



JOURNEY IN... YEAR TWO THE DIVINE WITHIN STORY

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- When we recognize that the Divine that is within us is also in every other human being, we feel compassion for ourselves and for others.
- Compassion, the deep understanding and sharing of another being's feelings, can be cultivated and nurtured.
- Acted upon, compassion contributes to our own well-being and the greater good of the entire world.

Lesson Materials

- *Tales from Many Lands*, by Sophia Lyon Fahs
- Plain paper
- Pencils
- Fine pens in a variety of colors
- Finished cards from the Art Workshop, or, on the first Sunday of the cycle, blank cards.
- *Dora's Box*, by Ann-Jeanette Campbell
- White/chalkboard and writing utensils

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

Jesus said to them, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Rabbi, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." - Matthew 25:35-40

When you begin to touch your heart or let your heart be touched, you begin to discover that it's bottomless, that it doesn't have any resolution, that this heart is huge, vast, and limitless. You begin to discover how much warmth and gentleness is there, as well as how much space. - Pema Chödrön

A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. - A. Einstein

If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.

- The Dalai Lama

GATHERING AND FOCUSING

⌚ 2-3 minutes

Introduce (or revisit) the word 'compassion'. Using the whiteboard, ask if anyone has heard or seen the word compassion. What is their working definition of the word. Break it down in to the root part, 'passion' meaning feelings and the prefix, 'com-' meaning with.

How can we feel something *with* another person?

PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE THE GOOD SAMARITAN

⌚ 10-15 minutes

Invite the children to get comfortable and ready to use their imagination because this story does not have pictures other than the ones in their minds.

Read aloud Sophia Lyon Fahs' retelling of the parable of The Good Samaritan, from the teachings of our wise and kind brother, Jesus.

Wondering Together

- Which of the characters felt compassion? How do we know?
- What do you think the other people, the ones who passed the hurt man by, were feeling and thinking?
- Do you think that compassion is something that we feel mostly for our family and friends? What does the Samaritan in this story teach us about compassion?
- Are there any stories from your lives when someone you didn't know has acted on their compassion, or when you have acted on your own feelings of compassion.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY TWO CARD WRITING

⌚ 15-20 minutes

Wondering Together:

- Ask the children if they've ever received a card in the mail.
- Who sent it and why?
- What did it say on the inside?
- Name some happy occasions on which we send cards.
- Have you ever felt happy because someone else was happy and celebrating?
- Have you ever felt sorrow because someone else was unhappy or having a hard time?
- Name some sad or difficult times during which we might send cards.

**YOUR FIELD
EXPERIENCES:
FEEDBACK AND
NOTES**

Teacher Talk about Cards

Our Pastoral Care team is a group of people from our church who work with our ministers to take good care of people who are having a difficult time. When someone is sick, they visit them and sometimes take them good food or more medicine. When they're elderly, they go to their houses and take tapes of the church services for them to listen to. When someone is dying or has died, they come to the hospital or home to be with the family and help them make hard decisions. Another thing they do is send a LOT of cards, so many that they often run out. Sometimes they send store-bought cards, but people are really happy when they get hand-made cards from kids and grownups here at church. In our ART WORKSHOP, the kids will be making beautiful, hand-made cards that the Pastoral Care team will send to those who are sick, grieving or need encouragement.

Inside the cards, there will be words of compassion and comfort. Our job this morning is to write those words. [On the first week, you'll write them inside blank cards that will be decorated later. On subsequent weeks, the cards from the last Art Workshop will be ready to write in.] There are people who write the words inside cards as their job every day! We're going to do their caring work ourselves!

The week's Embracing Meditation notes should be in your classroom. Encourage a moment of loving thoughts for those who are in need of our very real care.

Writing Notes of Compassion

On a chalkboard or whiteboard, write four categories: "Get Well Cards", "In Sympathy" "In Celebration" and "Encouragement Cards". To clarify the differences in the language we might use, read to them from the insides of the sample store-bought cards. The words show understanding and caring! Sometimes they rhyme like a little poem, even. Give each child three cards (their own cards from Art Class if possible - check the back). Have them 'assign' one of the three categories to each card and write some words inside. Provide regular paper and plain pencils for practicing, nice pens and rulers for writing inside the cards. Encourage them to ask for help with spelling and use their best handwriting, but remind them that kid cards are special because you can tell that they're from kids! Use the chalk or whiteboard to share spelling reminders for hard words like 'sympathy' and 'grieving' and 'compassion' and any other tricky words that they remember and want to use. Kids can work in pairs to come up with ideas. [If this is the first week, please have the kids write on the back of the cards, "Made with Love by _____" so that their cards can be identified in Art Class]

When you're done, invite anyone to share their words if they'd like. Collect the cards and put them in the box for safekeeping.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY THREE

STORY: DORA'S BOX

🕒 10 minutes

Encourage the kids to gather in the storytelling area so that they can see the unique artwork in this storybook. Read aloud from Dora's Box.

Wondering Together

- I wonder if Dora appreciated her life more before or after she opened her box...
- Do you think the parents were wise or foolish to keep things in the box? Why do you think they chose to do that?
- Is it worth it to have all these sad and unpleasant things in our lives? Why or why not?
- What are some things you'd put in a box like Dora's? How would your life change?
- Is it possible to be a compassionate person without ever feeling sad or lonely or lost?
- Have any of your friends ever been sad? How did you respond?
- (for older children) Does this story remind you of any story you've heard before? How is it similar and different from a version you might know?

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, assume a comfortable meditative position or take each other's hands. Speak these words, or words like them, the children repeating each line after you, the teacher.

The Holy is inside us
And the Holy is inside everyone
May we love and understand ourselves
May we love and understand others
May we love and understand the whole Universe
May our hearts be tender
May our minds shine friendliness into the world
and/or
We want others to be happy
Let us practice compassion
We want to be happy ourselves
Let us practice compassion