

# ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN D

## Theme: Living Our Faith

### Materials Needed

- Newsprint (or dry erase board) and markers
- Bible, with enthronement and candle, if possible
- The storybook(s) *Green Street Park* and/or *Drop by Drop*, available from Loyola Press, or the stories from the [WeAreSaltAndLight.org](http://WeAreSaltAndLight.org) website

**Each Catholic School in the Diocese of Duluth was given a copy of these two books**

### Gathering

*The first task in each session is to establish a sense of welcome and hospitality. The second task is to begin the session with the child's human experience, i.e. the child's "story." A Bible should be enthroned prominently in the room. Gather around the Word for prayer.*

At the start of the session, ask the young people to think about and then share answers to the following question:

How have you worked with others to try to help make a difference, to make our families, our neighborhood and the world better?

Write answers on the newsprint or dry erase board.

### Opening Prayer

**Let us pray.**

**Good and caring Father, you love all of your children. Jesus, help us see your face in others. Holy Spirit, help us to work to end poverty and promote life, justice and peace by speaking up for those in need in our community, our nation, and our world. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*Students are seated. Catechist takes Bible from enthronement and proclaims reading. Be sure reading is marked in advance.*

## Scripture Reading & Faith Sharing

Proclaim the reading (Matthew 25:31-40):

### **A reading from the Gospel of Matthew...**

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

After the reading a brief period of silence follows. Then, the catechist asks the children these or similar questions:

- What did you hear Jesus saying in the reading?
- What were you surprised to hear?

After the children's initial response, proclaim the reading again.

### **A reading from the Gospel of Matthew...**

- What is Jesus trying to teach us in this story?
- In whom is Jesus present in our community today?
- Name a time when "Jesus" was hungry and you fed him? Or, thirsty and you gave him drink? Or, a stranger and you welcomed him? Or, sick and you visited him?

## Storytelling and Discussion

The bishops encourage us all to "build a world of respect for human life and dignity, where justice and peace prevail" (*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, no. 57). They say that everyone—even young people—have a role to play.

The catechist should explain that we will now hear some stories of children being Jesus' disciples by working to make a positive difference in their own communities.

Read the elementary storybooks, *Green Street Park* and *Drop by Drop*, which offer great examples of Catholic young people making a positive change in the local and global communities. These books from the U.S. Catholic bishops' Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development, are available for order through the Loyola Press website

An alternate option is for the catechist to read the following examples of children working to transform their communities, from the [WeAreSaltAndLight.org](http://WeAreSaltAndLight.org). Depending on the students' grade level, the catechist may wish to paraphrase the examples and then share them with the young people as examples of what youth are doing in other parts of the country.

- Art in Action! Youth Use Art to Fight Landmines. . .
- Catholic School Teaches Care for God's Creation. . .
- A School that Builds Bridges. . .  
(these examples are found on the internet)

After sharing the story or stories, ask the young people:

- How did the children put their faith in action?

Next, as a group, identify an issue that many of the young people care about.

Then visit the [PovertyUSA](http://PovertyUSA) or [CRS Education](http://CRSEducation) web sites for age-appropriate activities that you can use to help the young people learn more about the issue they care about. Be sure to help the young people to understand the experiences of others who face the issue using videos or other resources that are available on the websites.

Brainstorm with the young people about what action they might take to put their own faith in action. Beforehand, the catechist may wish to review the U.S. Catholic bishops' *Two Feet of Love in Action* model and handout so that he or she may help to encourage ideas about both Charitable Works activities (which meet short-term, immediate needs) and Social Justice activities (which seek long-term, systemic change).

- Here are some examples of Charitable Works responses: Organize families to meet on a Saturday morning to work together with the local St. Vincent de Paul chapter or local food pantry. Gather afterward for lunch, prayer and reflection.
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen and then participate in a Hunger Walk.

- Bring in canned goods. Have a prayer, blessing and discussion before delivering to the local food pantry.
- Establish a "pen pal" relationship with a parish religious education class or a school in another country.
- Collect clothing and toys for children of the same age—perhaps at a time other than Christmas—and donate them to a local organization serving low-income children.
- Contact the local Children's Hospital to ask what your class could do to be of service to hospitalized children. Some hospitals accept donations of new toys or books.

Here are some examples of Social Justice responses:

- Help the young people write letters to their local, state, or national elected officials to express their concerns about an issue. If possible, help the young people select an issue on which many other Catholics are also doing advocacy, through your state Catholic conference, USCCB, or Catholics Confront Global Poverty.
- Organize families to participate in a "lobby night" or pro-life march if one is being planned by your diocese or state Catholic conference.
- Invite a local legislator to the class to talk about how he or she works to make sure the needs of those who are poor and vulnerable are addressed.
- Join the efforts of a local organization that receives funding from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. Find groups in your area on [this map](#). (Select "All Markers" and then zoom in to your county.)
- Organize a fair trade Christmas sale to promote economic development and fair wages in countries around the world.

### **Closing Prayer**

Return to the adult gathering or return to the prayer circle. Recall the table image used in the opening exercise. Bring the children together and quiet them for prayer.

- Ask them to remember that Jesus is present in those who are hungry, thirsty, sick, stranger, and in prison.

**Let us pray.**

**Good and caring Father, thank you for your love for all people.**

**We pray now for those in whom Jesus is present, including those who are hungry, thirsty, sick, strangers, and in prison.**

**Help us to share your love by working for justice and peace for all your children.**

**We ask this in the name of Jesus your Son and through the power of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.**