



Holy Childhood Association

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PRIMARY GUIDE for TEACHERS/CATECHISTS (Lent 2024)

Dear Teachers/Catechists,

Welcome again to a new calendar year of mission activity with the Holy Childhood Association (HCA). Special greetings to returning teachers and catechists and a warm welcome to newcomers. It is hoped that you find our information about “*Children Helping Children*” a rewarding and useful resource. This year, new challenges around the world have been presented to us, especially escalating violence and warfare that force us to pause and consider our relationship with less fortunate people. Our contribution to the missions is just as important as ever.

The HCA is still as active as ever with the production of the educational work produced for use by Catholic Schools and Parish groups throughout Canada. Many of our resources are available online. Hard copies of all our materials can be ordered, using the order form, and are available free of charge through the post. Specifically, Newsletters, Teachers’ Guides, general educational documents and specific Lenten/Advent support materials are at this moment available both online through the HCA section of our website missionsocieties.ca or through the post. Naturally, some items that are not normal document size, such as mission banks, stickers, prayer cards, membership cards and the poster can only be sent in the mail.

Our mission of “children helping children” continues to be as relevant as ever. Child poverty still exists in many parts of the world. Availability of education and facilities are still lacking for students in many areas. Children in some areas are exploited for their financial or military value. Increases in violence and conflict in certain areas of the world present challenges to innocent children. As members of the HCA, we need to continue our efforts to help these children around the world. Your role in guiding the young people under your care in this mission is significant.

Last year, October 22nd was **World Mission Sunday**. The theme of this day was: ***Hearts on fire: feet on the move!*** What we do in our schools and parishes should be a reflection of Christ’s work in our world. The theme suggests active involvement in mission activity. Find the World Mission Sunday Youth Guide in the Educational Materials section of the HCA section on the Pontifical Missions website. This is a useful resource to share with your students.

Once again, the Season of Lent approaches. In 2024, **Ash Wednesday is on February 14**, with **Easter following on March 31**. This is earlier than last year, meaning that there isn’t as much time to catch one’s breath after the return from the Christmas season. Your role in celebrating this sacred time in the Church Year continues to be crucial, especially in today’s increasingly secular world.

Holy Childhood Mission Focus

In this issue, the missionary country of focus is Kenya. One of the more well-known African countries, many Canadians know some pieces of information about Kenya. It is one of the most popular tourist destinations for people interested in African wildlife. There are several National Parks and game reserves that can be visited or to which you can go on safari. Kenya has been at the forefront of activity concerning wildlife and environmental preservation for several years. Kenya has produced both male and female elite athletics champions, particularly in events involving distance running. They have had considerable success at the World and Olympic levels. There are many immigrants to Canada from Africa, and some come from Kenya. You may have some in your school or parish.

Like many other African countries, Kenya had a difficult colonial background. Most recently controlled by the British, it attained Independence in 1963 after the Mau Mau uprising. Kenya has suffered from cultural, tribal and religious conflict up until the present time, but remains a more peaceful country than some other troubled African nations. One of the legacies that Kenya shares with other African countries is that it was an area victimized and involved in the slave trade of the 18th and 19th Centuries. Many people were transported by colonial powers to the “New World” and forced into slavery. Many people in the Americas and the Caribbean today are descended from these slaves.

Suggestions for using the Newsletter

1. Always begin your lesson with the HCA prayer. Each student should have their own prayer card. (Additional cards are available from the National Office.) They can recite the prayer as a group, or have a student lead the prayer. Remind students of why they are members of the HCA.
2. Using a globe, atlas, the internet or all three, have children find Kenya. Locate its immediate neighbours: Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and its position on the Indian Ocean. Find Canada and observe how far away we are. Read together the information provided in the Newsletter and discuss according to their age level. Allow children to colour select items.
3. Look at the Lent section of the Newsletter. Discuss the Lenten ideas as listed in the Newsletter and talk about how they contribute to observing Lent.
4. Refer to the current project in Kenya. Use the internet to look up the area and find out as much as possible about the people. Use the project information to stimulate the raising of funds for these projects.
5. Look up and watch various You Tube references to Kenya. There are several.
6. Be inspired by the work of the HCA organisations during Mission Month last October. Take photos and send us feedback on activities from your group.
7. Use the Newsletter as stimulus for a class research project, as outlined later in this Guide. There are several possibilities.

Religious Education Applications

1. Throughout Lent, say the Mission Prayer daily. Add it to the prayers already said each day within your classroom, school or community. Make use of your prayer table, which usually consists of a candle, a children’s version of the Bible, a Rosary and appropriate pictures, photos or other relevant books. Use the colour purple on your table. Purple is a symbol of penance. The Scriptures tell us that a purple garment was placed on Jesus during his passion as an act of mockery.
2. Say the *Lenten Prayer* with your students.
3. Ask the students for their understanding of “giving up” things for Lent. What is relevant for them to “give up?” Discuss the positive way of “giving up”. What positive things can they do throughout Lent in preparation for Easter?
4. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14. Encourage participation in the distribution of Ashes either at school or in your parish. Discuss why ashes are used on this day.
5. Read and discuss the Pope’s Lenten message with your children.
6. Download the Lenten Word Searches and Crossword from the web site.
7. Download the Lenten Calendar, found in the Educational Resources section of the website, <http://www.missionsocieties.ca/holy-childhood-association-hca/education-materials>. Follow the calendar daily, or weekly, as appropriate.
8. As Lent is a time for reconciliation, review what students know about the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). Encourage students to participate in this sacrament either within the Parish Community or within the school if it is offered. (Depending on your location and Parish customs, Primary children may or may not have received First Reconciliation. If they have not, your parish priest may be willing to conduct a non-sacramental rite for those individuals).

9. Be sure that your students are familiar with the special days and events of **Holy Week**. Prepare them as appropriate to their age before this special time arrives. Go over the readings and discuss the events that culminate with the Resurrection. Students need to be aware of these in order to attend and participate actively at these unique celebrations.

LENTEN ACTIVITIES (repeated from past issues)

LENTEN SIGNS

Objective: To allow students to understand the meaning of “giving up”.

Lesson Outcome: The children will have a good understanding of what it means to “give something up”.

Materials:

- Poster paper
- colours

Directions

- Students discuss what it means to give something up.
- Students choose positive ways of “giving up” (being helpful, friendly, generous, etc)
- Students label their poster: I AM GIVING UP I AM BEING (Wording can vary)
- Students draw a relevant picture from their everyday experience.

Follow-Up

- Students display their poster to the class and talk about their message.
- Display the posters in the classroom, school halls, gymnasium, meeting room or church during the season of Lent.

PALM CROSSES

Children can make Palm Crosses from palms collected on Palm Sunday. There are many instructions on YouTube as to how to make them, so have a quick look.

SISTER FAUSTINA AND THE DIVINE CHAPLET OF MERCY

Sister Faustina is responsible for the special Lenten prayer, the Chaplet of Mercy. She was canonized as a saint in 2000 by Pope John Paul. Look at her life and the events and occurrences leading to her sainthood. Describe the meaning of her special prayer, the Divine Chaplet of Mercy, which is shown in the Educational Resources for Lent on the HCA web site.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Organize food drives for poor and neglected children. Raise some money for the HCA by having events such as a bake sale.

Kenya offers opportunities for research activities for Primary students:

- The flora and fauna of Kenya, while similar to other countries in the area, have unique features. Students can research birds and animals in the country.
- Be a tourist agent and present a unique holiday safari!
- Look at the several Lenten activities in the Educational Resources section of the HCA on our website. There are some challenging and interesting things for Primary students.