ask them what they think this means for individual Christians. Draw out, if possible, the duty of Christians to cooperate in God's plan and vision for creation, to make a new heaven and a new earth a reality in their lives and in the lives of others.
12. Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 students and distribute copies of Handout 1.3.

13. Have them discuss the questions and record their group responses on sheets of paper or newsprint that will be hung around the room when they are done.

Optional Questions for Discussion:

1. What do you think the earth would be like if there were no humans on it?
2. What might our world be like if a creature superior to humans were to take control of the earth in the next 100 years?
3. Shortly after the story of Cain and Abel, Genesis tells how sin spread and only Noah and his family were saved from the flood. Imagine that Noah's Ark sprung a leak and sank. What would be your suggestions for God to start creation over again?
4. Complete this sentence: The first part of Genesis would be good professional reading for today's world leaders because _____.

Closing Prayer:

God,

Grant us your wisdom. We do not ask that you help us through the day; rather, we ask you to give us the compassion to help others through difficult times. Teach us understanding so we may see Christ in all people. Jesus showed us forgiveness; help us to forgive and love our enemies. We do not ask that you give us peace, but grant us the ability to love all people so that we can find peace ourselves. Teach us responsibility and help us to remember to care for your people and your earth. We ask this in Christ's name. Amen! (*Rebecca Braun, McNicholas High School, Cincinnati, Ohio* From page 55 of **More Dreams Alive: Prayers by Teenagers** Saint Mary's Press, Winona Minnesota)

Assignment Options:

1. Explain that the Chinese character for the word *crisis* is composed of the characters for the words *danger* and *opportunity*. Discuss how our modern world might be viewed as in crisis because it is both a time of danger and great opportunity. For homework, assign each student to create a collage from newspapers and magazines that depict today's world as *danger* and *opportunity*.
2. Ask, "Do you think that the world is developing according to a plan?" Allow for free discussion and then read Genesis 1:27 – 29 and 2:15 and explore the plan there. Have the students write a short essay, poem or song on "God's Creation: Sunrise or Sunset?"

Homework Assignments:

Assign either *Assignment Option 1 or 2* from Day Two of this program – "The Identity of the Lasallian School."

Vision

Circle three descriptions in each column that you feel best describes each category:

| HUMANS ARE ... ? | THE WORLD IS ... ? | GOD IS ... ? |
|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Rational animals | Complex | Loving |
| Lovers | Beautiful | Judgmental |
| Artists | Peaceful | Merciful |
| Workers | Filled with opportunity | Forgiving |
| Consumers | Painful | Punishing |
| Dishonest | Exploited | Understanding |
| Children of God | Mysterious | Angry |
| Dreamers | Life giving | Faithful |
| Violent animals | Violent | Unconcerned |
| Pilgrims | Chaotic | Peaceful |
| Risk takers | Angry | Wise |
| Comedians | Dying | Planning history |
| OTHER: | OTHER: | OTHER: |

God said: “Let the earth bring forth every kind of vegetation and fruit tree . . . and God saw that it was good.”

God said: “ Let there be lights to separate day from night . . . and God saw that it was good.”

God said: “Let the waters be alive with living creatures . . . and God saw that it was good.”

God said: “Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creatures . . . and God saw that it was good.”

God said: “Let us make humans in our own image and likeness . . . and God saw that it was very good.”

What is the vision of all creation that is presented in the beginning of Genesis?

“Thus the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed and God rested . . .”

What might the image of God resting mean for humans in maintaining creation?

Why is this vision of the world called Paradise?

“And the serpent said if you eat the fruit you will become like gods . . .”

How does thinking that one has God-like power lead to sin that preys on the weak, exploits the earth, wages war, discriminates racially and sexually, thus tarnishing the Original Justice of Paradise?

What might be some other modern examples of injustice resulting from the decisions of other humans and symbolized by the eating of the fruit?

“After Cain killed Abel the Lord asked him where his brother was. Cain answered, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Is the answer “Yes” or “No”? Explain.

1. What is Genesis calling us to be as “co-creators” and guardians of all creation?

2. List any 3 people who have made decisions at one time or another that positively supported God’s vision of a Good Creation?

3. What are 3 challenges in the world today that blind us from seeing creation and creatures as good?

4. How are the following words a constant reminder of the call to bring God’s vision from Genesis into our wounded world?

“Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God”

5. What might be the meaning of the idea of “Our goal is to get each other into heaven, not just ourselves”?

6. Salvation comes from the word *salve* which is a healing ointment. How is each Christian who is anointed with oil at Baptism and Confirmation, called to bring healing and salvation into the world NOW?

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools—Day Two

The Identity of the Lasallian School: Who are we?

Programs in Lasallian schools . . . must be frequently examined to see that they correspond to real needs. Courses must be organized and educational standards set in such a way as to foster the human development of the poor, for whom the Institute [of the Brothers of the Christian Schools] has a special concern. Persons must be the center of educational systems rather than the prestige of some academic curriculum.

-- The Brothers of the Christian Schools in the World Today: A Declaration

Objectives:

1. To compare the mission statement of this school with a comprehensive Lasallian mission statement.
2. To compare personal experiences to the ideals of the mission statement of this school.
3. To appreciate the role of education in the forming of one's personal identity

Background:

A mission statement seeks to concisely articulate the identity of an institution. This statement articulates institutional commitments and ideals in such a way that the distinctiveness of the institution becomes clear. A mission statement thus proves helpful for evaluation.

While two documents, *The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today: A Declaration* (1967) and the Brothers' *Rule* (1987) "define the mission and the vision of the Brothers in the modern world," no single official statement "encompasses all educational endeavors that follow the Lasallian tradition."¹ Therefore, George van Grieken's "Annotated Mission Statement" and "Annotated Vision Statement" serve as the basis for this lesson.

¹ George Van Grieken, "To Touch Hearts: The Pedagogical Spirituality of John Baptist de La Salle" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Boston College, 1995), 380

The mission of the Brothers and of all Lasallian education originates in Saint John Baptist de La Salle's vision of very real and pressing needs of children in France in the late seventeenth century. "The poor, victimized by unfavorable economic conditions and consequent ignorance and lawlessness, would find in the Christian school, free and well-conducted, a way by which they could earn a decent living, live a good moral life, and serve society and the Church."² Notice that the needs are spiritual and practical, and that these overlap.

Saint John Baptist did not become involved in his life-long mission either suddenly or deliberately. Rather, a series of little decisions, responses to immediate needs, gradually transformed his life from one of ease and piety to one of courageous challenge to the educational establishment.

Materials:

1. Homework assignments, one of which is due on the day of this lesson (Assignment 2.1 is designed to be conceptually easier than 2.2.) the other of which is due on the fifth day of this unit (Assignment 5.1).
2. Mission Statement of your school (This may be edited as needed.)
3. Activity sheets, one of which will be completed during the class (Activity 2.3 is the simpler. Both attempt to guide a comparison of broader and synthetic mission statements with that of your school.)

Opening Prayer: Let us remember that we live in the holy presence of God.

God, you made us to live with other people. You give us schools so that we can help one another. Like all the products of human beings, however, these institutions are less than perfect. Help us today prayerfully to examine our own school and the global Lasallian movement. May our efforts challenge us personally, and help us to challenge the institutions in their shortcomings. Amen.

Procedures:

1. After the opening prayer, begin the lesson with a review of Day One's theme (Original Justice) and an overview of the goal of the entire unit that will culminate in some practical activity that will help make the world a better place.
2. **Assignment option 2.1:** Ask the students to review the last section of their homework assignments, where they provide answers to the questions about the mission of the school.

² Othmar Wurth, *John Baptist De La Salle and Special Education: A Study of Saint Yon* (Landover, Maryland: Lasallian Publications), cited in David L. Hotek, "The Role of the Lasallian School According to John Baptist de La Salle," in Lasallian Readings.

Have the students discuss their answers with one partner. Invite the class to share the fruits of their discussions.

3. **Assignment option 2.2:** Ask the students to get into groups and read all their mission statements. Have each group select the best student-composed mission statement from the group, and explain why it is the best. Allow a group or two to read its best mission statement to the whole class, and point out the assets of this statement.
4. Explain that a mission statement is valuable for self-evaluation. In other words, are we doing the job we claim that we want to do?
5. Distribute a copy of your school's mission statement. Explain that the students are to read this carefully because they will analyze it. Encourage questions about the mission statement.
6. Distribute either **Activity 2.3** or **2.4**. Have a student read aloud the directions, and entertain questions on the procedures. Allow the students to complete the worksheet.
7. Once most students have completed this worksheet, organize a synthesizing discussion that focuses upon the discontinuities between the general Lasallian mission statement and your own school's. Then consider how students' personal goals cohere with the goals of the mission statements and share the particular concrete actions the students generate for their cooperation with the mission of the school.
8. Distribute a copy of the worksheet "Here's a Problem" (Assignments 5.1A and 5.1B, found at the end of the Day Two materials). Read the instructions and ask if there are any questions. You may offer an example or two of creative solutions to community problems (Resource 5.2, found at the end of the Day Two materials) to clarify and impart the sense of the assignment.

Closing Prayer:

Let us remember that all of us here at N. School live in the holy presence of God.
Dear God, this school exists to help us to grow in our faith in you. You teach us to love our neighbors as ourselves, and we can help our neighbors by praying for them. We now pray for our trustees, our school's president, N., our principal, N., our benefactors, our teachers, our coaches, and our staff. Help us to be true to the mission of making our world more just and help us to see that all of our daily lives may be lived more fully as we try to make your kingdom present today. Amen.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle...pray for us!
Live Jesus in our hearts...forever!

In this assignment, you will be interviewing a few persons connected with your school in order to determine common perceptions of what things are important about the school and what motivates the members of the school community to do these important things. You will then write your own perception. Remember that interviewing requires intelligently pursuing the conversations that these questions initiate.

Ask at least one classmate:

1. Why did you decide to enroll at this school?
2. What has disappointed you about this school?
3. What has pleased you about this school in a surprising way?
4. What is the most valuable tradition of this school?
5. Why was this school founded?
6. Can you tell me one thing about the mission statement of this school? If so, tell me what it is and why it is important enough for you to remember it.

Ask at least one teacher:

1. What is the most valuable tradition of this school?
2. Is there anything special about this school that makes it an appealing place to teach?
3. What does it mean to say that teaching is a “ministry”?
4. In what way is religion a part of the life of this school?

Ask at least one parent or guardian:

1. Explain one thing that is especially good about this school for your child / children.
2. What is the central value of this school?
3. Why was this school founded?
4. What is the meaning of the phrase *social justice*?

Now answer these questions yourself:

1. Why did you decide to enroll at this school?
2. What has disappointed you about this school?
3. What has pleased you about this school in a surprising way?
4. Why was this school founded?
5. State the mission of this school, its primary reason for existing.
6. Describe a way in which you personally experience this mission, or a component part of this mission, of the school.

In this assignment, you are to read the example of a “mission statement,” answer a few questions about this mission statement, and finally to compose your own mission statement for any organization with which you are familiar, real or imagined.

La Salle Green Hills MISSION STATEMENT

La Salle Green Hills is a Catholic institution for boys committed to the education of responsible citizens and future leaders. In living up to this vision and its three-fold ideal of *Religio, Mores, Cultura*, La Salle Green Hills reaffirms its mission: the formation of Christian gentlemen who live the Gospel.

In pursuing this mission, La Salle Green Hills professes to:

1. promote the development of spiritual and moral values;
2. respect the individuality of each person and the totality of his human potential;
3. pursue a relevant and an excellent academic program;
4. develop social and political awareness, social justice and social responsibility for national development;
5. promote the enrichment of Filipino culture and the growth of an interdependent global community.

Our mission statement reflects the school’s priority goals and objectives. It clearly defines the development of spiritual and moral values as the school’s primary concerns.

1. Quote a word or phrase that indicates that this school is “Lasallian.”
2. In what country is this school located?
3. What are the school’s “primary concerns”?
4. “*Mores*” refers to the ideal of acting with justice and integrity; “*Cultura*” refers to appreciating human creativity throughout the ages. Make a hypothesis about the meaning of the word, in this context, “*Religio*.”

5. “*Gentleman*” is defined by LSGH as a “man of compassion who lives out the core gospel values of truth, freedom, love and justice. He is a well-rounded person spiritually, socially, intellectually, aesthetically and physically and is committed to the service of the poor.”

List one example of a “gentleman” or “gentlewoman,” and specify the accomplishments of this person.

NOW.....Compose your own mission statement from some organization with which you are very familiar.

Directions: Read through the individual statements from unofficial Mission and Vision Statements of all Lasallian schools.³ Under each statement on this sheet, write the statement that most nearly connects with it from your own school's Mission Statement.

- If necessary, write one sentence from your own school's mission statement that does not seem to fit into any of the sentences taken from all the Lasallian schools.
 - Assess whether your own personal goals and aspirations fit with the mission of the school; in other words, are you willing to be molded and shaped as the school intends to mold you?
 - List one specific thing that you can do to cooperate more fully with becoming the type of person that you want to be.
1. Lasallian schools are Catholic educational communities inspired by the vision of St. John Baptist de La Salle.
 2. Lasallian schools provide a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor in solidarity with the living tradition of the Brothers of the Christian schools.
 3. The spirit of those in Lasallian schools is a spirit of faith and zeal. They do everything in view of God, and attribute all to God. All the efforts of Lasallian educators are directed to achieve the salvation of those confided to their care.
 4. The principal function of those in Lasallian schools consists in the work of evangelization—sharing the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

³Freely adapted from George Van Grieken, 38

5. Lasallian schools believe that the means of salvation are quality education and an explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ.

 6. Lasallian educators cultivate personal companionship with their students and promote justice.

 7. A spirit of prayer and an attentiveness to the presence of God animate the Lasallian school.

 8. Lasallian schools operate among all cultures and peoples.
-

- Copy one sentence from your own school's mission statement that does not seem to connect with any of the printed sentences, above.

- Circle the number of one sentence from the Lasallian school's sentences for which you cannot find a partner, and draft a sentence that should be included in your own school's mission statement.

- List and explain one personal goal that seems to agree with one of those of the Lasallian school and your particular school.

- Describe one concrete action that will help you to better cooperate with the goals of this school for you.

Directions: Read through the individual statements below describing a Christian school. After each statement is a quotation that supports and sheds some additional light upon the statement.

- Write the statement or statements from your own school's Mission Statement that most nearly connect(s) with it in the areas just after the quotations.
- If necessary, write one sentence from your own school's mission statement that does not seem to fit into any of the sentences taken from all the Lasallian schools.
- Assess whether your own personal goals and aspirations fit with the mission of the school; in other words, are you willing to be molded and shaped as the school intends to mold you?
- List one specific thing that you can do to cooperate more fully with becoming the type of person that you , and the school, want to be.

A Christian school

1.

A Christian school is a school centered on young people and attentive to real needs. *“One of the principle duties of those engaged in the instruction of others is to come to know them, and to discern the way to act with regard to them. . . You must adapt your instructions to their level of understanding; if you do not, such instructions will not be very useful.”*

2. A Christian school is a school open to all, and especially to the poor. *“They shall show equal affection for all their pupils, even more for the poor rather than the rich, because they are especially entrusted with the instruction of the former rather than the latter.”*

3. A Christian school is a school which functions well. *“The school teaches especially things which are useful for them to learn to do, and which they will need during their lives.”*

4. A Christian school is a school which announces Good News and helps people to live it. *“Jesus told his apostles, ‘I must announce the good news of the reign of God, because this is why I have been sent.’ Say the same thing. . . this is why Jesus Christ has sent you.”*

 5. A Christian school is maintained together and by association. *“For this purpose. . . we are associated to conduct, together and by association, schools for the service of the poor.”*
-

- Copy one sentence from your own school’s mission statement that does not seem to connect with any of the printed sentences, above.

- List and explain one personal goal that seems to agree with one of those of the Lasallian and your particular school.

- Circle the number of one sentence from the Lasallian school’s sentences for which you cannot find a partner, and draft a sentence that should be included in your own school’s mission statement.

- Describe one concrete action that will help you better to cooperate with the goals of this school for you.

Here's a Problem

DIRECTIONS:

Between today and the last class on the Lasallian focus on justice, identify and assess one problem in your neighborhood or the larger community. Create in writing a plan of action that might solve or reduce the problem. You may work with a classmate in devising a solution to the problem, but each student should work individually to perceive a problem.

Using the newspaper and/or a tour of your neighborhood or school, identify an issue of injustice, pollution, human need (housing, hunger, etc.). If possible, include newspaper clippings or photos that highlight the problem.

THE PROBLEM:

What is the problem?

Where is it?

Who are the people most affected by the problem?

How did this problem come to your attention?

What about this problem made it touch your heart?

NAME _____

Assignment 4.1 B

Here's a Problem (continued)

THE SOLUTION: In as much detail as possible, list the steps that might be taken to solve or reduce the scope of the problem. Include all ideas about implementing your actions.
(Use another sheet if necessary.)

RESOURCES: List those things and persons that you would need to put your plan into effect.

SUCCESS? List two ways that you could tell if your actions are successful.

Examples of Teens Taking Action. . .

GOALS: We do not need to be rich and powerful to make things better.
We do need to apply some energy and creativity to solve problems.
People around us may be more willing to help us than we think.
Youth is not an obstacle to doing good and changing the world for the better.

EXAMPLES: True stories, from the book, *It's Our World, Too!* that may be read aloud to motivate the activities.

Justin Lebo of Paterson, NJ, loved fixing bikes. He had been racing them for a long time. Passing a home for children he noticed two kids fighting over the one bike in the playground. Since he had a couple of old bikes in his garage, he went home, fixed them up, and brought them back to the home. Realizing that the two bikes still didn't solve the problem and that lots of bikes were sold at garage sales, he started going around buying bikes at the sales and at thrift shop. When a neighbor heard about what he was doing, she told a local newspaper asking for help. Soon people were bringing Jason bikes to fix. By Christmas, he had fixed 21 bikes – one for each child in the home. By the time he was fourteen years old, he had fixed and given away 200 bikes to needy children.

At age fifteen, Joel Rubin of Cape Elizabeth, Maine, was fed up with the slaughter of dolphins by the giant tuna canning companies. Their method of catching tuna with drift nets was relatively simple and cheap, but it needlessly trapped dolphins in with the tuna. The dolphins quickly died from a lack of oxygen. Joel struck on a novel, but effective idea: he talked his schoolmates into writing hundreds of personal postcards to the homes of the three key executives of the H. J. Heinz Company, owner of Star-Kist tuna. He figured that by sending an avalanche of postcards to their home addresses, the mail would have more impact because it would be seen by the executives' families, too. Before the campaign got started, Joel wrote to the president of Heinz asking him to cease buying tuna caught in drift nets. When the executive failed to reply, the postcards started going out. Soon the Heinz president wrote to Joel complaining about all the postcards sent to his homes. Joel and his schoolmates persisted. Not long afterward, the Heinz Company gave in. Soon other big tuna companies stopped buying tuna from fisheries that used drift nets. "What happened is amazing," Joel says. "It just goes to show that if you really try, and plan, you can make a difference."

Teaching Unit For Lasallian Schools – Day Three

Justice

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us,
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us,
Melt us, mould us, fill us, use us.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us.*

Objectives:

1. to define charity and justice and to recognize the differences between them
2. to identify who the poor are in the world
3. to identify who the poor are in the community
4. to study and interpret De La Salle's definition of the poor

Opening Prayer:

Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God....

Scripture: Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?" Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the stick out of your eye', while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye. (*Matthew 7:1-6*)

Reflection: The Sufi Bayazid says this about himself: "I was a revolutionary when I was young and all my prayer to God was, 'Lord give me the energy to change the world.' As I approached middle age and realized that half my life was gone without my changing a single soul, I changed my prayer to: 'Lord, give me the grace to change all those who come in contact with me. Just my family and friends, and I shall be content.' Now that I am an old man and my days are numbered, my prayer now is 'Lord, give me the grace to change myself.' If I had prayed for this right from the start I should not have wasted my life.'" (*Prayers For Parish Groups*, Harrington & Kavanagh)

Saint John Baptist de La Salle, pray for us!

Live, Jesus, in our hearts forever!

Engagement Activity:

This lesson is designed to help the students recognize that living justly means taking an active role in the world around us. The first important idea in the lesson is a clarification of the crucial difference between acts of charity and justice. While charity is an important aspect of living justly, it is essential to recognize that while charity ameliorates the *effects* of social evils, justice addresses the systemic *causes* of social evils.

In this lesson, the students will generate their own definitions of charity and justice, they will briefly examine one social injustice (infant mortality), they will identify who the poor are, and, finally, they will compare their descriptions of the poor with De La Salle's description of the poor.

Time: 45 minutes

Materials:

1. Teacher copy of "Babies in the River" (3.1)
2. Master for overhead "Babies in the River" Response Options (3.2)
3. Master for overhead Child Mortality Rates (3.3)
4. Master for overhead Mortality Rate Calculations and Article 40 (LaSalle's description of the poor) (3.4)
5. Master for overhead Outcome Sentences (3.5)
6. Master for class set of "The Pastor's Decision" with questions (3.6)
7. Teacher's copy of the definitions of charity and justice from *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (3.7)

Before beginning the following activities, have the students choose a partner for the class. Some of the work will be completed individually, and some will require that they quickly turn to their partner. You will want at this time to designate two students who will record class responses on the board.

Procedures:

Part One: (15 min)

1. Ensure that all students have paper and pen on their desks.
2. Tell the students that you are going to read a brief story aloud, after which they will respond
3. to questions shown on the overhead.
4. Read the story to the students.
5. Turn on **Overhead 3.2** and give the students a few minutes to write personal responses to the story.
6. Ask the students to find their partner and to share their responses for 2-3 minutes.
7. Using a **whip-around/pass option**, ask the students which option they and/or their partner chose and why. **When using a whip around/pass option, choose a row and tell them that "When your turn comes , either give your thoughts or say 'I pass'. There is no need to**

respond if you prefer not to.” Students in that row(s) answer one after the other down the row. Monitor energy levels in the room and use time as appropriate.

8. If the class has not already recognized/stated the significance of the person who goes up the river, then specifically ask that question. This should lead to a clarification of the differences between charity and justice and definitions (students’, teacher’s, or a combination) of these terms should be forthcoming.
9. Have the students copy these definitions as you dictate and/or write them on the board.

Part Two: (3 min)

1. Have students prepare to respond on their own paper.
2. Put on the Child Mortality Rate, **Overhead 3.3**. Read it to the class.
3. *Covering the bottom of the overhead transparency*, put on the Mortality Rate Calculations, **Overhead 3.4**.
4. Ask the students to complete the calculations found on Overhead 3.4.
5. Elicit a few comments from the students as they finish their calculations. This exercise should be very brief; when 3-4 students have finished the calculations, put the numbers on the board. **Speed is essential to keep up the energy in the room.**
6. Now is a good time to pose a **thought question**; a verbal response is not necessary. Ask the students, “Now that we have considered the numbers of dying babies, why are the babies coming down the river?” Let them consider silently for a moment.

Part Three: (5-10 min) – Brainstorming

In this activity, students will express their own understanding of who the poor are, both in the world and within their own community. Bring the student-recorders to the board. **Note:** Students should not name specific people, particularly within their own community, and they should not be denigrating in their descriptions. Also, if the students do not include those other than the economically poor in their brainstorming, the teacher should prompt them toward a more comprehensive description of the poor.

1. Ask the class “Who are the poor around the world?” Two students record responses on the board. Again, speed is important to maintain the energy in the room. **Guidelines for Brainstorming** are:
 - Accept all ideas without judgment. An unrealistic idea may generate a new valuable idea.
 - Write all ideas as they are mentioned. Do not attempt to judge each idea as it is offered. Keep minds open during the brainstorm. Judgments are for later, when you look back over the written list.
 - Generate ideas quickly. High energy and quick pace often lead to new creativity. If ideas come too fast for one person to write them, get two or more to take turns recording offerings. (*Inspiring Active Learning*, Merrill Harmin)

2. Tell the students that you have a second question; they should respond individually on their paper.
 - Ask the students “Who are the poor in our community?”
 - After 1-2 minutes, begin another **whip around/pass option**. Two students can again record responses.

Part Four: (10 min)

This activity grounds the day’s lesson in De La Salle’s teachings by having students examine his description of the poor.

1. Return to **Overhead 3.4** and, covering the top half of the overhead, read aloud *Article 40*, La Salle’s description of the poor.
2. Tell the students to quickly find their partner and to compare/contrast their lists to La Salle’s description.
3. Then, ask the students to respond privately on their papers to one of the following **Outcome Sentences: (Overhead 3.5)**
 - I learned . . .
 - I was surprised . . .
 - I’m beginning to wonder . . .
 - I’m getting clearer about . . .
 - I rediscovered . . .
 - I promise I will . . .
 - I am feeling . . .
 - *Inspiring Active Learning*, Merrill Harmin
4. Student papers can be collected.

Part Five: (2-3 min)

Finally, two more **thought questions**: Remind the students that LaSalle lived more than 300 years ago, close to the time when the Pilgrims came to America. Since that time, we have made enormous progress in how people live. Given this, “Why are the babies still coming down the river?” and “Who or what is sending the babies down the river?” No verbal response is required at this time. They should take a moment to silently consider these questions.

Homework:

Distribute “The Pastor’s Decision” with any instructions you might have regarding the questions that follow the story. The story helps the students to focus on some of the sources of social injustice with an eye toward the Day Five lesson, which asks them to respond to one of these sources of injustice. **Note:** The last section of the handout is for the teacher’s use and should not be reproduced for the students.

Closing Prayer:

Disturb us, O Lord
when we are too well pleased with ourselves;
when our dreams have come true
because we dreamed too little;
when we have arrived in safety
because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, O Lord,
when, with the abundance of things we possess,
we have lost our thirst for the waters of Life;
when, having fallen in love with time,
we have ceased to dream of eternity;
and when, in our efforts to build a new earth,
we have allowed our vision of the New Heaven to grow dim.

Stir us, O Lord, to dare more boldly
to venture more seas, where storms shall show your mastery,
where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.

In the name of the One who pushed back the horizons of our hopes
and invited the brave to follow . . . St. John Baptist de La Salle: Pray for us.
Live, Jesus, in our hearts: Forever.

Prayers For Parish Groups, Harrington & Kavanagh

An Analogy–“Babies in the River”

One day, a group of picnickers along a river noticed several babies floating down the river. They jumped in to rescue them and then noticed even more babies floating by. They called to others to help and, before long, there was a string of people involved in the rescue operation. As more and more babies appeared in the river, people began organizing temporary shelter along the bank. Medical people were called in. Milk and other foods were gathered. Eventually, a team of social workers began to arrange foster care for those babies strong enough not to be hospitalized. Finally, one person started walking upstream along the shore. As babies continued to float down the river, others shouted at the person to stay and help. The person turned and answered: “I’m going upstream to try to stop whoever or whatever is throwing the babies into the river.”

Educating For Peace and Justice, James McGinnis

“Babies in the River”

If you were picnicking nearby and saw what was happening, what would be your response?

_____ Picnic somewhere else?

_____ Jump into the river and help pull babies out?

_____ Go for other help? What kind?

_____ Join the person going upstream?

Educating For Peace and Justice, James McGinnis

Child Mortality Rates

It is estimated that one child dies every two seconds from hunger or hunger-related diseases. Many of these deaths could be prevented by a series of simple injections costing less than \$10 per child.

Source: Educating for Peace and Justice, James McGinnis

How Many?

Per Minute _____

Per Hour _____

Per Day _____

Per Year _____

Article 40 De La Salle's Description of the Poor

The Brothers work directly for the poor by providing an education for the economically deprived, victims of social injustice, delinquents, and those neglected by the rest of Society. The Brothers give special attention to their students who have difficulties at school, at home, or problems adjusting to society.

Outcome Sentences

I learned

I was surprised

I'm beginning to wonder

I'm getting clearer about

I rediscovered

I promise I will

I am feeling

Inspiring Active Learning, Merrill Harmin

“The Pastor’s Decision”

One Sunday, in a small town with a strong Christian community, the pastor preached a sermon on Jesus’ Great Commandment, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” To illustrate the point, the pastor reminded the congregation about car accidents that had happened on the highway near the town and encouraged people to become involved in the volunteer rescue department. Several members of the church took this message to heart and joined the rescue squad.

A few months later, these members visited the pastor. They explained that the ambulance used by the rescue squad was old, in need of repair, and did not contain up-to-date equipment. As a result, the volunteers were often unable to provide necessary medical care to accident victims, and some of them were dying needlessly. They reminded the pastor of his sermon and asked that he help promote a fundraising campaign for a new ambulance. He complimented them for their commitment to Jesus’ commandment and helped with the campaign. The funds were raised within weeks. A new ambulance was purchased, and the rescue work became more effective.

Several weeks passed. Two of the church members again visited the pastor. They asked him for his support of the fund drive and acknowledged that care for accident victims had improved. But they were concerned because accidents were still taking place. They explained that the *major cause* of the accidents was a dangerous curve in the road. If the road were straightened, the number of accidents could be greatly reduced, perhaps even eliminated. They had already shared this idea with others on the rescue squad and in the congregation. But they had encountered significant resistance. It was pointed out that the change in the road would require routing it through land owned by the town’s major employer causing significant expense to the company. Several city council members who had heard of the idea warned them not to pursue it further. “But you taught us about Jesus’ message to love our neighbor,” they reminded the pastor. And they encouraged him to support their efforts to change the road.

The pastor thought about the request for a while. “I admire your concern for the accident victims. But I need to be careful to make sure that the church doesn’t get mixed up in economic or political issues. Religion should be kept separate.” And he refused to give them any support.

Questions: Do you agree or disagree with the pastor’s decision. Why or why not? What does the pastor’s decision reveal about the sources of social injustices?

For the Teacher: (Block out this material when reproducing this page for student use.)

1. *Christian concern for justice is rooted in Jesus’ commandment of love – an unselfish concern for the well being of others as well as oneself.*
2. *Concern for justice entails more than just responding to people’s immediate needs. It also requires attention to the causes of suffering and involves efforts to alleviate those causes.*
3. *Economic and political systems and decisions affect people’s lives. Systems can express love – concern for the well-being of all; or they can express sin – disregard for well-being. Jesus’ commandment of love calls Christians, as individuals and as a community, to promote the former systems and decisions and to work to change the latter. (from Christian Justice, Sharing God’s Mission: Ahlers & Wilt)*

Definitions of Charity and Justice

For the Teacher's use:

Charity

CCC 1822 - *Charity* is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

CCC 1823 - Jesus makes charity the *new commandment*. By loving his own "to the end," he makes manifest the Father's love which he receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus, which they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love." And again: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

CCC 1824 - Fruit of the Spirit and fullness of the Law, charity keeps the *commandments* of God and his Christ: "Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love."

CCC 1825 - Christ died out of love for us, while we were still "enemies." The Lord asks us to love as he does, even our *enemies*, to make ourselves the neighbor of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ himself. The Apostle Paul has given an incomparable depiction of charity: "Charity is patient and kind, charity is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Charity does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Charity bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

CCC 1826 - "If I . . . have not charity," says the Apostle, "I am nothing." Whatever my privilege, service, or even virtue, "if I . . . have not charity I gain nothing." Charity is superior to all the virtues. It is the first of the theological virtues: "So faith, hope, charity abide, these three. But *the greatest of these is charity.*"

Justice

CCC 1807 - *Justice* is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor. Justice toward God is called the "virtue of religion." Justice toward men disposes one to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good. The just man, often mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures, is distinguished by habitual right thinking and the uprightness of his conduct toward his neighbor. "You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor." "Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."

From *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools – Day Four

Courage: What Can I Do?

*Can you say as Saint Paul,
“Lord, what will you have me do?”*

-- Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Objectives:

1. To realize that ideals requires action
2. To appreciate that one person can make a difference
3. To respond concretely to a social justice issue
4. To understand De La Salle’s courage in the face of adversity

Background: The previous four lessons have provided ideas that are intended to inspire and motivate the students to act in charity and justice. This is the most challenging lesson for both the student and the teacher. Ideas without action are like seeds that remain in a packet: there is no change or growth. Many schools have a requirement of community service ministry. This lesson could well be applied to that program. However, in addition to that requirement, this lesson encourages the students to engage in a real action at this time. The possibilities for involvement in the school, community, nation or world are extensive. Three excellent books that provide guidance and information on empowering students to become actively involved are: *Kids With Courage*, *The Kid’s Guide to Social Action*, and *The Kid’s Guide to Service Projects*. All of these books are authored by Barbara A. Lewis and are available from Free Spirit Publishing, Inc., 400 First Avenue North, Suite 616, Minneapolis, MN 55401 (612-338-2068).

The old adage “actions speak louder than words” certainly applies to this unit. Stepping out of one’s comfort zone and reaching out to make a difference in someone else’s life requires courage. We might recall the hesitation displayed by the apostles after the Resurrection as they hid in fear. It was only after the burning fire of the Holy Spirit that they were filled with zeal and enthusiasm to go out courageously and imitate the actions of Jesus.

De La Salle’s life followed a similar path. He was probably similar to many of our students, comfortable and relatively unconcerned for the situations around that cried out for justice and charity. In *Meditations* 8.3 De La Salle struggled with the challenge from the Letter of James that asks, “What good is it to profess faith without practicing it?” He goes on later to say, “You must especially teach this maxim to those whom you instruct if you want to put them on the road to heaven.” De La Salle modeled for us an example of how our faith should move us to action. His personal actions in establishing schools, caring for teachers and students while dealing with opposition and adversity, are truly heroic stories of the difference that one person can make. All

teachers in the Lasallian tradition are challenged to courageously make this example of De La Salle a reality with their students.

Materials:

1. Assignment 4.1, Needs Assessment and Plan of Action (at end of day 2 materials)
2. Resource 4.2, Examples of Teens Taking Action and Suggestions for Processing the Assignment (at end of day 2 materials)
3. Handout 4.3, Tips for Taking Social Action

Opening Prayer:

Let us remember that we are in the holy Presence of God

What is it like to always see
someone faster and smarter
on the other side?
All of us are different.
God sees our hidden talents
and knows what we can do,
even if it happens a little slower
or a little differently than we expected.
All of us are different.
God makes us this way.

But now without a little help,
I can't walk, so I ride in a chair.
He can't see and uses a cane.
She is slow, so she takes her time.
You can't always see the differences with the naked eye,
but all of us are different.
God makes us this way.
Thank you, God!

Saint John Baptist de La Salle . . . Pray for us
Live, Jesus, in our hearts . . . Forever!

Procedures:

1. Becoming involved in social action is an important outcome of growing in a Christian and Lasallian way of thinking. Below are 10 tips for taking social action (**these can be placed on an overhead projector using Overhead 4.2**):
 - **Select a situation that would benefit from change**
 - **Read, interview, telephone and do research on the situation**
 - **Think of as many ways as possible to address the situation**
 - **Get other people involved with you as a support team**
 - **Recognize your opposition and their thinking on the situation**
 - **Get the word out in local newspapers, church bulletins, TV, and so on.**
 - **Raise money if you think that it will help in making others aware**
 - **Carry your action out in actions, speeches, petitions, letters, and so on.**
 - **Evaluate what you did right and what needs improvement**
 - **Be courageous! Expect opposition but if you are convinced of the importance of the situation, keep working at it!**
2. Give students a copy of Handout 4.1. Give them time to read the handout quietly.
3. Ask students to gather in groups of 4.
4. Ask each group to respond to the following:
 - For each of the 10 points, discuss how either Joby responded or how you would have responded to the situation in the story.
 - What are some benefits to the community and to you that might result from getting involved in a social action campaign?
 - What might be some situations in our school, our churches, our city, our state, our nation or our world upon which you could take action?

—Adapted from *Kids With Courage* by Barbara Lewis
Free Spirit Publishing, Minneapolis, MN 55401

Homework Follow-Up: Based on homework from Tuesday (Assignment 4.1)

1. Ask students to take out their homework from Tuesday (Assignments 4.1, *Here's A Problem*)
2. Invite volunteers to present their "problem" and to outline the "solution."
3. If you feel that certain action plans might derive some energy and help from the class, you might solicit other suggestions to help the planner(s).
4. Always keep in mind two questions that might help students talk about their plans:
 - What did you learn?
 - How do you feel about this experience?

Option: The class might pick one or two problems and solutions to actually work on as a class over the next months.

Option: Copies of the plans might be posted for the school to see.

Youth Can Make a Difference

We might be tempted to protest, “I’m only one person” or “Who’s going to listen to a teenager?” when we encounter situations that are unjust and need changing. Students do have meaningful insights and ideas but the real challenge is often just getting adults to listen.

Thirty-five teenagers chanted, “Fair fares for youth! Faith fares for youth!” outside the city offices in downtown Seattle, Washington. Inside the offices council members were holding a hearing about busing fares while outside fifteen-year-old Joby Shimomura was leading teens in a demonstration for their rights. As the spokesperson for the group, Joby observed that “The handicapped and senior citizens get low rates; we want bus fares lower for kids, too! Some families don’t have cars. Kids have to use the bus.”

As the group of teens moved towards the doors of the council hearing to voice their concern, they were suddenly stopped and told by council members: “If we lower the rates for young people, we’ll have to hike up senior fares.” Joby replied, “That’s not right. You’re pitting the young against the old. We never intended higher fares for seniors as a tradeoff.”

The newspapers picked up on that angle and printed headlines like, **Youth Stealing Grandparent’s Grocery Money**. Joby remembers how unfair the whole situation became because they were only young people who did not have much credibility and so they lost that battle. However, learning from this experience, she continued to organize social-action campaigns. “We got burned out over bus fares,” she observed, “but we learned a lot. One of the problems is getting people to recognize us as important. It’s difficult, because there is no history of kids doing this. But we did educate the public, and we showed them that young people can organize and speak out.”

What kind of teenager has the courage to take on City Hall and start a citywide campaign? Joby describes herself as average. She has an older brother and a younger sister and her parents are divorced. She studied piano and violin and even sang in a choir but these faded in importance. Joby then became one of only three girls on a flag football team, darting between bigger and heavier boys, helping her team to win the Community Center Championship. She enjoyed school until she got to high school where she found it “boring” and “not challenging.” She became involved with the school newspaper and generated some excitement with her articles.

Joby was accepted as a member of Kidsboard, a youth leadership group whose purpose was to give advice to adults. When local authorities proposed a curfew for teenagers, Joby led the Kidsboard in voicing their opposition. “We decided there was no fair way to enforce the idea. We testified at community hearings and before the city council.” This time the adults listened and the curfew was defeated.

Joby and the Kidsboard did not always have success. When the city council moved to shut down the dance clubs in Seattle for teenagers, they fought the proposal but only won part of the battle. Some of the dance clubs were allowed to remain open but they had to comply with new city regulations.

She realizes that social action does not mean that you are always going to win or be popular. “Leadership doesn’t always mean you get what you want. You need to experience what it feels like to not get what you want, to fail. You need to fail to experience how to get up for the next time.” However, Joby has succeeded more times than she has failed. She became one of the key organizers of a Teen Convention that focused on youth violence. Several hundred young people from various high schools attended the convention.

She also worked the Teen Hotline where troubled teens can telephone and talk about their problems with other young people. They call with questions on drug abuse, suicide, family problems, health concerns and teen pregnancy. Sometimes teens just call to talk about how they can get along better with other kids. “I remember once I talked with someone who had breast cancer,” Joby recalls. “She didn’t know how to tell her family. She was confused and scared. I talked with her and listened. Later, she called back and wanted to become a volunteer. She had told her parents and was happy with her decision. We get a lot of “thanks-a-lot” calls. It makes me feel absolutely wonderful. It makes the training worthwhile.”

The list of accomplishments that Joby has achieved reads like a list of programs initiated by a congressional leader. She has spent more time in lawmaking chambers than many legislators. She has testified for youth before the Seattle council, the Washington state legislature and before congressional committees in Washington, D.C. She has urged policy makers to utilize youth as a valuable resource, and encouraged adults to listen to young people about decisions that affect them. She publicly discussed these issues with Senator Ted Kennedy on the *Today Show*.

One of Joby’s dreams is to get at least two young people on every city board and commission in Seattle – health, the arts, animal control, everything. She wants them there not merely as advisers, but as voting members. The assistant to the mayor of Seattle remarked, “Some people say she is destined to be a great leader. Many of us are convinced that she has already established herself as one.”

Tips For Taking Social Action

- 1. Select a situation that would benefit from change**
- 2. Read, interview, telephone and do research on the situation**
- 3. Think of as many ways as possible to address the situation**
- 4. Get other people involved with you as a support team**
- 5. Recognize your opposition and their thinking on the situation**
- 6. Get the word out in local newspapers, church bulletins, TV, and so on.**
- 7. Raise money if you think that it will help in making others aware**
- 8. Carry your action out in actions, speeches, petitions, letters, and so on.**
- 9. Evaluate what you did right and what needs improvement**
- 10. Be courageous! Expect opposition but if you are convinced of the importance of the situation, keep working at it!**

-- Adapted from *Kids With Courage* by Barbara Lewis
Free Spirit Publishing, Minneapolis, MN 55401

LET US REMEMBER...

A Five-Day Teaching Unit for Seniors in Lasallian Schools - Seniors

Objectives:

- To reflect upon the key events and experiences of each individual's faith journey at this time of transition
- To recognize examples of God's Presence in one's life
- To offer guides for the journey
- To provide a Lasallian frame of reference which might motivate the student to become actively involved in serving others after graduation
- To prepare a Mission Statement which expresses how the Lasallian experiences can be integrated into one's personal identity.

Components:

- Day one: Sharing Our Story: Remembering the Presence of God
- Day two: Growing Pains: Examining the Struggles We Encounter on Our Journey
- Day three: Faith: The Role of God's Providence in Our Lives
- Day four: Called to Be Ministers of Grace: Examining Our Faith Response
- Day five: Living Jesus in Our Hearts, Forever: Examining the Call to Serve

Background:

Every person has a story. We gain a sense of ourselves by sharing those stories. Others we encounter influence our stories. Certain people have a powerful influence on our history and function as guides for our journey. For Christians, Jesus Christ is our guide. The Gospel stories speak to our faith. John Baptist De La Salle's story is one that has influenced thousands of people in the past 300 years and continues to point the way to Jesus to people in over 80 countries in the world today.

This curriculum has been developed as a reflection for twelfth grade students in a Lasallian high school. It is hoped that students have some sense of what it means to be a member of the worldwide Lasallian family and are familiar with the story, the achievement and the vision of John Baptist de La Salle. De La Salle wanted his teachers to be totally immersed in the life of the students, sharing their interests, their worries and hopes. He expected the students to see in their teachers concerned adults who would know them by name, who would help them to see themselves in their dignity as children of God, and from whom they might experience God's love for them. A hallmark of the Lasallian School is the mutuality of mediating God's love. De La Salle believed that the teachers would find God in the students and the students would see God in them. He wanted his educators to share the best of themselves with the

students putting their personal values and vision into creative tension with those of the students and to give students the awareness of the meaning and value of their lives.

As we journey with one another we share ourselves in community, in service, in telling our faith story--proclaiming God's Good News.

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools - Day One

Sharing Our Story: Remembering the Presence of God

Objectives:

1. To reflect upon the key events and experiences of each individual's faith journey.
2. To reflect upon De La Salle's own faith journey.
3. To recognize that God is and has been present to us.
4. To celebrate the promise of God's presence with us always.

Background:

Faith, much like all of life, is a journey. All of us go through stages, trials, surprises, failures and eventually, an awareness of who we are and who God is for us and our world. Faith is rooted in the past but must be reflected upon in the present in order to provide direction to the future. By reflecting upon the events of our lives, we can see, "with the eyes of faith," God working in our lives. Faith plays a role in the development of adolescents. During the teenage years, students will challenge, test, build upon, and form their own identity. This is done in the context of the communities to which they belong. It is important for the teacher to accompany teens through this searching for faith identity - lending example, challenging preconceptions and stereotypes, and proposing ways of understanding. John Baptist de la Salle compares the role of the teacher to that of guardian angels:

"Without someone to put God's truths into more concrete forms for their developing and distracted minds, they may well never be able to understand and practice what is so necessary for their salvation. This is why God in his providence has appointed you their visible guardian angels to perform this ministry in their regard." (MTR 5.1)

Through the sharing of their stories, students will be guided and invited to see where God has been present and working in their lives. They are challenged by the teacher and their classmates to look with the eyes of faith at their own experiences.

Materials:

- Handout 1.1
- Handout 1.2
- Handout 1.3
- Pen
- Paper/ Journals
- Candle (optional for prayer)

Opening Prayer:

Use Handout 1.1 - Choose five students to read the various parts. Allow adequate time for quiet. You may want to light a candle at the opening as everyone remembers that they are in God's presence.

Activity I:

After prayer, the teacher introduces the activity in these or similar words:

We gain a sense of ourselves by sharing our stories with others. At the same time, our encounter with others influences us. Certain events, experiences, places and people are a powerful influence on our journey through life. We may encounter people who act as guides, models, or heroes for us.

We all have a story of our life journey. Do we recognize God present in our lives? During the prayer, we reflected on a time when God was present in our lives. This week we will be sharing our faith stories and how those stories have been shaped and molded by our encounter with others. We will also reflect on how we influence the stories of others. Today we will begin by remembering and retelling the important events in our lives.

Pass out Handout 1.2. On this sheet are the beginnings of several phrases. Have the students take some time to fill out the sheet. The students will then share their responses with one or two other people.

Activity II:

1. Journal Writing: After they have shared some of their responses, have the students make a list of the key events, people, places, experiences, etc., where they believe they experienced God working in their lives. (Or when they wanted God to be present.) Have the students use their statements from Handout 1.2 to guide their work.
2. Some questions to think about:
 - *What kind of person am I?*
 - *What events have shaped my life?*
 - *Who are the people who have influenced me?*
 - *What are some important lessons I have learned?*
 - *How have I developed my faith, my beliefs?*
 - *Do I believe that God has been working in my life?*
 - *What are my goals?*
 - *What are the difficult times that I went through or that I grew from?*

Activity III:

1. It is not important that students finish now. This is the start of a larger project.
2. Students will return to this journal writing at other times this week.
3. Saint John Baptist de la Salle also wrote about his life. He saw that God had been working in the experiences that he had and even in his failures. Coming from a wealthy family De La Salle was not used to the people whom he gathered to work in the schools for the poor. His early teachers were not any better off than their students. He had this to say about his story, his “faith journey.” (Handout 1.3)
4. Have the class read and discuss this passage using these or other discussion starters:
 - What do you think De La Salle is saying?
 - How would you paraphrase this passage?
 - Have you felt this way before?
 - In the story about the disciples on the road to Emmaus, they began to understand who and what Jesus is about only when he explained the past events and the stories about him to them. How is this similar to De La Salle’s comment?
 - How have you recognized God present in your story?
5. If the students have not mentioned it yet, focus on the last few lines of the quote from De La Salle on how God has worked in his life (imperceptible, over a long period of time, etc.)
6. After the discussion, remind students that they will be exploring these and similar topics using De La Salle’s life story. Keep in mind the role of our story and God’s presence in our lives and the role we play in others’ lives as together we form community.

Closing Prayer: Handout 1.4

Invite the students to reflect on and give thanks for a time when they experienced God’s presence or God’s goodness in their lives. Then after a short pause:

“Let us close with a short prayer and in the voice of a high school student from Illinois.” (A student or a group of students may read the prayer)

Optional Activity 1: Depending on the ability of your students, you may wish to omit the introductory activity on personal story journal and expand on the discussion of De La Salle’s comments. Students should be encouraged to relate their own experiences of God’s presence in their lives.

Optional Activity 2: De La Salle did not experience God’s presence or God’s will as a voice or a dramatic miracle. Rather, he did so through the reflection on his life and experiences. Have students brainstorm events in the news or current events and discuss how they see God at work in these events. How can we all be the presence of God to these events?

Optional Activity 3: Expand on the opening prayer service by including petitions for current events, prayers for people who have been models of God’s presence in the student’s lives.

Walking in the Presence of God

Luke 24:13-35 (CEV adapted)

Leader: Let us remember...

All: That we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: Let us listen to a story from the gospel of Luke of how the disciples recognized Jesus' presence among them.

Reader 1: After the resurrection, two of Jesus' disciples were going to the village of Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. As they were talking and thinking about what had happened, Jesus came near and started walking along beside them. But they did not know who he was. Jesus asked them,

Reader 2: What were you talking about as you walked along?

Reader 1: The two of them stood there looking sad and gloomy. Then the one named Cleopas asked Jesus,

Reader 3: Are you the only person in Jerusalem who didn't know what was happening there these few days?

Reader 2: What do you mean?

Reader 3: Those things that happened to Jesus from Nazareth. By what he did and said he showed that he was a powerful prophet, who pleased God and all the people. Then the chief priests and our leaders had him arrested and sentenced to die on a cross. We had hoped that he would be the one to set Israel free! But it has already been three days since all this happened.

Reader 4: Some of the women in our group surprised us. They had gone to the tomb early in the morning, but did not find the body of Jesus. They came back saying that they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive. Some men from our group went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But they did not see Jesus either.

Reader 2: Why can't you understand? Didn't you know that the Messiah would have to suffer before he was given to his glory?

Reader 1: Jesus then recounted and explained all the stories written about himself in the Scriptures, beginning with the Law of Moses, and the Books of the Prophets. As they approached

the village where they were going, they begged Jesus to stay with them, and so he joined them as they ate.

Reader 4: After Jesus sat down to eat, he took some bread. He blessed it and broke it. Then he gave it to them. At once they knew who he was, but he disappeared. They said to each other, “When he talked with us along the road and explained the Scripture stories to us, didn’t it warm our hearts?” So they got up and returned to Jerusalem where they told the others that they had recognized the Lord when he broke the bread.

Leader: In the retelling of the Scripture stories and in the familiar action of breaking the bread, the disciples recognized Jesus present with them. We too are called to recognize God in our own stories and in the events of our lives. Let us remember a time when we felt God’s presence with us, maybe through another person’s words or actions, maybe in nature, or maybe even a time when we wished that God had been present.

(PAUSE FOR QUIET REFLECTION)

| | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| Reader 5: | Is that you, God? Are you really here with me? Are you in my joy and laughter, And in the sparkle in my eye? | God, are you everywhere? Is it you that makes the sun reflect on the rippling waves? Are you here? |
| | Is that you, God? Are you in my hurt and sorrow, and the tears that slip from my eye? | Do you change the colors of leaves in the midst of the autumn wind? Tell me, is it you? |
| | Sometimes, I don’t know, I’m supposed to believe, but deep down, do I truly believe? I want to. | Doubt is not the feeling here. It’s awe and wonderment. I’m totally mystified. Are you in everything? You <i>are</i> here, God; it <i>is</i> you! |

Jill Bowers
Sacred Heart Academy High School, Mount Pleasant, MI
*from pg. 74 of **More Dreams Alive: Prayers by Teenagers**
Saint Mary’s Press, Winona, MN*

Leader: Saint John Baptist de la Salle
All: Pray for us!

Leader: Live Jesus in our hearts.
All: Forever!

I AM...

Complete the following statements. You will then share some of your responses with others in your class. Be honest and write what is in your heart.

I am happy about...

My best friend is my best friend because...

I am glad I...

A person I admire is...

I am afraid that...

I hope that...

Five years ago I remember...

I wonder about...

Ten years from now I...

The most important thing in my life is...

I will stand up for...

My family taught me that...

I really needed God when...

In school I learned that...

I am still...

I laugh every time I think about...

I remember that I was...

God is...

I cry when I remember...

My favorite place is...

When I'm not busy I...

I accept the fact that...

A Reflection on Faith

St. John Baptist de La Salle's words:

Indeed, if I had ever thought that the care I was taking of the schoolmasters out of pure charity would ever have made it my duty to live with them, I would have dropped the whole project. For since, naturally speaking, I considered the men whom I was obliged to employ in the schools at the beginning as being inferior to my valet, the mere thought that I would have to live with them would have been insupportable to me. Indeed, I experienced a great deal of unpleasantness when I first had them come to my house. This lasted two years. It was undoubtedly for this reason that God, Who guides all things with wisdom and serenity, Whose way it is not to force the inclinations of persons, willed to commit me entirely to the development of the schools. He did this in an imperceptible way and over a long period of time so that one commitment led to another in a way that I did not foresee in the beginning

(Blain, *The Life of John Baptist De La Salle*, p. 80)

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us take a few moments to reflect on and give thanks for a time when we experienced God's presence or God's goodness in our lives.

(PAUSE FOR QUIET REFLECTION)

Leader: Let us close with a short prayer in the voice of a high school student from Illinois:

If you've ever looked at someone
and saw that the goodness is inside,
no matter what was on the outside,
then you've seen God ... with your eyes.

If you've ever heard a song,
that brings joy and hope to everyone around you,
no matter who says it's too stupid or holy,
then you've heard God ... with your ears.

If you've ever eaten your relatives' cooking,
and found the care and love baked into everything,
no matter how awful it tastes,
then you've tasted God ... with your mouth.

If you've ever smelled lilacs and roses,
growing in a grassy, green meadow, and you jumped and played
no matter how silly you looked,
then you've smelled God ... with your nose.

If you've ever recognized that Jesus is in everyone,
and you've done that extra good thing
and gone that extra mile, no matter how hard the road,
then you've felt God ... with your heart.

Laura A. Laskowski
Queen of Peace High School, Burbank IL
*from p. 88 of **More Dreams Alive: Prayers by Teenagers**
Saint Mary's Press, Winona, MN*

St. John Baptist de La Salle, pray for us!
Live Jesus in our hearts forever!

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools – Day Two

Growing Pains: Examining the Struggles We Encounter on Our Journey

Objectives:

1. To help students examine feelings of worry, fear, struggle, and loss – particularly those related to senior year.
2. To offer examples of De La Salle's own struggles and his response.
3. To reassure the students that they have a place, even in this time of transition in their lives.

Background:

We know adolescents are on a journey that tests hope, will, purpose, competence, love, care, wisdom, and fidelity. Each person's adolescent journey has a payoff: a youth will become either reasonably certain that life makes sense or that it does not. Thus the adolescent journey has to do with the very core of personhood: to what within me, outside me, and of me, can I be faithful or is there nothing that makes sense, and am I dissolved in apathy? To be dissolved in apathy is to be fragmented and not whole. Many youth dissolve into apathy, do not make it through the adolescent wilderness, and remain trapped in that wilderness without food, maps and guide. Others pack maps acquired from the culture and employ guides who leave them stranded deep within the wilderness. (William Myers, *Theological Themes of Youth Ministry*)

The purpose, today, is to help the student examine feelings of fear, loss, and abandonment by offering them guides and food for the journey. The wilderness is a land predominantly populated by youthful peers. Among peers in that wilderness is where a significant part of every youth's great adventure takes place, and peer interaction set with specific cultural boundaries provides the arena floor. On this peer floor, in the cultural wilderness, battles are waged: many are bloody, some are caring. The situations played out are a combination of drivenness and disciplined energy, of irrationality and courageous capability. Without romanticizing these situations, it can be said that they have the potential for bringing youth closer to the edge of existence, psychologically speaking, than the struggles of any other period. Questions like "With what peers will I be accepted?" translate into "Will I lose myself?" and "Is there anyone or anything to which I can be faithful?" It has been suggested that in no other state of the life cycle...are the promise of finding oneself and the threat of losing oneself so closely allied.

Each of us has a story. Together we gain a sense of ourselves by sharing those stories. Others we encounter influence our stories. Certain people have a powerful influence on our history and function as guides for our journey. John Baptist De La Salle's story is one that has influenced thousands of people in the past 300 years and continues to point the way to Jesus to people in over 80 countries in the world

today. As we journey with one another we share ourselves in community, in service, telling our faith story. For teachers this means walking with students where they are. Br. John Johnston, former Superior General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools says, “The students come to us with questions, convictions, perplexities, concerns, hopes, fears, and frustrations and we must meet them where they are, not where we think they should be, not where we were when we were their age, not where our past pupils were in the 60's, 70's or 80's. We must meet them where they are today. As their elder brothers and sisters, we must respect them accompany them, and walk with them side by side.”

An adult youth minister reflects:

I often lay adult expectations on the young people I work with thinking that they should be able to keep everything in long-range perspective. But teenagers, for the most part, live in the present. What matters most is what is happening right now. How their parents are treating them, how their peers are responding to them, what might happen for them this week means just about everything. Seeing their lives as “in process” is difficult for teens. Because of this it is important for me as teacher to live with them in the present. The zit on the nose, the rejection of that guy or girl, who they are seen with are foremost concerns. As much as I would like to, I cannot dismiss these concerns as petty or insignificant. What matters to them should matter to me. I can live with them in all of their anxieties, even those that seem silly to me, I may be able to lead them into some of the larger issues of life. For me, this perspective on ministry derives from a theology of the Incarnation. I believe that living with people where they are is precisely what God has done in Jesus. Jesus did not cling to his prerogatives as God, but emptied himself, seeking solidarity with humanity by becoming one of us. Seeking solidarity doesn't mean that I have to behave like a teen or that I look for artificial ways to impress young people, but that I enter their world in compassion as an adult friend. This is risky business because it means I must be willing to serve them, to let go of the accepted order of things where adults are somehow dominant. This involves leaving my space and physically entering into their world, messy though it may be. Anyone who has made this a regular part of their ministry knows how vulnerable and outright terrifying such a move can be and has perhaps faintly tested the risk God takes for us in the Incarnation. (Daniel Ponsetto, *Praying Our Stories*)

Materials:

- Handout 2.1 (Opening Prayer, Closing Prayer)
- Handout 2.2 (De La Salle's Story)
- Handout 2.3 (Student Reflections)
- Handout 2.4 (From Bad to Good)
- Handout 2.5 (How Can I Help?)
- Optional Activity 1 (Handout 2.6)
- Poster board or news print for each small group
- Marking pens for each group
- Masking tape to hang posters around room after small group presentations

- For Closing Prayer Activity:
 - Small stone for each member of the group
 - Prayer table, candle
 - CD or cassette of instrumental music suitable for guided meditation
 - CD or cassette player

Procedures:

Introduce the day’s activities (see Background)

Opening Prayer:

Use Handout 2.1. This prayer provides background and sets the theme. Select five readers. **Note:** Closing Prayer on same handout.

Activity I

1. **Introduction by teacher:** In the human experience there can be no gain without pain, no Easter Sunday without Good Friday, no birth without labor pains, and so on. Every hello means some sort of goodbye has taken place. Harsh as it may seem, it is the mystery of life. The process of growth includes suffering. However, we were not just dumped on earth with this, “no pain, no gain” situation and abandoned to go it alone. Jesus lived a human life and showed us how to do it right. He is our Brother, our Teacher, our Savior. He is the Gentle Friend who suffers with us and lets us know everything will be all right, not because he will prevent the pain, but because he will help us get through it. Certain people accompany us on our journey and offer us support through their love and understanding. We can look at the lives of the saints for inspiration. Because we are Lasallians, we will take a look at the struggles that De La Salle encountered on his journey and his response.
2. Distribute Handout 2.2: *De La Salle’s Story*
3. **Note to teacher:** Have students read aloud the various paragraphs or prepare ahead of time a skit based on the above.

Activity II (can be done in small groups)

1. Distribute Handout 2.3: *Student Reflections*.
2. Select 4 students to read a paragraph including the reflection question and to pause briefly for silent response. Teacher reads Br. Walter’s and then directs class to write a brief response using the sentence stems to stimulate their thoughts. Ask for a few volunteers to share with the class. You may use the following words or something like them: *Take a few minutes individually to reflect on your own response to De La Salle’s “growing pains” and the student responses above. Then share with your small group your thoughts. The following are offered as guides for your reflection:*
 - I learned...
 - I liked...
 - I will remember...
 - I found a source of strength in...
 - I don’t understand...
 - I would like to know...

Activity III (Done in small groups)

Move to small groups, distribute Handout 2.4: *From Bad to Good*. Following the directions on the handout, guide students through the handout activity.

Activity IV

Distribute poster board, pens and Handout 2.5: *How Can I Help?* When students have finished this activity, ask them to pick up a rock, move back to their seats, get comfortable, and clear their minds in preparation for guided meditation.

Closing Activity: Teacher Guided Meditation

- Set up prayer table and have tape or CD ready to begin ahead of time.
- Have students pass out rocks and direct students to Closing Prayer on Handout 1. (You could ask students to bring in a small stone for the class activity; have extras for those who forget.)
- **The purpose of this meditation is to help find the source of inner strength for our Journey.**

GUIDED MEDITATION SCRIPT

(Every student should have a small stone)

- Hold your stone in the palm of your hand. As you look at it, imagine that it is the greatest time of hurt, one that you can't forget. Take a few minutes of silence to recall that time of suffering. (Allow a minute or so. Make sure you (teacher) have a stone as well.)
- No matter how great they are, Jesus holds our sufferings, mistakes, faults, failings, and fears in his hand. He understands human suffering and loves us in a special way during these times.
- Now, turn the stone over, away from your sufferings of the past and think for a moment of how Jesus wants to change your life. Close your eyes and imagine that it is the stone which is rejected that becomes the cornerstone of your life. Imagine that it is the stone rolled away from the tomb opening you to new life.
- Look at your stone now in a new way. It is no longer a symbol of suffering, but a building block of your future.
- Spend a minute speaking silently to Jesus in your own words about how your future can be different with him at your side.
- When you are ready, bring your "building block" stone to our prayer table.

(When everyone has placed their stone, all pray Prayer on Page 2 of Handout 1)

“GROWING PAINS” OPENING PRAYER

Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God.

Reader 1: Each of us encounters rough roads on our journey. Worry, fear, and suffering are truly human. These cannot be avoided; however, they can be turned to good by our choices. Healthy grieving of our losses can lead us back to life, and suffering can help us see what is important. When it moves us to take action, to help other people heal, and to build a world of peace and justice, then it becomes redemptive. Jesus is our example. When Jesus encountered people suffering he was moved to act with compassion.

Reader 2: As they left Jericho, a great crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried, out, “Lord, have pity on us!” The crowd warned them to be silent but they called out all the more, “Lord, Son of David, have pity on us!” Jesus stopped and called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?” They answered him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” **Moved with pity**, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him. (Matthew 20:29-34)

Reader 3: Jesus, as fully human, suffered loneliness, fear, rejection, betrayal, pain and finally death. In Matthew 26 we read:

Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane. When they got there, he told them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” Jesus took along Peter and the two brothers, James and John. He was very sad and troubled, and he said to them, “I am so sad that I feel as if I am dying. Stay here and keep awake with me.” Jesus walked on a little way. Then he knelt with his face to the ground and prayed. “My Father, if it is possible don’t make me suffer by having me drink from this cup. But do what you want, and not what I want.”

Pause for reflection

Reader 4: God, I know that “good” people get through their struggles and get through their pain and either die and become saints or? But what about me, God? Are you there, God? I’m not sure. I know that Jesus suffered heroically; but I am not Jesus. I’m not sure I see anything in me just now. I just know things seem so uncertain. Teach me to have hope. What do I do next?

Reader 5:

“Footprints”

One night a man dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonging to him and the other to the Lord. When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life. This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. “Lord you said that once I decided to follow you, you’d walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why when I needed you most you would leave me.” The Lord replied, “My precious child. I love you and would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.”

St. John Baptist de La Salle, pray for us. Live Jesus in our hearts, forever!

CLOSING PRAYER *(for use at the end of class)*

Thank you Lord Jesus for showing us how to change our sufferings into something new that will help us to use our gifts to help others. St. John Baptist de La Salle, may we learn from your example to trust in God’s mercy at those times when we encounter the rough spots in our journey. God, we thank you for all those who support us and serve as our guides for our journey. Amen.

St. John Baptist de La Salle, pray for us. Live Jesus in our hearts, forever!

De La Salle's Story

De La Salle suffered many hardships in the later years of his life. When he found out that one of his Brothers had left and kept some property for himself, he was greatly saddened. He was one of his most trusted companions. He asked God how this could be. He knew Jesus himself had been betrayed and let down by close friends. A young man, Clement, from an influential family told John Baptist that he wanted to purchase a property which could be used by the Brothers as a teacher training center. He convinced De La Salle to loan him money just until his own funds were received and promised to repay the loan as soon as his father returned. However, instead of paying off the loan, Clement told his father that De La Salle stole the money from him. When De La Salle tried to tell Clement's father what really happened, the father responded, "My son was below the legal age for signing documents. You tricked him into this financial arrangement." John Baptist had witnesses on his side, but they, too, turned against him because of Clement's father's influence. De La Salle knew he didn't have a chance of winning the court case even though he was totally innocent and that it would be bad for the schools if he remained in Paris so he headed to the south of France, leaving Brother Bartholomee in charge of the schools in the north. In his absence, and in spite of his innocence, the court condemned and fined De La Salle.

When De La Salle arrived in Marseilles, a port in the south of France, things went well for a time and then people began to spread rumors about him and to withdraw their support. The Brothers, fearing that their schools would close, asked him to leave. He then went to the Brothers in Grenoble where he was warmly received. Meanwhile De La Salle's painful rheumatism flared up again and he was forced to undergo a painful treatment where he was placed on a grid over a bed of coals, much like a barbecue. The treatment helped and he decided to go to a nearby place for retreat. Good air would also help his asthma.

At Parmenie, he found great peace. There he met Sister Louise who everyone thought was a saint. People used to visit her for advice and prayer. He told her about his trials. He thought he had failed and all had turned against him. She counseled him not to give up. He prayed to know God's will. He then received a letter from all the Brothers wanting him to return as Superior. He would have refused, but the Brothers reminded him that he had made a vow of obedience and they were now asking him to return. Obeying, he returned and the Brothers were overjoyed.

Some 200 years later, John Baptist De La Salle was declared a Saint. In 1950 he was made the Patron Saint of all teachers. There are now 25 Brothers who join him in being called Saint or Blessed from Belgium, Ecuador, France, Reunion, and Spain. We too are called to be saints, to be fully alive, to go about our ordinary lives in extraordinary ways. As De La Salle said at one point reflecting on his life, "Looking back, I now see that God was leading me slowly and wisely from one thing to another without forcing me and without my being aware of it. He is a God of surprises. Let's turn to him with confidence."

Student Reflections

As you can see from De La Salle's life, even saints suffer "growing pains" on life's journey. Read these students reflections on some of De La Salle's crises. Then silently reflect on the questions that follow.

If John Baptist de La Salle were here today I think he would tell those of us who are struggling with our faith to trust in God. He led a life of constant journeying and at times he seemed to be lost. It is those times when we feel lost that we actually start to understand who we really are. If you feel confused and do not know what life will be like after graduation, do not worry. You are probably on the way to finding out who you are and how you will live your life. *(Corey)* **Do you agree with Corey that clearer vision follows times of great confusion?**

God provides us with the things we need to overcome daily obstacles. Everything is possible through God. We can learn what we are to do with the things God gives us through meditation. We are to use the gifts God gives us for the good of others. God calls us to action. De La Salle was a man of action. *(Darren)* **What is God calling you to?**

John Baptist de La Salle was able to maintain this trust amidst his own doubts thus bringing to the world the gospel message through the schools of the De La Salle Christian Brothers. *(Brian)*
How does De La Salle respond amidst his doubts?

De La Salle, with courage, accepted his calling with Providence as his guide. Although in some brief moments he felt unworthy, he defeated those that would oppress him and his teachings. This courage and compassion gave light to many people: the unfortunate who desperately needed a tangible, loving guardian, those that follow in his teaching, and those who are touched by those who follow his way. *(Merridith)* **Everyone suffers growing pains. How did De La Salle cope?**

De La Salle encountered numerous obstacles through his life and suffered much opposition and rejections, and was even stripped of his priestly faculties as he lay on his deathbed.

I too encounter obstacles, opposition and rejection in my life.

De La Salle experienced discouragement and self-doubt in his life.

I too experience discouragement and self-doubt in my life.

De La Salle had complete trust in God's Providence. *I too can trust in God's Providence.*

De La Salle is a saint. *I can be a saint.* I am all of us. (Br. Walter Schreiner)

Take a few minutes individually to reflect on your own response to De La Salle's "growing pains" and the student responses above. Then share your thoughts with your small group. The following are offered as guides for your reflection:

I learned that...

I liked...

I will remember...

I don't understand...

I would like to know...

I found a source of strength in...

From Bad to Good

Our feelings are fluid and changing all the time. We roam from deep trust to deep fear depending on what is happening in our lives and how we are choosing to deal with it. For your personal reflection, respond to the following:

Think of a time when you experienced mild worry—

deep fear—

deep trust--

Very often good comes out of our sufferings as it forces us to seek new responses. When we meet our fears and share our hopes, we grow. For your personal reflection, respond to the following:

Think about a time in your life or in the life of someone you know, when good came out of sufferings or what seemed like a bad circumstance.

Share your response with your group. Pick one from your small group sharing to share with the large group.

How Can I Help?

For each of the following questions, take some time to reflect individually. Then share in your small group.

- Think of a time in your life that you felt lonely, rejected, or afraid.

- How did you deal with it?

- Who helped you?

- Have you been able to help someone who was suffering?

As a group: Select a recorder and reporter. Brainstorm ways that you can be there for others who are feeling abandoned on their journey. Select 10 ways and write them on the poster board. We will then share these lists with the large group.

Optional Activity

What Do We Fear?

Reflect on your answers to the following questions privately. Then we will share within our small groups.

Sometimes we suffer needlessly out of fear--fear of failing, fear of pain, fear of rejection.

What are three fairly common self-destructive or unhealthy ways with which many teenagers try to cope with their painful emotions?

Why do you think some teens choose these destructive ways?

What are three self-constructive or healthy ways that you can express unpleasant and painful feelings?

Optional Activity 2: Invite as a guest speaker, someone who would share their story of turning points, growing pains, or from bad to good.

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools - Day Three

Faith: The Role of God's Providence in Our Lives

Objectives:

1. To have the students reflect on their level of trust in God.
2. To have the students recall instances where they saw the Providential hand of God in their life.
3. To support the faith of all by the sharing of the students' stories of God's action in their lives.
4. To make the students aware of De La Salle's radical response to Providence.
5. To help the students understand the implications of a response to Providence such as De La Salle made.

Background:

One of the prime characteristics of De La Salle's life was his clear and implicit trust in the Providence of God. He relied on Providence in his own life and constantly encouraged the Brothers to do the same. What is Providence? In the Catechism of the Catholic Church we find the following:

By his providence God protects and governs all things which he has made, "reaching mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and ordering all things well." For "all are open and laid bare to his eyes," even those things which are yet to come into existence through the free action of creatures.

In this lesson, the students are asked to reflect on the role of God's Providence in their own lives. To help them with this task, they are provided with the following resources:

- Jesus Christ's words on Providence from scripture.
- The personal experience of their classmates relating to Providence.
- Information regarding De La Salle's radical response to God's Providence.
- Excerpts from three reflection papers from students in a Lasallian school who were studying the life and thought of De La Salle.

In using the student papers, it is important to realize that these are reflection papers written by the students in the middle of their studies on De La Salle. These are hardly their final thoughts on Providence, but were their reflections at a particular time based on their own personal histories, their reading, and class and personal discussion. The excerpts are provided to help promote reflection and discussion by your students.

Materials: Sufficient student copies of Handouts 3.1 – 3.4 that are found at the end of the Lesson.

Procedure:

Arrange the students in groups of four (or three if necessary). Make sure all students have a copy of each handout.

Opening Prayer:

- Read Luke 12: 22-32

Then He said to His disciples, "That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. For life means more than food, and the body more than clothing. Think of the ravens. They do not sow or reap; they have no storehouses and no barns; yet God feeds them. And how much more are you worth than the birds! Can any of you, for all of your worrying, add a single cubit to the span of your life? If the smallest things, therefore, are outside your control, why worry about the rest? Think of the flowers; they never have to spin or weave; yet, I assure you, not even Solomon in all his glory was robed like one of these. Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, how much more will He look after you, O you of little faith! You must not set your hearts on things to eat and things to drink; nor must you worry. It is the pagans of this world who set their hearts on all these things. Your Father well knows you need them. No; set your hearts on His kingdom, and these other things will be given to you as well. There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom."

- Ask the students to quietly reflect on their level of trust in God's Providence, God's loving care for them.

Activity: Personal Experiences of God's Providence

- Have the students read Handout #1, excerpts from Merridith's paper, a reflection paper on the topic of God's Providence. The students could read it quietly by themselves, or someone could read aloud while the others follow along. Inform the students that this paper and the other two student papers that will be looked at later are from students in another Lasallian school who were studying the life and thought of De La Salle. Tell them that these are not the final thoughts of the students on these topics, but rather their reflections in the middle of studying these topics based on their personal experiences, their reading, and class and personal discussions.
- Ask the students to take a couple of minutes to try to recall, as Merridith has done, one or more things from their life or the lives of family or other acquaintances that seem to illustrate God's Providence.
- Ask the students to share their recollections with the small groups.
- Near the end of the time period, ask if any students have a recollection they would like to share with the entire class.

Activity: Faith in God's Providence

- Tell the students that over the next several minutes they will be looking at John Baptist de La Salle's radical response to God's Providence at a critical time in the formation of the Christian schools and the Brothers, along with excerpts from reflection papers on De La Salle's response from two students in another Lasallian school who were studying De La Salle's life and thought.
- Have the students read Handout 3.2, the selection on De La Salle's radical response to God's Providence from The Work Is Yours by Luke Salm, FSC. In order to conserve class time for discussion, this handout could be distributed the previous class and its reading assigned as homework. If read in class, the students could read it quietly by themselves, or someone could read aloud while the others follow along. The same applies for the following two handouts.
- Have the students read Handout 3.3, the excerpts from Nicole's reflection paper on De La Salle's response and Providence in general.
- Have the students read Handout 3.4, the excerpts from Jessie's reflection paper on De La Salle's response, a paper in which she disagrees with De La Salle's approach.
- In large group, ask the students for their reactions to De La Salle's radical response to God's Providence along with the student reflections. Some possible questions to help encourage and guide the discussion are:
 - Does Jessie really understand the nature of and the motivations for the decisions that De La Salle made? Was De La Salle really testing God in giving up his source of income and then distributing his fortune to the poor during the famine? How would you have advised De La Salle to proceed?
 - In attempting to ascertain God's will, De La Salle spent much time in prayer and meditation. How did God answer De La Salle's prayers? In what ways does God answer our prayers and communicate his will to us?
 - Can you think of anyone else whose approach to God's Providence parallels that of De La Salle's? What is your approach like?
 - How can we decrease our anxiety and increase our trust in God? What works for you?
 - How can you tell when God is there offering you help? How can you distinguish your efforts from God's?
 - What can we really count on God for? Can we count on him for a miracle when we need one? Can we count on him to change the heart of another?

Closing prayer:

Ask the students to prayerfully reflect on where they are being invited to be more trusting today.

Merridith's Reflections on Providence

[The following excerpts are from a paper written by Merridith, a student in a Lasallian school studying De La Salle's life and thought, regarding Providence. This paper is a reflection paper and does not contain Merridith's final thoughts on the topic of God's Providence, but rather her reflections in the middle of studying this topic based on her personal experiences, her reading, and class and personal discussions.]

Many times in life people turn to God in order to gain a sense of clarity and a sense of assurance that everything will turn out right in their troubled lives. I have also had moments when I have turned to God and have prayed for a miracle when life has turned sour. When reading the book Beyond the Boundaries by Leo C. Burkhard, FSC, Monsieur Nyel explained Providence as "the loving care that God takes of his creatures. It was the way God arranges events in our lives for our own good even though we don't always see it his way." Sometimes it has seemed like my prayers have been answered and I have praised Providence, while other times I have felt all alone and have questioned Providence. Among the different trials in my life, two specifically come to mind where I saw contrasting actions of Providence...

My father passed away quite suddenly in September of my senior year...Maybe I was being selfish and immature in my thinking, because I wanted him to be there for my graduation and my college years. He was too young to die and I could not understand why Providence did not intervene...Although now I can understand that maybe it was for the better and now he cannot feel any more of the pains he had dealt with, I still cannot say I fully believe in that instance there was total good from Providence.

But there still is hope... I was deciding on a college to attend and had filed all the papers and taken all of the tests to join the Navy in their ROTC program and for their [Naval] Academy program as well...Everything was following the right track until everything went wrong...I had been mixed up with a few of the [naval] recruiters that had been later fired because of a recruiting scandal. I had put my full trust into their promises and had not applied for any other universities. Two weeks before graduation, no school and no scholarship, and I was completely depressed. I received a package in the mail from St. Mary's [University of Minnesota] and when I called I was offered a scholarship. I believe that Providence helped me through those tough times and I was meant to be...at St. Mary's.

Through the different times in my life I have dealt with many events and have honestly believed that there was some divine intervention that held my hand as I walked through these fires. Although I have doubted on a few occasions, I would like to believe in Providence and that God will take care of us. In closing, I would like to leave by writing a Brenton fisherman's prayer that seems to sum up my feelings:

*Protect me, O Lord;
My boat is so small,
And your sea is so big.*

De La Salle's Radical Response to Providence

(from The Work Is Yours by Luke Salm, FSC)

...[De La Salle] encouraged the teachers to be faithful to their duties in the community and the school, leaving to Divine Providence any concern for the future. It wasn't long before this approach began to create a certain uneasiness among the teachers. With no real guarantee for the future, they began to be concerned about what might happen to them if the fragile structure of the community should collapse. De La Salle responded by quoting the words of Jesus about the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. He renewed his appeals to them to leave everything to God and to abandon themselves to his Providence.

These pious exhortations fell on deaf ears. "It is easy for you to talk," they told him. "You have everything you need. You are a rich canon with a regular source of income and a guaranteed inheritance. You don't know what it is to do without. If our enterprise falls apart, you will survive and the collapse of our situation will not involve your own. But we are without property, without income, and we don't even have a marketable skill. Where will we go or what will we do if the schools fail and the people no longer want us? The only thing we will have left is our poverty and the only solution will be to go out and beg."

Their words struck home. De La Salle entered into a long period of meditation where he began to see the futility of giving a discourse on the Gospel that was so contrary to what he himself was living. He sought divine guidance in extended periods of prayer...After all, it was the Lord's work he was trying to accomplish.

This time, the divine imperative was clear. It was a moment of conversion, a decision even more radical than those he had already experienced leading up to this one...he knew how to meet the challenge of the teachers once and for all. John Baptist de La Salle resigned his canonry...

... Divested of his source of regular income, [De La Salle] yet retained his other financial assets. These, too, he was determined to give up. It would seem quite natural, and it was the expectation of the teachers as well, that he would use his wealth to endow the schools. The memory of Father Barre's advice that "founded schools founder" seemed to suggest a different solution. De La Salle addressed himself in prayer to his Lord in these words: "If you, my God, endow the schools, they will be well endowed; if you do not, they will have no endowment. I beseech you to let me know your will."

An unexpected and tragic famine in the winter of 1683-1684 provided the answer. The high price of food and the rigor of the winter turned the city of Reims into one vast almshouse. To the three schools and the house on the Rue Neuve the poor came in droves, children and adult alike, all close to starvation. None of them went away unprovided for. The daily distribution continued until there was nothing left. It got to the point where De La Salle himself had to beg for the bread that he could no longer afford to buy. Yet when it was all over, De La Salle reminded his community that, through it all and relying now on Providence alone, they never lacked the basic necessities.

Nicole's Reflections on De La Salle's Response to Providence

[The following excerpts are from a paper written by Nicole, a student in a Lasallian school studying De La Salle's life and thought, regarding De La Salle's response to Providence and Providence in general. This paper is a reflection paper and does not contain Nicole's final thoughts on these topics, but rather her reflections in the middle of studying them based on her personal experiences, her reading, and class and personal discussions.]

...through discussion about De La Salle, issues about God are coming up that I have thought a lot about over the past few years. Such questions like how can I decrease my anxiety and increase my trust in God?...How will I know when God is really there helping me? I am very unsure of how to answer these questions and they are causing me to feel a bit lost and confused...

John Baptist de La Salle sure did trust completely in God...But this whole concept is amazing to me and I think to many people now days. How could you just give up everything you own and trust in God to get you by?...

...I guess I believe that if you go through a horrible tragedy and end up with nothing that God will definitely help you through those bad times and not just sit and watch you scrape for life. I do not however think that I could just purposely throw away everything and trust that God will help me to be healthy and happy. Or maybe I do believe that God would help me out. It is just that I can't imagine throwing everything away and being happy about it and living happily forever without all of it. As I said before, I am very confused about all of this...

Another question that I always ask myself is how will I know when God is there helping me?... How will I know that it wasn't just my own doings and choices that made me get to that particular point? I wish I had some sort of detector that went off every time God was right next to me leading me the right way or wiping away my fears. I guess if I would just look to John Baptist de La Salle, he would probably tell me that God is always right there...

Jessie's Reflections on De La Salle's Response to Providence

[The following excerpts are from a paper written by Jessie, a student in a Lasallian school studying De La Salle's life and thought, regarding De La Salle's response to Providence and Providence in general. This paper is a reflection paper and does not contain Jessie's final thoughts on these topics, but rather her reflections in the middle of studying them based on her personal experiences, her reading, and class and personal discussions.]

A man was sitting in his living room and water started to seep into the house. Before he knew it, the dirty floodwaters were filling up the first level of his home. A truck came by with a man inside yelling, "Buddy, get into the truck! A flood is coming! You won't be safe in there!" The man shouted back, "Don't worry about me. I'll be ok. God will save me!" A little while later a boat came by. Seeing that the house was filled with water all the way to the second floor, the guy in the boat said, "Buddy, get into the boat! You're going to die if you stay in there!" The man in the house yelled back, "Don't worry about me. I'll be ok. God will take care of me!" So the boat left. Soon the man was on top of the roof of his house and a helicopter came with a man inside yelling, "Buddy, get in! You're going to drown!" The man yelled back, "Don't worry about me. God will protect me!" So the man drowns and when he gets to heaven he asks God, "What happened down there? Why didn't you save me?" Exasperated, God answers him, "What are you talking about? I sent a truck, a boat, and a helicopter!" Much like this man in the story, we believe that God can only provide for us through some miraculous happening. The truth is we shouldn't test God, but we should use our abilities and strengths that God gave us to earn a living and provide for ourselves, realizing that God provides and loves us through the people and events in our lives.

...we shouldn't expect God to hand us everything. De La Salle brought his belief in Providence too far...I believe that by putting his trust in God to provide day-to-day food and shelter for him and the rest of the brothers, De La Salle was not only putting their lives in danger but testing God and in effect saying, "Here I am, I serve you only and I love you, now provide for me." What De La Salle neglected was the fact that God had already provided for him. God gave him riches, the ability to teach, and a loving character...

... I believe we have to see each event in our lives as God's gift to us and we should use these gifts to praise him and to help the less fortunate around us, just like De La Salle did with his schools for the poor children. I believe that De La Salle should have been more realistic and seen his riches as another talent to help the brothers and children of his schools.

...through discussion about De La Salle, issues about God are coming up that I have thought a lot about over the past few years. Such questions like how can I decrease my anxiety and increase my trust in God?...How will I know when God is really there helping me? I am very unsure of how to answer these questions and they are causing me to feel a bit lost and confused...

John Baptist de La Salle sure did trust completely in God...But this whole concept is amazing to me and I think to many people now days. How could you just give up everything you own and trust in God to get you by?...

...I guess I believe that if you go through a horrible tragedy and end up with nothing that God will definitely help you through those bad times and not just sit and watch you scrape for life. I do not however think that I could just purposely throw away everything and trust that God will help me to be healthy and happy. Or maybe I do believe that God would help me out. It is just that I can't imagine throwing everything away and being happy about it and living happily forever without all of it. As I said before, I am very confused about all of this...

Another question that I always ask myself is how will I know when God is there helping me... How will I know that it wasn't just my own doings and choices that made me get to that particular point? I wish I had some sort of detector that went off every time God was right next to me leading me the right way or wiping away my fears. I guess if I would just look to John Baptist de La Salle, he would probably tell me that God is always right there...

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools - Day Four

Called to be Ministers of Grace: Examining Our Faith Response

Objectives:

1. To develop a genuine sense of social concern and responsibility by responding to the real needs of others in a Lasallian spirit of love and service.
2. To provide a Lasallian frame of reference which might motivate the student to become actively involved in serving others after graduation

Background:

As a sign of faith (Signum Fidei), De La Salle emphasized the value of helping others as a means of spiritual growth. Young adults discover that the simplicity of “loving others” becomes more complicated and uncertain with a variety of choices facing them. De La Salle warned that we ought to be aware of our best intentions. He advised us to connect our everyday, ordinary actions with our prayer in order to come to a deeper knowledge of one’s values, motives, weaknesses and capacity to love.

Lasallian spirituality identifies us as “ministers of grace.” The word “minister” comes from Latin and means “servant.” “Grace” is the energizing, dynamic, positive power of God that enables healing to take place in a wounded world. The Gospels portray Jesus as a “servant” who came “to serve, not to be served,” and is strikingly captured in the washing of the feet of the disciples at the Last Supper.

This way of understanding life in general and his life in particular, inspired De La Salle to examine his life and respond to the needs of the poor children of France in a positive way. To have merely aided the poor children would have been a humanitarian effort. But De La Salle perceived it as a call from God, to serve all God’s creatures because of their dignity as “children of God.” Therefore De La Salle assessed the gifts that God had given to him and, like Jesus, acted to heal the suffering of others. It is hoped that graduates of a Lasallian school would carry this spirit of service to others as “ministers of grace” beyond graduation. They are called to be aware that they are cooperators of Christ, just as De La Salle was, so that in tending to the needs of others, one helps others obtain salvation while serving the People of God and making the world better. It is through the term “minister” that one represents a new kind of force that will respond to the challenges of the world. And it is through “grace” that one is guided and strengthened in responding to this call in being God’s instrument of salvation for others, especially those in need.

Materials:

- Handout 4.1 & Handout 4.2
- Several complete editions of newspapers from the past week
- Loose leaf paper and pens

Opening Prayer:

- Distribute copies of Handout 4.1 for the opening prayer.
- For the first part of the prayer have either the teacher or a student assume the role of Prayer Leader. For the second section of the prayer have two students serve as Reader 1 and Reader 2.

Activity I:

Briefly introduce De La Salle's experience to the class with the following ideas:

John Baptist De La Salle was born into a wealthy family in Reims, France. He was studying to be a priest and as part of his training he taught religion to children in a parish located in the most crime-ridden section of Paris. A short while later his parents both died and he was placed in charge of his family's wealth and his younger brothers and sisters. A few years later De La Salle worked with some other people in France to establish a number of charity schools for poor children. Anger, disbelief and accusations of madness greeted De La Salle's actions. Numerous challenges threatened these schools but he trusted that he was doing what God wanted him to do to help the poor. Today hundreds of Lasallian schools around the world continue this legacy of education.

Activity II:

- In order to stimulate thinking about De La Salle's actions, ask some open-ended questions that do not necessarily have exact answers. This is to invite the student into creatively reflecting about what De La Salle was experiencing.
- Ask the class the following question:
“What might explain De La Salle's desire to serve the poor through the Christian Schools and his willingness to give up his previously comfortable life to do so?”
- Allow 10 minutes for discussion.
- Areas to consider for discussion:
 - *How did De La Salle see the Presence of God in this situation?*
 - *What gospel stories may have inspired De La Salle to do this work?*
 - *Why did he want Christian schools and not just ordinary academic schools?*

Activity III:

- Bring in newspapers collected from the past week or so.
- Divide the class into groups of 4-5 students. Distribute one complete newspaper to each group. Ask them to find ten articles or pictures of God's poor and suffering people.
- Distribute one copy of Handout 4.2 to each group and instruct the students to follow the directions and complete the handout.
- Allow 20 minutes for this experience.

Closing Prayer:

Ask a student to lead the closing prayer. Use the prayer written by a teenager to close the prayer. (See Handout 4.3)

Opening Prayer

Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God

Prayer Leader: My friends, what good is it to profess faith without practicing it?
Such faith has no power to save one, has it?

Class: If a brother or sister has nothing to wear
and no food for the day,
and you say to them,
“Good-bye and good luck!
Keep warm and well fed,”
but do not meet their bodily needs, what good is that?

Prayer Leader: So it is with the faith that does nothing in practice.
It is thoroughly lifeless.

(James 2:14-17)

De La Salle's words:

Reader 1: Jesus Christ, speaking to his apostles, said that he gave an example to them that they might do as he had done. He also wanted his disciples to be with him at all the conversions he brought about, so that they could see how he acted and take him as the rule and model for all they would do to win others to God.

Reader 2: This is also what you must do, since Jesus Christ has chosen you among so many others to be his cooperators in the salvation of souls. You must study in the gospel how Jesus brought his disciples to practice the truths of the gospel.

-- from the Fourth Meditation for the Time of Retreat

St. John Baptist de La Salle...pray for us.

Live Jesus in our hearts...forever!

Newspaper Exercise

John Baptist De La Salle responded to the needs of the poor at the time that he was living by establishing schools to help them realize dignity as human persons and children of God.

De La Salle's eyes of faith were opened to a wounded world that cried out for healing. His understanding of Jesus moved him to heal others. Today we face the wounds of loneliness, poverty, discrimination, violence, injustice, addiction, or physical or emotional pain.

- For each of the 10 newspaper articles or pictures write out a response that would bring dignity to the situation.
- Make a list of the areas where “broken people” need help today. They can include all ages: children, adolescents, adults, senior citizens. They can be areas of hurt in families, in schools, in cities or around the world.
- Each person in the group is to select a different area of need. Take out a sheet of loose-leaf paper. Write a letter to God asking for someone to respond to the needs of these people and to bring God's healing grace.
- How do I see myself in the future using my talents? How could I respond to these types of situations through my career, through political involvement, through volunteer and social work, through Church agencies?
- What were some service projects or volunteer activities that you did during these past four years that have helped others?
- Write a letter to a politician or religious leader informing him/her of the situation and requesting his/her action.

Closing Prayer

Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God

God is present throughout the land;
Holiness and goodness are in all of creation.

God is visible in those who work for the well-being of others:
the compassionate, generous, and unselfish.
God is present in those who persecute others:
the ones most in need of God's guidance.
God is visible in all the children of the world:
the playful, growing, loving, and trusting.
God is present in those who are imperfect.

The loving arms of God continue to hold those who turn away.
Be thankful for the forgiveness of God!
Though people choose sin over love, they will not be abandoned.

Rejoice!

Humanity will never be without the love of our God!
We are the children of God for all eternity.

Grace Telcs
Holy Names Academy, Seattle, WA
*from p. 94 of **More Dreams Alive: Prayers by Teenagers**
Saint Mary's Press, Winona, MN*

***Saint John Baptist de La Salle...pray for us.
Live Jesus in our Hearts...forever!***

Teaching Unit for Lasallian Schools - Day Five

Living Jesus in Our Hearts, Forever: Examining the Call to Serve

Objectives:

1. To reflect on the response of the call to serve in various dimensions of life.
2. To appreciate each student's role as a member of a Lasallian team of ministers.
3. To bring closure to these units through a mission statement.

Background:

De La Salle came from a time in history when the word "vocation" referred to a person entering the priesthood or religious life. As our understanding has evolved over the years, we today realize that all people have a vocation to which they are invited to respond in the course of their lives. The Catechism of the Catholic Church informs us that:

"Lay people share in Christ's priesthood: ever more united with him, they exhibit the grace of Baptism and Confirmation in all dimensions of their person, family, social and ecclesial lives, and so fulfill the call to holiness addressed to all the baptized." (#941)

"Those who with God's help have welcomed Christ's call and freely responded to it are urged on by love of Christ to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world. This treasure, received from the apostles, has been faithfully guarded by their successors. All Christ's faithful are called to hand it on from generation to generation, by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer." (#3)

The world has changed significantly since the time of De La Salle. We can ask ourselves what he would have envisioned for graduates of contemporary Lasallian schools. Would he desire that they be directed towards seeing themselves as "ambassadors of Christ" who are called and empowered to respond to the poor, the oppressed and the powerless? De La Salle understood the message of Jesus to be a calling to tend to the needy as an orientation of our entire life. We are called, or have a vocation, to live lives of service, to have that value integrated into all of our relationships, work, decisions and prayer. Failing to live lives of service is costly. It costs others, for their needs will be neglected, and it costs ourselves, for we will be closing our channels of love rooted in the gifts given to us by God.

We live in a culture that is saturated with individualism and self-interest. Inviting students to reflect on the implications of their call to serve in all dimensions of their lives, including their future careers,

relationships, and lifestyles, is a critical opportunity for them to discover the meaning of the Christian message from a Lasallian point of view.

To encourage students to grow in this Christian identity and to empower them for future service, a mission statement helps bring closure to these units. As a group they have the opportunity to express what being a Lasallian graduate means and to integrate that more deeply into their personal identity. They are not simply a “minister,” but a class of “ministers” who go forth as a group to live out the Lasallian mission.

Materials:

- Handout 5.1, 5.2, & 5.3.
- Blackboard and chalk, or newsprint and marker
- Audio player and musical recording of “Amazing Grace”

Opening Prayer:

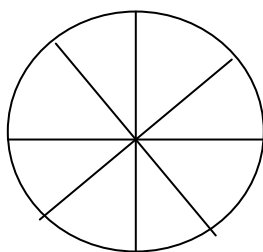
Distribute a copy of Handout 5.1 to each student for the opening prayer. You may want to select a student to be a prayer leader for the top part and another to read De La Salle’s words.

Activity I:

Following prayer, refer to the Scripture passage from the First Letter of John. Ask why the author of the First Letter of John calls some followers “liars.” (The discussion should be directed towards loving those around us that we see as a way of showing our love for God who we do not see, to fulfill the commandment of God.)

Activity II:

Draw the following image on a blackboard or newsprint:



- Explain that God is at the center of the diagram. When a person is born, they live their life on the outer circle. We all begin a life journey from our outer circle and like a magnet, God draws each person towards the center of God’s love. Of course, we are free to resist that pull and move outside the circle. But the further we are, the more God draws us to love.
- Ask the question: As a person moves closer to God in love, what happens to the distance between other lines? (answer: They draw closer.)
- Ask how De La Salle lived this out in his life. (Schools for poor, took in teachers, gave money to the needy.)

Activity III:

- Write out the term **MINISTERS OF GRACE** on the board. Ask what the word **MINISTER** means. Responses may vary. Often they will refer to a person who presides over Protestant worship services. Explain that it comes from a Latin word meaning “servant.” Up to the 16th century it referred to someone who served at the altar. In the 17th century a minister also referred to a person in charge of a certain task or office. This person was asked to perform certain work in the name of a higher authority, such as God or a king.
- Ask students what the word **GRACE** means. Again answers may vary. This word is sometimes not used except for the prayer before meals. Allow 5 minutes for this discussion.
- Explain after the discussion: Grace is the power of God that allows us towards goodness and love and away from evil and sin. Through grace, one is guided and strengthened in responding to the call of God to love others, especially our enemies and those in need.

Activity IV:

Distribute Handout 5.2 to each student. If possible get a recording of “Amazing Grace” to play for the class, or sing it with them. Complete the discussion on Handout 5.2. Allow 20 minutes for this exercise.

Activity V: Homework

Distribute Handout 5.3 on Mission statements. Have students write out a personal mission statement for a journal assignment as homework.

Closing Prayer:

See handout 5.4

Opening Prayer (from 1 John 4)

Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

All: **The commandment that God has given us is: “Love God and love each other!”**

Leader: Dear friends, don’t believe everyone who claims to have the Spirit of God. Test them all to find out if they really do come from God.

All: **The commandment that God has given us is: “Love God and love each other!”**

Leader: My dear friends, we must love each other. Love comes from God, and when we love each other, it shows that we have been given new life. We are now God’s children, and we know him. God is love, and anyone who does not love others has never known him.

All: **The commandment that God has given us is: “Love God and love each other!”**

Leader: We love because God loved us first. But if we say we love God and don’t love each other, we are liars. We cannot see God. So how can we love God, if we don’t love the people we can see?

All: **The commandment that God has given us is: “Love God and love each other!”**

De La Salle’s words:

“What ought to encourage you to have much zeal in your vocation is the fact that you are not only ministers of God, but also of Jesus Christ and of the Church. This is what St. Paul says when he expresses the wish that people should regard those who announce the gospel as ministers of Jesus Christ, whose role is to write the letter dictated by Christ, not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh....”

(from De La Salle’s Ninth Meditation for the Time of Retreat)

St. John Baptist De La Salle...pray for us.
Live Jesus in our hearts...forever!

Amazing Grace

One of the most popular religious songs is “Amazing Grace.” The words help teach us the meaning of **GRACE**. The composer of the song, John Newton, was a slave trader.

One night a storm arose, threatening to sink his ship. He cried out to God: “Save us, and I’ll quit this business and become your slave forever.” The ship survived. John quit the slave trade and became a minister of the Gospel.

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

This song presents **GRACE** as a positive, transforming force of God that allows healing to take place in a wounded world.

- Have you ever experienced this “grace” of God?
- Is there an area of your life right now where you need grace?

The Lasallian motto is **SIGNUM FIDEI**, which is Latin for **SIGN OF FAITH**. De La Salle emphasized that helping others was a **SIGN OF FAITH** that leads to Spiritual Growth.

- What does De La Salle mean when he calls you to be a **MINISTER OF GRACE** serving the needs of others, even if it requires you to leave your comfort zone?

Mission Statements

One of the most powerful methods of cultivating the passion of vision is to create and live by a mission statement, philosophy, or creed. Such statements capture what you want to *be* and *do* – what qualities you want to develop, what you want to accomplish, what contributions you want to make. Clarity on these issues is critical because everything else – the goals you set, the decisions you make, the world view you take, and the way you spend your time – depends on them.

A personal mission statement, based on well thought out principles and beliefs, becomes a standard for an individual. It becomes a personal constitution, the basis for making life-directing decisions and daily decisions in the midst of the circumstances and emotions that affect your life.

An empowering mission statement...

- represents the deepest and best within you. It comes out of a solid connection with your deep inner life.
- is the fulfillment of your own unique gifts. It is the expression of your unique capacity to contribute.
- addresses and integrates the four fundamental human needs and capacities – the physical, social/emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions.
- deals with all the significant roles in your life. It represents a lifetime balance of personal, family, work/school, community – whatever roles you feel are yours to fill.
- is written to inspire you - not to impress anyone else. It communicates to you and inspires you in the most essential level.

Writing a Mission Statement:

Using the above description, write a mission statement for yourself. Think about what you write, pray over it. It does not have to be perfect. Ideally, you will return to this statement from time to time to review it, to revise it, or even to change it completely.

Write about what you believe and what you want to do with your life (your relationships with others, with God, with yourself.) Remember, it should express your beliefs, but it should be short enough to get attention and have an impact. (It is not meant to be a “Mission Essay”)

When you have written your mission statement, rewrite it and make it beautiful. Use nice paper and a good pen/marker. Decorate it. Express yourself artistically! Be creative. This is about you.

Finally, reread your statement and pray a prayer of thanks or gratitude for who you are.

Closing Prayer

Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

I believe in the God of heaven
and in the God who lives inside all of us.
I believe in Jesus Christ,
the savior and the light of our life,
Who came to us in this world
to guide us to the Reign of God.
I believe in the miracle of everyday life
and of the everyday things we see here on earth.
I believe in the guidance of God
as I ride this roller coaster called life.
I believe in the goodness of people,
even those who do not show goodness in their heart,
for they too are the children of God.
I believe through the grace of God
I will succeed in my life
and in this uncertain world.

Irish E. Trinidad
Ramona Convent Secondary School, Alhambra, CA
From: More Dreams Alive: Prayers by Teenagers
Saint Mary's Press, Winona, MN

***St. John Baptist De La Salle...pray for us.
Live Jesus in our hearts...forever!***

Optional Activities

Optional Activity I:

In place of Handout 4.2, distribute newspapers to groups as directed. Give each student a 3x5 card with a hole punched in the corner. Ask each student to write a prayer for one specific article. Collect the cards and tie them with a piece of yarn. Place them near a crucifix or statue in class. Each day select one card for the prayer that day.

Optional Activity II:

Have the students choose a favorite selection from the Bible (or allow them to use one of the following Scripture quotes) and relate it to an issue of justice in today's world. Instruct them to come up with a creative way to present the issue and the scripture passage to the class in a way that it reflects the teaching and spirituality of De La Salle. Some possibilities include: reading it to the class, illustrating the passage, role-playing the passage, writing a poem or song about the passage, staging a debate on the passage, having De La Salle explain the passage. Allow a few days for the students to prepare their presentations.

- Luke 10:25-37: The Good Samaritan
- Matthew 25:31-46: The Last Judgment
- John 1:1-18: Prologue
- Matthew 11:25-30: My yoke is Easy, My Burden is Light
- Mark 10:13-27: Blessing of Children and Giving up Riches
- Luke 1:46-55: Mary's Canticle
- I Corinthians 13:1-13: The Power of Love

Optional Activity III:

Face the students and ask, "What ministry of helping others is God calling me to right now?" Have three students come to the front of the room to hold printed 8x11 cards. They read:

- CALL
- MINISTRY
- YES on one card, NO on a second card

Stand behind the first student (CALL) to demonstrate to the class this activity. Say "God calls me" then move behind the second student (MINISTRY) and say, "to teach about God and how the Gospels apply to life." Move behind the third student and say, "At this point I can accept or reject this call. I accept!" The third student lowers the NO card and keeps the YES card up. Allow the students a few moments to reflect on their call and ministry. Have each student come to the front of the class and take a turn going through the 3 steps. Conclude with spontaneous prayer, including a prayer for those who are unsure of what their ministry is.

Optional Activity IV:

De La Salle did not use the word minister in the singular but preferred to use the term **MINISTERS OF GRACE** in the plural. This reflects Jesus choosing the 12 or sending out the 72 in pairs to do God's work. There is a certain dynamic power or synergy in teamwork, more than just two ones working next to each other. It is said geese can fly 70 times farther when in formation than flying alone. A team of horses can pull 10 times their individual strength when working together.

Discuss:

- How does the power of Lasallian graduates increase when they join with other graduates in serving the needy?
- How might this relate to the scriptural promise of Jesus to be there whenever 2 or 3 are gathered in his name?
- How might the terms **HOPE** and **PROMISE** identify Ministers of Grace?