

Social Justice in Our Schools

To bring culturally responsive education in our classrooms, the following document has been prepared to assist teachers in integrating lessons on social justice, diversity, and culture into units. For each month of the year, a theme has been designated based on the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching. On the corresponding pages, you will find books, activities, key understandings, and connection to the standards.

Why is integrating these topics important?

The tenets of Catholicism have a strong foundation in the fundamental understanding of the value and dignity of each person. As we see polarization and discord within our society, it is important for students to discuss and understand the world through the lens of Catholic social teaching. We are also blessed to be a diverse Diocese and as such should make every effort to increase student understanding and appreciation of other cultures, countries, and ethnicities.

How can I use this document?

Each month has a specific theme, tied to Catholic social teaching, which ideally can be connected to your existing plans and curriculum. Over the course of a month, you would ideally integrate 2-3 texts and corresponding activities to capture the theme. This document is intended to be a starting point and teachers are encouraged to build from what they find below.

Do I need to use these specific texts and activities?

No, this document is intended to serve as a guide. You are, of course, welcome to use all the activities provided but feel free to adjust the texts or activities to suit your current classroom.

How can I access these texts?

Some texts may already be available within your school and can be easily shared between classrooms and grade level bands. The NYC public library also has each of the listed text available for loan with a valid library card. YouTube also has most of the texts listed below as read alouds which can be found by searching YouTube with the text title followed by “read aloud.”

Monthly Themes

<i>September</i>	Solidarity, All are Welcome and Loved
<i>October</i>	Call to Family, Community, and Participation
<i>November</i>	Dignity of Work and Rights for Workers
<i>December</i>	Celebrations Around the World
<i>January</i>	Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
<i>February</i>	Rights and Responsibilities, Black History Month
<i>March</i>	Rights and Responsibilities, Women’s History
<i>April</i>	Care for God’s Creation
<i>May</i>	Life and Dignity of the Human Person
<i>June</i>	Being Leaders in Faith

September

Solidarity describes the belief that we are all one family in Christ regardless of national, racial, ethnic, economic, or ideological differences.

Key Understandings

- We are one human family.
- Diversity is important and should be celebrated.
- Each person is different, special, and created in God's image. Appreciating and celebrating other's differences honors God's work in our creation.
- We are called to be peacemakers and to love our neighbor.

Integration of the Standards

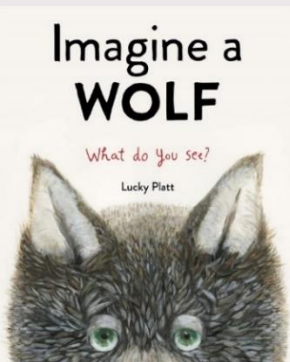
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Religion	3KF1, 3KF2, 3SJS3	4KF1, 4KF1, 4SJ3	5KF1, 5SJ6
Social Studies	3.5b, 3.8		5.1c, 5.5

Key Vocabulary

- God's Family
- God's Image
- Unique
- Diversity
- Compassion

Integrating the Lives of the Saints

- St. Damien the Leper
- St. Martin de Porres
- St. Catherine of Genoa
- St. Teresa of Calcutta
- St. Vincent de Paul



Imagine a Wolf (Lucky Platt)

This text introduces students to the idea of bias and can begin a conversation on the biases we have and how to address them.

Before Reading: Begin by reading students the book title "Imagine a Wolf." Have students close their eyes and picture a wolf in their mind. Encourage students to share the images they thought of. What characteristics or behaviors describe a wolf?

During Reading: What do you think the author is trying to tell us in this story? How do you think the wolf would feel knowing that these assumptions are being made?

After Reading: Have students think about a time that they may have assumed something before they really knew a person or a situation. Students do not have to share these moments. What caused them to make these assumptions? Introduce students to the word bias and give examples of when/ how this can occur. Have students work in pairs to develop strategies to combat bias or what to do in a situation where they may see bias at work. You can also extend the activity by introducing the idea that bias can be offset by learning more about a person, situation, or group. Encourage students to learn the facts about wolves and create a short presentation about their real characteristics.

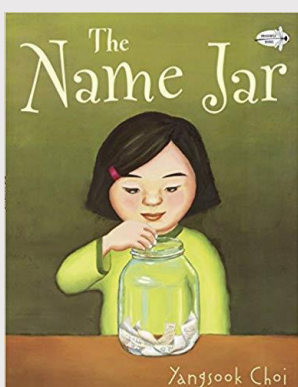
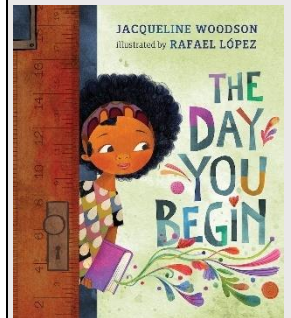
The Day You Begin (Jacqueline Woodson)

Before Reading: Introduce students to the story by using the follow quote found in the text "There will be times when you walk into a room and no one there is quite like you until the day you begin to share your stories." Have students think about what this means. How are we each unique? How does it feel to walk into a room where you feel different? Why is it important to share our stories?

During Reading: As you are reading, have students point out examples of why different characters feel that "no one is like them." How do you think these characters feel about being different? What makes you think that?

After Reading: Remind students that by sharing their differences, the characters also found the places where they are similar. In small groups, have students think of the differences shared in the book (physical characteristics, language, country of origin, food, etc.). How are students in the group similar and different. You can also extend the lesson by having students write about their differences. The following link contains an extended lesson on using poetry to help students share about their important differences (blue arrow to download lesson plan)

<https://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems>



The Name Jar (Yangsook Cho)

This text is a good follow-up to "The Day You Begin" as it can allow further investigation into being different and celebrating differences.

Before Reading: Ask students to share what they may know about their names. What do they like about their names? Would they change anything?

During Reading: Why did Unhei tell her classmates she had not picked her name yet? Would you change your name if you could? How do you think Unhei's family felt about her wanting to change her name?

After Reading: What names would you put in your name jar? What does Unhei learn in the story? Have students speak to their family members when they get home and find out about their names. Is there a special story or meaning associated with their names? What does their name mean? Students should create a "stamp" to represent their names and write an explanation of the uniqueness of their names. You can also extend the activity and create a mural using the "stamps" students have created.

October

Call to Family, Community, and Participation describes the belief that describes the belief that marriage and family are a central part of our human lives. The Church serves as our faith family likewise our school serves as a type of "family."

Key Understandings

- Families have many similarities and differences, but all families are important in the love they provide.
- God's love for us is reflected in the love of our family.
- Our Church is a family of individuals who share the faith. Schools and communities also mirror families.
- The Catholic sacrament of marriage is between a woman and a man. *It is important to be sensitive to families who may have a different type of union

Key Vocabulary

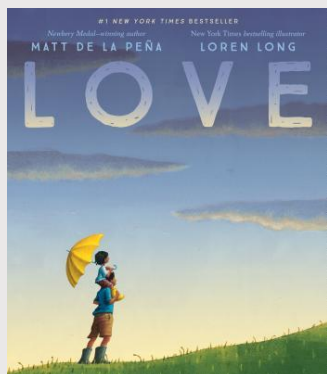
- Sacrament of Holy Matrimony
- Family of believers
- "Body of Christ" in reference to the Church

Integration of the Standards

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Religion	3CC1, 3SJ7,	4KF2, 4SJ8	5SJ9
Social Studies	3.5a,	4.4e	

Integrating the Lives of the Saints

- St. Teresa of Avila
- St. Luke
- St. Faustina Kowalska
- St. Hedwig



Love (Matt de la Pena)

Before Reading: Using the cover, title, and illustration, ask students to do a quick draw or quick write (2-3 minutes) of what comes to mind when they think of the word love. Depending on time, have a few students share their thinking.

During Reading: The text in this book is simpler but the illustrations and word choice convey deeper meaning. As you read the book aloud, have students make note of what they see in the illustrations. What different families do they see? What types of homes are in the story?

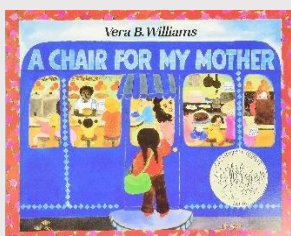
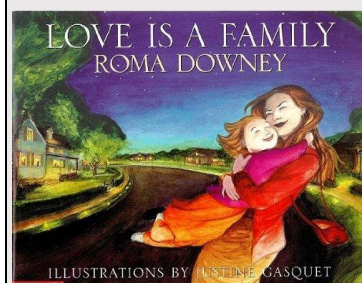
After Reading: In small groups, have students return to the text and look deeper into specific scenes. Using copies of the text/ images, have students discuss what deeper message the author was trying to convey. For example, on the page that describes burnt toast, the author/ illustrator shows an adult getting on the bus with two younger boys at home. The author is using the burnt toast to show how one brother takes care of the other as a sign of love. Have students share their understandings then have students individually make another drawing or writing about what love means to them regarding their families. How does their family/ home remind them of love?

Love is a Family (Roma Downey)

Before Reading: Create a list of attributes of a family. If students are focused on family members (i.e. mom, dad, siblings), discuss the book cover. Are all families made up of the same people? What are the core elements of a family?

During Reading: Throughout the story, Lilly is learning about different family dynamics. Introduce students to the idiom "the grass is greener on the other side." What does this mean in the context of the story? How does Lilly's character change?

After Reading: At the end of the story, Lilly talks about how she will take care of her mother as she gets older. What are some other responsibilities we have to our families? What words and actions are important in our family? Have students think about responsibilities that they have in their families. These should be specific such as helping a younger sibling put on their shoes. Students will complete a quick write to note ways that they help within their families and ways that they can help as they get older.



A Chair for My Mother (Vera Williams)

Before Reading: Begin by having students think about gifts that they would want to get or have gotten for their mothers. Read the title of the book and have students share their thoughts around why this chair is important for the mother. Why do you think she wants to buy her mother a chair?

During Reading: As you are reading, point out vocabulary this is significant in the story (ashes, bargain, spoiled, rosy). What do these words help us understand about the story? For example, grandmother was looking for a bargain helps us understand that the family did not have extra money to buy items for full price.

After Reading: The story is based around the family finally buying a chair but what does this story show us about community. How did the community make a difference in the story? What can this show us about responsibilities in our community? This is a good opportunity to focus on ways that the Church or parish outreaches to the community. Have students look for ways that their parish (or the school) impact the community as well as ways that students or their families can contribute to these efforts.

November

Dignity of Work and Rights for Workers describes the belief that *that work is more than just a way to make a living. It is how we participate with God's creation. All workers should have access to worker's rights.*

Key Understandings

- God provides for our physical and spiritual needs.
- Farmers and farm workers are a vital part of our daily lives.
- All types of work are important and effect our world. All workers deserve consideration and respect.
- Workers are not always treated fairly, and we should have the goal of creating fair working conditions for all people.
- Workers of color, women, children, and undocumented individuals often face the greatest challenges in equitable work opportunities.

Integration of the Standards

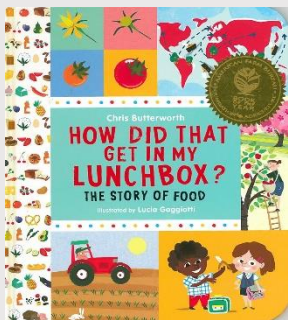
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Religion	3SJ5, 3SJ6	4SJ5, 4SJ6	5SJ5, 5SJ6
Social Studies	3.8b, 3.8c, 3.9b	4.5, 4.7a	

Key Vocabulary

- Fair wage, living wage
- Migrant workers
- Worker's rights
- Child labor
- Undocumented workers

Integrating the Lives of the Saints

- St. Joseph the Worker
- St. Isidore the Farmer
- St. Elizabeth of Hungary
- St. Andrew
- St. Catherine Laboure



How Did that Get in My Lunchbox? (Chris Butterworth)

Before Reading: Ask students to share their thoughts on where food comes from. Create a list of food sources that students share as well as any workers that they feel like contribute to the process.

During Reading: This text can be used as a read aloud or for a jigsaw activity if you have multiple book copies (check out the local library to borrow between branches). For a jigsaw activity, use small groups to read about a specific lunch component and then present to other groups or to the class about where it comes from. As students are sharing, emphasize the journey of our food and the workers that make it possible.

After Reading: Have students draw a picture of their favorite lunch or other meal item. Students will write about each component of the lunch, where it comes from, and the workers that help produce it. Older students might also begin to think about how food is developed (i.e. the process of making cheese). This lesson can also be extended to math to include a survey/ graph of where produces is sourced from. Students can accompany parents to the supermarket with a list of fruits and mark where each is from then come together in small groups to create graphs showing countries of food origin.

First Day in Grapes (L. King Perez)

Before Reading: Preview the text by reading the first few sentences describing Chico's life as a migrant worker. Define the term migrant worker and explain to students what that means. Ask students to share the challenges that might come from being a migrant worker, especially a child.

During Reading: This text is a good opportunity to discuss challenges of migrant workers but is also relatable in dealing with bullies. What strategies does Chico use to help get through his first day? How does he make connections with others?

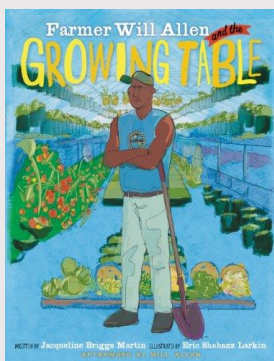
After Reading: This text can serve as an introduction to migrant workers. Have students explore the topic further with titles such as *Gathering the Sun (Ada)*, *Side by Side: Lado a Lado (Brown)*, *Tomas and the Library Lady (Mora)*. As they are reading, students should record their observations about life as a migrant worker. Afterward, have students work in pairs or small groups to create poems or prayers for workers. For poems, students can use *Gathering the Sun* for examples.

Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table (Jacqueline Martin)

Before Reading: Begin by having students use the title and illustrations to make predictions. Is this text informative or narrative? What makes you think this?

During Reading: Compare and contrast Will's "farms" to a traditional farm. Were the challenges similar? Stop midway through the text and have students reconsider the question "is this text informative or narrative?"

After Reading: This text can be used to focus on problems/ solutions within the plot. Have students identify the problems and solutions identified within the text. To increase complexity of the task, have students identify the steps that needed to be taken and the character traits that Will possessed to make these solutions possible. What is the overall message of the story? How can one person impact the world? This text is based on a true story. To extend the reading, students can research the Will Allen and investigate the impact his work has on urban areas. Students can also look at initiatives in the NYC area.



December

Celebrations around the World

focuses on the joy that comes from sharing beliefs and traditions with others.

Key Understandings

- Celebrations are a key component of religion and culture.
- Understanding and respecting other ways of celebrating is important to fostering a culture of inclusion.
- Individuals are part of different faiths.
- There are significant connections in global religions as well as in celebrations associated with these religions.

Integration of the Standards

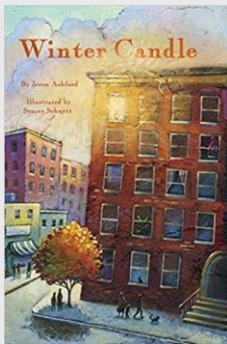
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Religion	3CC7, 3SJ3	4CC7, 4SJ3	5CC7
Social Studies	3.5, 3.5b		

Key Vocabulary

- Culture
- Tradition
- Inclusion
- Global religions (Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism)

Integrating the Lives of the Saints

- St. Lucy (Lucia)
- Our Lady of Guadalupe
- St. Nicholas
- The Immaculate Conception
- Ss. Joachim and Anne



Winter Candle (Jeron Ashford)

Before Reading: Ask students to consider how candles are an important part of our preparation for Christmas. How do candles help us celebrate this holiday season? Candles are an important part of other celebrations as well. Students can share about any other holidays they know that also use candles.

During Reading: This text also connects to October's focus on family and community. As students are listening, have them look for examples of community and family connections.

After Reading: What holidays or cultural vocabulary did students notice during the reading? Use this text as a starting point for student or group research on other winter holidays. Students can work in small groups to learn more about a holiday. While students are learning about the new holiday, encourage them to look for ways that this celebration is like their own. Where do you see connections and similarities? What do you want to know more about?

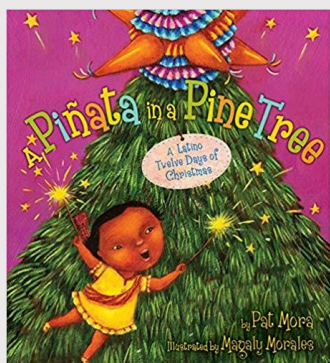
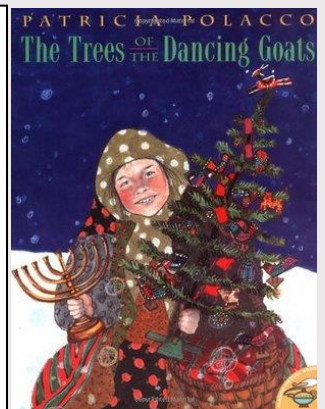
The Trees of the Dancing Goats (Patricia Polacco)

*This text contains scenes of illness amidst the Scarlet Fever outbreak. It most likely will remind students of the COVID-19 pandemic and should be previewed with students accordingly

Before Reading: What holiday symbols are visible in the front cover illustrations? What do you think this tells us about the story?

During Reading: How do you think the family felt knowing Trisha may have been exposed to Scarlet Fever? What influences the family to stop their celebrations and focus on their neighbors?

After Reading: How did Trisha's family share the holiday spirit with their neighbors? What connections did you see between the two faiths? How does this story embody the spirit of giving at Christmas? Trisha's family decorated the tree with carved animals. Have students work in pairs or small groups to create decorated trees that symbolize the true spirit of love and giving during the holidays.



A Piñata in a Pine Tree

*This text is simple but is a good starting point for looking at the way culture influences our celebrations.

Before Reading: Is Christmas celebrated the same around the world? What traditions, foods, or activities does your family have at Christmas? Compare student responses and talk about different traditions that may be specific to a culture (i.e.

During Reading: What vocabulary words do you see? Have you heard these words before? Do you have similar items or words in your culture?

After Reading: Students can create their own 12 Days of Christmas based on their culture (i.e. An Italian 12 Days of Christmas) and complete the text with examples of how they celebrate Christmas/ holidays specific to their culture. This can also lead into a mini research activity on ways that Christmas is celebrated around the world. Celebrations such as St. Lucia Day and Las Posadas as well as other smaller celebrations can be highlighted.

January

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable describes the belief that we need to focus on putting our poor and vulnerable first.

Key Understandings

- It is important for all people to have access to basic needs such as food, water, housing, and medical care as well as work and education. Individuals without access are considered poor.
- The Church teaches that these individuals should be treated with extra care and concern. It is important to share what we have with others.
- Many students have a stereotyped image of poverty. Students should understand that poverty can occur in any type of individual or family.

Integration of the Standards

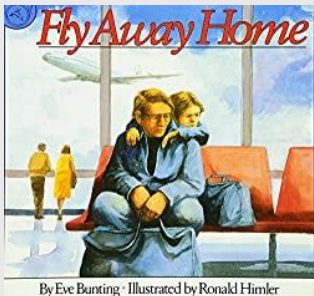
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Religion	3SJ4, 3SJ6, 3SJ7	4SJS4, 4SJ7, 4SJ8	5SJ2, 5SJ4, 5SJ7, 5SJ8
Social Studies	3.9, 3.8C		5.6D

Key Vocabulary

- Vulnerable
- Food insecurity
- Food scarcity
- Poverty

Integrating the Lives of the Saints

- St. Genevieve
- St. John Bosco
- St. Cajetan
- St. Oscar Romero
- St. Louise de Marillac



Fly Away Home (Eve Bunting)

Before Reading: Ask students to imagine what it means to be homeless. What images come to mind? *Students do not have to share these. What does the cover of the story and title make you think about?

During Reading: As you are reading, have students think about the way Andrew and his father look on the outside. Is it different from how they feel on the inside? Why is it important to them to blend in?

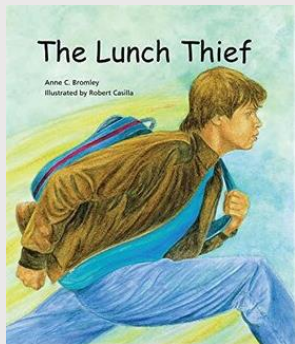
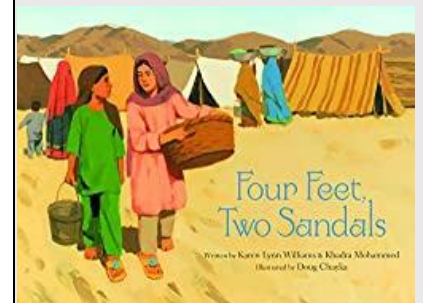
After Reading: In pairs, have students discuss the bird in the story. Why was this bird important to the story's theme? What does this bird symbolize? As a class, talk about how this depiction of homelessness may be different from student thoughts. Emphasize that being homeless or vulnerable does not have one look or shape. It is important to think about how appearances do not reflect a person's situation. Like Andrew and his father, whose challenges were not visible to anyone else, it is important for us to be kind and considerate always as we never know another's challenges.

Four Feet, Two Sandals (Karen Lynn Williams)

Before Reading: Introduce students to vocabulary such as refugee, refugee camp, relief worker. Discuss with the class different reasons why an individual or family might become a refugee.

During Reading: What challenges have the girls faced? What do they hope for? How are their lives different from ours? In what ways are they similar?

After Reading: How does the girl's friendship change throughout the story? Why are the sandals so important to the girls? How does the girl's view of the sandals change during the story? This is a good time for students to think about the opportunities they might have to help others who do not have access to necessities. Donating clothing or toys can be a step that students can take with help from parents. This text is also a good introduction to further discussion of refugees and the situations that impact their lives.



The Lunch Thief (Anne Bromley)

Before Reading: Use the title and illustrations to have students make predictions about the character and what the story may be about. What information did you use to make this prediction? *This is a good jumping off point to discuss the author's word choice for the title.

During Reading: What good advice does Rafael's mom give him? What do we learn about each character throughout the story? Stop throughout the text and see if student understanding of the characters has changed as they learned more through the character's words and actions.

After Reading: Have students work in small groups to discuss Kevin and Rafael's actions. What motivated their actions? Do you think Kevin's actions were justified? Why or why not? This can be an opportunity for students to discuss Kevin taking the lunches. Is stealing ever acceptable? Have students use evidence from the story to support their response. Kevin demonstrated one way to help a classmate in need. What are some other solutions that may have been helpful in this situation? How could a teacher or parent have assisted in this situation?

Students can also learn more about wildfires by reading this article

<https://newsela.com/signin/?next=/read/socal-wildfires/id/4036/>

February

Rights and Responsibilities

describes how each person has a fundamental right to life. We also have a responsibility to each other and our communities. This month focuses on rights issues related to race and coincides with Black History Month.

Key Understandings

- Each person has the right to have what they need to live (food, water, shelter, clothing, etc.) as well as access to education, medical care, and other opportunities.
- A person's rights can be impacted by how they look or where they live. Race can have a significant impact on a person's rights and opportunities.
- It is our responsibility to work to make sure all people have equal rights.

Integration of the Standards

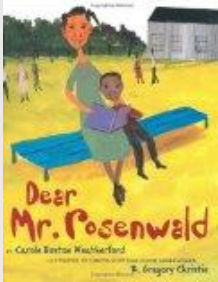
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Religion	3SJ3, 3SJ4,	4SJ3, 4SJ4,	5SJ2, 5SJ3, 5SJ4, 5SJ7
Social Studies	3.8, 3.8A, 3.8B, 3.8C	4.5, 4.5A	5.3D, 5.6C, 5.6D

Key Vocabulary

- Segregation
- Racism
- Civil Rights
- Racial injustice

Integrating the Lives of the Saints

- St. Josephine Bakhita
- St. Benedict the Moor
- St. Monica
- St. Augustine
- St. Katharine Drexel



Dear Mr. Rosenwald (Carole Weatherford)

Before Reading: Students can learn about “Mr. Rosenwald” prior to reading the story or make predictions about who the students might be writing a letter to. You can also have students make predictions after reading the first poem or two.

During Reading: Why do you think a new school is important to the community? How do you think this will impact the children? Think about Mr. Rosenwald’s focus on the community contributing. Why did he want the community to help?

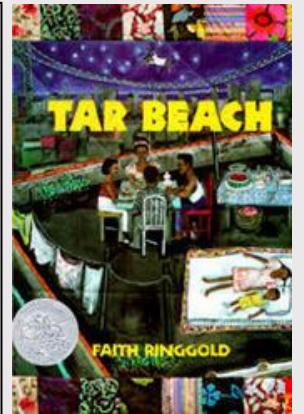
After Reading: How did the community make their dream a reality? How do you think this impacted their futures? Why do you think it is important for many people to join together to achieve a goal? How does this make it more successful? Have students write a poem using a format like the text that might come next in this story or another poem that they might add into a different part of the text. In small groups or pairs, have students research the history of Rosenwald schools and the impact they had on the south. You can further the investigation by researching current organizations that have similar goals.

Tar Beach (Faith Ringgold)

Before Reading: Explain to students that this text discusses a family in the 1930s. What do you think their lives are like? How do you think things are different today?

During Reading: What hardships does the family face? How do you think their race impacts their lives? Do you think Cassie’s family would have a similar experience today? Why or why not?

After Reading: Cassie imagines flying over buildings to own them. She selects places that are important to her or will help her family. Ask students, “What buildings would you want to own? Or what buildings would you use to help others?” Consider buildings that might help your community or family (i.e. if you owned a supermarket you could share some of the food with those in need). Have students draw pictures of themselves flying and describe which building they selected. Encourage students to use an illustration style like *Tar Beach*.



Teammates (Peter Golenbock)

Before Reading: This text discusses the Negro Leagues in baseball. It is important to preview this term with students, discuss the connotations of the word, and how it is perceived today. You can also preview terms such as segregation and prejudice.

During Reading: As students are listening, have them identify examples of inequality. Is this something we still witness today? The text says, “many people knew racial prejudice was wrong.” Why didn’t more people stand up for justice? Why is it difficult sometimes to do the right thing? Jackie Robinson faced tremendous adversity. What type of person do you think he was to be able to stand up to the pressure, fear, and anger that surrounded him?

After Reading: This text describes the incredible actions of Jackie Robinson. Have students describe him using character traits and then support the traits with text evidence. Students should focus on his actions as well as his choice not to react to others. Next, have students describe PeeWee. How were they similar in their beliefs and their choices? This activity can be followed up with a discussion about how PeeWee’s support of Jackie was a step in the right direction for equality. Being an ally or supporter to someone who is facing adversity can help make their journey a little easier. How can you support or stand with others? This is also an opportunity to begin discussing the privilege PeeWee had and how privilege made it easier for him to stand up for what is right.

March

Rights and Responsibilities describes how each person has a fundamental right to life. We also have a responsibility to each other and our communities. This month focuses on rights issues related to gender and Women's History Month. This month builds upon the understanding that students developed in February

Key Understandings

- A person's rights can be impacted by how they look or where they live. Gender can have a significant impact on a person's rights and opportunities.
- Gender stereotypes impact access to basic rights and opportunities.
- It is our responsibility to work to make sure all people have equal rights.

Integration of the Standards

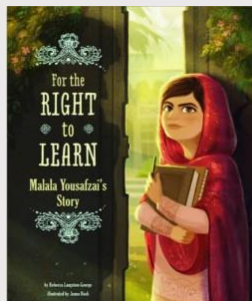
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Religion	3SJ3, 3SJ4, 3KF10	4SJ3, 4SJ4, 4KF10	5SJ2, 5SJ3, 5SJ4, 5SJ7, 5KF10,
Social Studies	3.8, 3.8A, 3.8B, 3.8C	4.5, 4.5B	5.6C, 5.6D

Key Vocabulary

- Gender discrimination
- Gender stereotypes
- Ally
- Women's Rights

Integrating the Lives of the Saints

- St. Catherine of Siena
- St. Elizabeth Anne Seton
- St. Joan of Arc
- St. Teresa of Calcutta



For the Right to Learn (Rebecca Langston George)

Before Reading: Read the text introduction to the class “scarcely five feet tall...” Have students discuss what it means to receive the Nobel Prize. What does this tell us about Malala? Are you surprised by the author's description? Why or why not? This can also be extended to look a word choice in the first sentence where the author emphasizes Malala being small and young.

During Reading: As this text is longer, you may consider breaking it into sections to be read in multiple small encounters or if multiple copies are available, have students read in groups. Students should focus on inequalities that are presented throughout the text (pre-and post-Taliban rule).

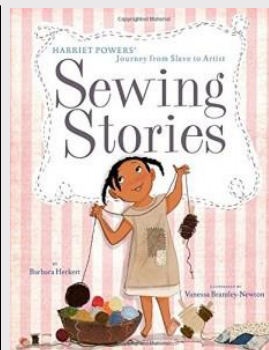
After Reading: In the text, Malala shares the quote “one child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world.” Have students use this quote and look for examples in the text that support this statement. What actions did Malala take to influence change? How did others support her actions? What does this tell you about your own abilities to influence change?

Sewing Stories (Barbara Herkert)

Before Reading: Use the title portion “from slave to artist” to have students make predictions about the main character. What do you think she became known for? Make a prediction about the character traits she might have to start as a slave and become an artist.

During Reading: Strength comes in many different forms. What examples of strength and strong women do you see in the text? What actions can you identify that show Harriet being strong? For older students, it may also be helpful to remind them of the context of the story (what was taking place at the same time in the world? How did the world view Harriet?)

After Reading: Ask students to share examples of Harriet's faith. How do you think her faith and belief in God gave her strength? Why is her faith an important part of her story? How can we use our faith to develop courage and strength? Students will create their own story quilts using either favorite stories from the Bible or to highlight important events in their life. Students should use Harriet's technic as they complete their own story quilts by using different pieces of paper, adding texture by gluing on fabric, etc. If students are illustrating Bible stories, each student can make one square representing a favorite or personally meaningful story (you may want to provide a list of passages). Afterwards, join the squares together to create a class quilt.



Fly High: The Story of Bessie Coleman (Louise Borden)

Before Reading: Begin by telling the class that you will be reading about a woman who was born in 1892. Have the class share what life may have been like for women at the time then show the class the cover of the text. Does this cover surprise them? Why or why not?

During Reading: *This is a long text and may need to be read in segments for students to gain the best understanding. What types of things does Bessie value? When she checks the overseers', sums what does that tell you about her? What obstacles do you notice along each part of Bessie's journey?

After Reading: Throughout the book, Bessie was quoted in talking about “becoming somebody.” Using the text, have students work in small groups or pairs to identify evidence of Bessie's actions that led her to “become somebody” as well as challenges that she faced. How was her journey inspirational to others? How do her actions show her determination and perseverance? Students can follow up with creating a goal for themselves (short or long term). Use an outline of an airplane for students to describe their goals. On small clouds connected to the airplane, have students write the steps or actions they will need to take to attain their goal.

April

Care for God's Creation

describes the belief that we show respect to God through respecting His creations. We are called to protect the Earth.

Key Understandings

- The Earth and all creation were created out of love by God. The way we treat the Earth is a way to convey our respect and appreciation for God.
- The Earth has limited resources. Humans have a significant impact on the Earth's resources.
- Different communities are challenged due to a lack of resources.
- Our actions have a direct impact on the environment locally and globally.

Key Vocabulary

- Renewable/non-renewable resources
- Stewardship of the earth
- Scarcity
- Biodegrade

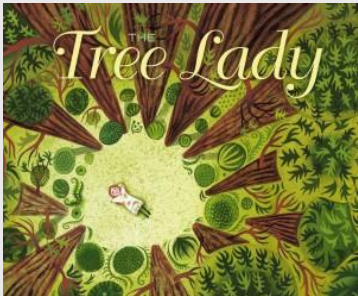
Integration of the Standards

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Religion	3SJ1, 3SJ2	4SJ1, 4SJ3	5SJ1
Social Studies	3.3B,		5.4

*This unit also correlates with science standard 5-ESS-3.C

Integrating the Lives of the Saints

- St. Francis of Assisi
- St. Modomnoc
- St. Katera of Tekakwitha
- St. Hildegard of Bingen



The Tree Lady (H. Joseph Hopkins)

This text connects with stewardship of the earth as well as Women's History.

Before Reading: Begin by having the class brainstorm a list of the importance of trees. How do they impact our daily lives? How do we impact trees? Why is this relationship important?

During Reading: Throughout the story, the physical landscape, characters, and community mindset are changing. Have students identify changes by pausing in the beginning, middle, and end of the text. What is the catalyst for these changes?

After Reading: Have students create a before and after picture of the San Diego to illustrate the dramatic impact that planting the trees had on the physical landscape. Then have students research the importance of planting native trees. The following article focuses on the benefits of planting trees in a desert area

<https://localyardandgarden.com/benefits-of-trees-desert-tucson>

You can extend this activity by having students identify areas of their neighborhood that would benefit from the planting of trees. Have students write letters to local government officials about planting trees in these areas, citing specific reasons for the value of trees.

One Plastic Bag (Miranda Paul)

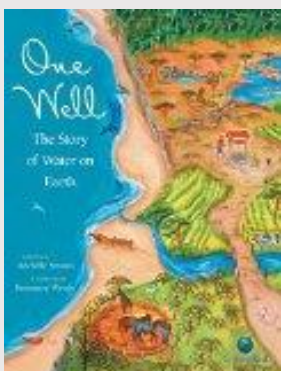
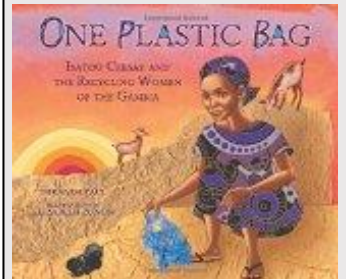
Before Reading: Ask students to consider, "how long do you think a plastic bag lasts?" Record student guesses then explain that one plastic bag could stay in a landfill for 1,000 years. The title of the text is only talking about one bag. How do you think one bag can become bigger problem?

During Reading: What does Istaou originally think about the plastic bags? How are they helpful to the village? What changes in the story? What do you think would have happened if Istaou did not decide to fix the problem of plastic pollution?

After Reading: How does this story show the importance of each person thinking about the environment? How can one person make a large difference?

Use the following video or one similar for students to understand how plastic can be recycled in the United States. <https://thekidshouldseethis.com/post/recycle-video-for-kids>

In the text, Istaou and the village found a creative way to recycle their plastic bags. Have students work in groups and develop other uses (decorative, creative, etc.) for recyclable items. You can even host a class or grade level competition for the best recycled design, most creative recycled artwork, etc.



One Well (Rochelle Strauss)

This is a lengthy text with a good amount of scientific information. For best student retention, it should be read in smaller sections with a discussion or small activity to follow-up.

As you read each section, you can have students select the most important 1-2 pieces of information. Encourage students to record the information in their own words. Students will record the facts and at the end of the text, create an infographic about the importance of water. Place a particular emphasis on the section "People at the Well" and discuss the amount of water we use on a weekly basis. Have students see a liter of water to visualize the numbers that book discusses and encourage students to carry the water to see what it might be like to have to travel to get water. This section also lends itself to cause and effect, activities surrounding water conservation, and research on where water is scarce around the world.

May

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

describes the belief that every human life is precious. As a society, we must work to protect all life. For this age group, the focus will be understanding our impact on others as well as advocating for ourselves and others.

Key Understandings

- Standing up for others, especially those who cannot stand up for themselves, is important and necessary.
- Jesus taught us that every person is special, valuable, and precious.
- The Catholic Church views the protection of life from conception to natural death.

Integration of the Standards

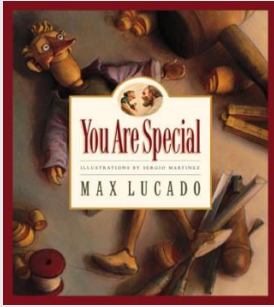
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Religion	3MF5, 3MF8, 3SJ4,	4MF5, 4MF8	5MF5, 5MF8
Social Studies	3.8A, 3.8C		5.6D

Key Vocabulary

- Dignity
- Intrinsic value
- Bullying
- Ally (* in the context of advocating for someone else)

Integrating the Lives of the Saints

- *May is the month of Mary, her love and faith are shining example of respect for life.
- St. Isidore
- St. Joseph the Worker
- St. Maximilian Kolbe



You are Special (Max Lucado)

Before Reading: As a class, discuss student attributes that make them special. What is unique or interesting about them? Ask students, “does everyone have special characteristics?” Why or why not?

During Reading: How do you think the Wemmicks make each other feel? Do you think their actions are respectful? Lucia is different from the other Wemmicks. How do her actions create a positive influence?

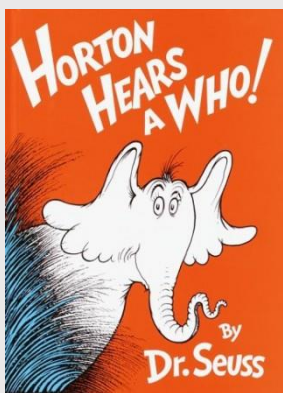
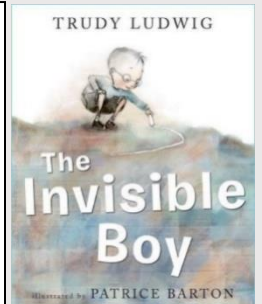
After Reading: The relationship that the Wemmicks have with Eli is like our relationship with God. What important step does Lucia take to understand Eli’s love? Have students work in pairs or small groups to write how we can understand God’s love. What actions do we need to take to embrace God’s love? How can we share that love with others like Lucia did? To extend the activity, have each student create a self portrait and then use stars to write qualities that they think God would identify as special (i.e. I take care of others, I help others by...). For older students, have them create a short prayer thanking God for creating and loving them.

The Invisible Boy (Trudy Ludwig)

Before Reading: As a class, discuss what it means to be invisible and create a class definition. Continue the conversation by asking students to think about what it means to *feel* invisible. How does your heart feel when you think others do not see you?

During Reading: Describe Brian’s feelings throughout the book. How would you feel in his shoes? Why do you think the others do not notice him? How does the story change?

After Reading: When we make others feel invisible, are we respecting them or showing them value? In small groups or pairs, have students read Mathew 25:31-46. What connections do you see between this story and this Gospel message? Justin changed how Brian felt about himself with simple actions. Ask students to write about or draw/ caption ways that they can reach out to others. How can you make others feel loved and valued? Students do not need to share but have them take a minute and reflect on a person in their school or community who may feel invisible or isolated. How can they reach out to that person? This could also be an opportunity to arrange for a visit or write letters/ cards for a nursing home/ elderly community to provide that feeling of connection.



Horton Hears a Who! (Dr. Seuss)

This text can be used to convey the message of the importance of life from conception or can be used to teach the theme of standing up for others. The depth of the message will depend on the age and maturity of the student group.

Before Reading: During this story, the main character says, “a person’s a person, no matter how small.” Have students journal and write down what this phrase means to them. How do you think you can live this phrase? If time allows, have students share their ideas.

During Reading: Why is it difficult to stand up for others? Horton is criticized throughout the story. How do you think he feels when others will not support him? How would you describe the other creatures in the story?

After Reading: Students will write a letter to Horton that thanks him for his actions and describes how they felt reading the book. Encourage students to reference specific actions, quotes, or events from the text. To conclude the letter, have students share ways they can stand up for others through their words, actions, or for older students, work with specific groups/ organizations. You can also extend this activity by having students learn about individuals who have stood up for others against tremendous adversity (i.e. St. Maximilian Kolbe).

June

Being Leaders in Faith

calls students to participate in their faith through their words and actions.

Key Understandings

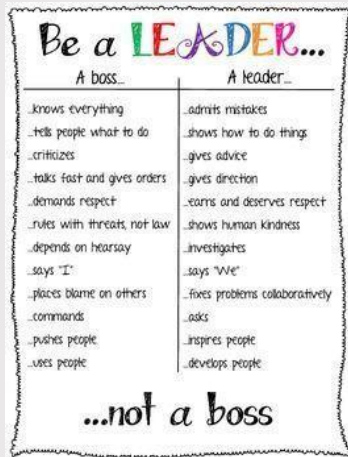
- This month, students will be able to take the ideas that they have learned about social justice and consider how they can apply them in terms of being a faith leader. It is important for students to understand that their actions are impactful to their school, parish, and community. By living their faith and acting as an example for others, they can influence change.
- What are the characteristics of a leader?
- What are action steps for being a school, parish, or community leader?

Integration of the Standards

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Religion	3SJ6, 3SS7, 3SS9, 3SJ7	4KF9, 4SS8, 4SJ8	5KF9, 5SS8, 5SJ9
Social Studies	3.8A, 3.8C	4.4E	5.6D

Key Vocabulary

- Leader
- Role model
- Positive influence



Begin by asking students to think about the words boss and leader. How are these words different? What do they tell you about a person's actions? Have students work in small groups to discuss traits of a leader versus a boss. Students should try to be as specific as possible as they create their list. Afterwards, use a gallery walk for students to read the list of other groups. As a class, discuss what similarities they noticed throughout the groups and what important qualities a leader has. One of the most significant areas to emphasize is the way leaders inspire others and for students to be leaders in faith, they want to influence others to engage in the same types of positive behavior.

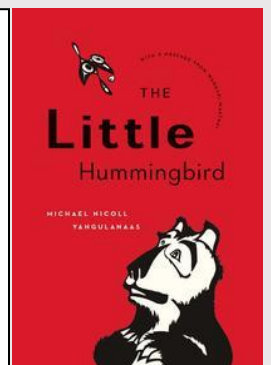
Little Hummingbird (Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas)

While this text is very short, it provides students an opportunity to consider the theme of the story and its relationship to their own lives.

During Reading: What sets the hummingbird apart from the other animals? How would you describe the hummingbird's actions? Why?

After Reading: What is the theme of this story? The author does not show us what happens after the little hummingbird speaks to bear. In small groups or pairs, have students continue and conclude the story. Use similar illustrations and simple wording to complete the story. If time allows, students can share their story endings. As a class, discuss what the lesson of this text means for our lives. What does this tell us about our actions and our influence on the world around us?

Students can read more about children being leaders in *Our Future: How Kids are Taking Action* (Janet Wilson)



Students will work in small groups to complete a Bible verse scavenger hunt. Using the verses below, students will find the passage, read it together, and then write in their own words the important message it contains about being a leader. At the end, groups will work to create a small poster or infograph using Jesus as the center to describe being a leader in faith.

Bible Passages:

- Philippians 2:3-4
- Romans 12:3-8
- John 13:13-17
- Luke 12:48
- Luke 6:31
- Galatians 6:9
- 1 Timothy 4:12
- Luke 5:15-16

Students use their understanding of what it means to be a leader to identify a leader of the faith within their home, school, or community. Have students write a letter to the individual that they identify. Within the letter, they should thank them for their leadership or actions as a role model as well as identify specific examples of how this individual is influencing others. Students can also include ways that they plan on following this leader's example.

Students can also research a leader within the Church and write a short biography/complete a biography project on their influence to others citing specific words or actions that help identify them as a leader of the faith.