

Grade 4, Theme Five

Family Letter

Dear Family,

We are ready to begin the last theme of *Fully Alive*, our family life program. Because the partnership of home, church, and school is so important, this letter is written to let you know what we talk about in class, and to offer some ideas for your involvement. For more information for families, please go to www.occb.on.ca.

About Theme Five

Theme Five of *Fully Alive* is called “Living in the World.” We are not simply individuals who have relationships with family members and friends. We are also members of human society. We want the children to become aware of how big the world is, and of the many ways in which people contribute to making it a good home for all. This awareness is the foundation for a Christian attitude of care and personal involvement in the world.

In Theme Five we will:

- learn to consider the world as a home, and, like the homes people live in, both a place and people.
- discover the importance of being good caretakers of our earthly home.
- explore the contribution of human work and recognize that people participate in building God’s world — our home — through their work.

Working together at school and at home

- Did you or other members of your family come to Canada from another part of the world? Tell your child about the physical environment and the people in this part of the world, or come visit our class and tell us.
- Encourage your child to participate in your family’s efforts to protect the environment — reducing garbage, donating used clothing and toys, recycling, and composting.
- As part of our exploration of the work people do, the students will be finding out in what part of the world different items were made. You might point out to your child items in your house that come from other countries and discuss the work that people did to create these items.
- Be sure to tell your child about your work and the way you try to contribute to making the world a good place to live. You could also mention the work that each person does for the family. This work helps to make your home a good place for people to live.

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Theme Five Topics

*The heavens are yours, and the earth also is yours;
The world and all that is in it, you have founded them.*

Psalm 89:11

The final theme of Grade 4 has three topics, and is developed through a story about Tim Casey and his project about the world. The opening topic introduces students to the idea of the world as both a place and people, just as their own homes are. Topic 2 looks at some of the ways we can be caretakers of our home, and Topic 3 explores the contribution of human work toward building God's world.

Topic 1 — The World is Our Home

*God, who has a parent's care for all of us, desired that all men and women
would form one family and deal with each other as brothers and sisters.*

The Church in the Modern World, #24

Summary

This topic helps the students understand the world as a home by encouraging them to think about what they already know about their own homes. The teacher and students read the first part of the story about Tim Casey and the poster he is working on, and discuss the ways in which the world is like a home.

Main Ideas

- God created the world and gave it to us as our home.
- A home is a place and people. We live in small homes, but the whole world is also our home. It is a huge place filled with billions of people.
- God gave us our home and wants us to care for it and for all the people in it.

Family Participation

- You and your child may enjoy reading the first part of the story about Tim Casey, "Tim's Project," which you will find at the end of this theme. You might ask your child about why Tim is confused. Has he or she ever been unsure about what is expected for a school project?
- At school, the students completed a sheet about the location of their homes in the world, including their address, town or city, province, country, and continent. If you have a

world atlas, you could help your child locate your home.

- If you or your child's grandparents came to Canada from another country, be sure to tell your child about the physical environment in that part of the world and about the people and the way they live.

Topic 2 — Caring for the World

*For thus says the Lord,
who created the heavens
(he is God!)
who formed the earth and made it
(he established it;
he did not create it a chaos,
he formed it to be inhabited!)*

Isaiah 45:18

Summary

This topic helps the students understand the importance of looking after the world and trying to be good caretakers. The teacher and students read the next part of the story about Tim's poster, and discuss what it means to be a caretaker of the physical environment.

Main Ideas

- God made each one of us to be a caretaker of the world. We all have to try to be good caretakers.
- Good caretakers don't litter, and they don't throw things in the garbage that can be re-used or recycled or that could be harmful to the environment.
- Good caretakers try hard to make the world a good home for everyone.

Family Participation

- You and your child may enjoy reading the next part of the story about Tim Casey, "Ideas for Tim's Poster," which you will find at the end of this theme. You might ask your child about the ideas Tim's family suggested. Are they good ideas?
- As part of this topic, the students considered respect for other people's property and for public areas of their neighbourhoods. Some of the examples they considered are littering, walking through other people's gardens, and defacing walls or sidewalks. It's important to talk to children about respect for both private and public spaces as part of the

commitment to be a good caretaker of the world.

- When talking to children about caring for the physical environment and how families might participate, it's important to be realistic. Children of this age are enthusiastic and action-oriented. As well, they hear a lot about global warming, pollution, and environmental damage, and they need to believe that they can do something to make the situation better. Some children are frightened by doomsday predictions about the environment and need reassurance that many people are working to solve the problem.
- Your whole family might like to get involved in planning caretaking projects. Your child could make a list of family ideas and put it up on the refrigerator. The list could include items such as careful recycling, composting, picking up litter, or taking smaller portions so as not to waste food. Some families keep a list of leftover food on the front of the refrigerator as a reminder to use up the various items. This helps everyone to be more aware of the importance of not wasting food.
- There are many excellent books and interesting websites with a great variety of suggestions for families to demonstrate their commitment to caring for the physical environment. There are also books and sites designed for children that your child may want to investigate.

Topic 3 — Building God's World

Each human being is a "maker," one who takes part in the making of the world, one who is co-creator with God.

Edward Marciniak, *"Toward a Catholic Work Ethic"*

Summary

The final topic of Theme Five helps the students deepen their understanding that we build God's world through our work, and are dependent on the work of other people. The teacher and students read the last part of the story about Tim and his poster, and discuss the role of human work in building the world by meeting basic needs and providing essential services.

Main Ideas

- We depend on the work of many people around the world.

- People's work provides what we need to live, like food, clothing, schools, and medical care.

- We build God's world through our work.

Family Participation

- You and your child may enjoy reading the last part of Tim's story, "A Lot of Hard Work," which you will find at the end of this theme. What does your child think about Tim's poster?

- In the story about Tim's project, Tim discovered that people from all over the world had worked to make his mother's tea. Your child might like to look around your house and find out where various things were made, for example, items of food and clothing, books, or even furniture. You could talk about the different kinds of work people did to make these items.

- It is good to let children know how important work is. It is part of God's plan for us; it is the way we build God's world. It is also the way we develop our talents and abilities. Be sure to tell your child about your work and how you try to use your gifts to contribute to making the world a good place to live. You could also mention the work that each person does for the family. This work helps to make your home a good place for people to live.

- If we want our children to value each person's work, we need to reflect this attitude in the way we speak and act. Children should know that the value of work is not determined by the amount of money a person receives for it, or by the status of the job. A job that doesn't pay a lot, or one like homemaking that pays no salary, may be more important to the individuals and to the world than a job that brings fame and fortune.

- You may also want to explain that some people cannot work because of poor health, disabilities, or some other reason, and that this does not make them any less valuable and deserving of respect. You can help your child understand that we all have a responsibility to look after people who cannot work. We want the world to be a good place for them to live too.

Theme Five Stories and Poems

Topic 1 - 3: The teacher and students read these three parts of the story about Tim Casey and the poster he is creating on the theme of the world as our home.

Tim's Project

Tim Casey looked around his bedroom. The floor was covered with magazines, and paper — tiny scraps of paper, ripped up paper, pieces of paper with ideas for drawings that didn't work out. Tim was working on a school project and it wasn't going well.

His dad looked into Tim's room. "Wow!" he said. "It looks like a tornado hit. What are you doing?"

"A stupid project!" Tim stood up. "Dad, I have to do a poster about the world and I don't know what to put on it. I've hardly got anything. What am I going to do?"

"You're going to take a break," his dad said. "Listen, your mom and Frank aren't going to be home for dinner. And Jane just dropped in. Let's go out and have something to eat, and we can talk about your project. How about Chinese food?"

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"Okay," Mr. Casey said as he picked up an egg roll. "Tim, tell us about your poster. Maybe we can help."

"Well, it's called "The World is Our Home," Tim said. "I can draw things or find pictures and I have to say why I chose them. But I can't think what to choose."

"What do you have so far?" Jane asked.

"A picture of a whale because I really like whales and they're part of the world. And I found a picture of a little girl from Africa. It was for people to send money to help poor kids who don't have enough to eat. That's all I have."

“I think the whale and the little girl are good choices,” Tim’s dad said. “Maybe it would help you think of other ideas if you thought about our home.”

“What do you mean?” Tim asked.

“Well, you know a lot about living in a home. You’ve been living in ours for ten years. What’s a home like?”

Tim laughed. “That’s a silly question. It’s just a home. It’s got rooms and a little yard in back and we all live in it.”

“What about my home?” Jane asked. “What’s it like?”

“Messy!” Tim answered and ducked as Jane pretended to throw her fork at him. “Okay. Your home is an apartment, and there’s only you living there.”

“There’s your definition of a home, Tim,” his dad said. “A home is a place and people. So if the world is your home, it’s a place and people too.”

Tim looked at his dad, and sighed. “I still don’t know what to put on my poster,” he said.

* * * * *

Ideas for Tim’s Poster

Tim went to bed that night thinking about his poster. When he got up the next morning, he was still thinking about it.

“Mom,” he said, as he poured himself some cereal, “do you have any ideas for my poster?”

“You could put something about pollution on it,” Mrs. Casey said. “After all, if the world is your home, you want to keep it clean.”

“Like not littering?” Tim said.

“You know,” Frank said, “you could put something about the Arctic on your poster. The Inuit people who live there are very worried about global warming. The ice is melting, and that really affects their way of life.”

“But what kind of picture could I put on my poster to show that?” Tim asked.

“I’m not sure,” Frank said, “But I’ll think about it.

“I have an idea for a picture,” Mr. Casey said. “We can take a photo of your room right now, and you can use it to show litter.”

Tim smiled. “I’ll clean it up when I finish the poster. I have to get going. I’ll be late for school.”

“I’m late too,” Mr. Casey said. “Frank, would you please put out the garbage and the recycling bins before you leave for school?”

“Will do, Dad,” Frank answered.

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A Lot of Hard Work

Tim chewed on his pencil as he looked at his drawing of a schoolyard cleanup. He was pleased with it and decided to show it to his mother.

“Very nice,” his mom said. “You’re really working hard on this poster. Is it almost finished?”

“I need a few more pictures,” Tim said. “I want something about the people in the world, but I’m not sure what.”

His mom poured water into a teapot and thought for a minute. Then she handed Tim the wrapper from her tea bag. “Maybe this will give you an idea.”

“You want me to draw some tea?” Tim exclaimed.

“Read what’s on the wrapper,” his mother said. “Where was the tea made?”

“It says in was blended in London, England. What does that mean?”

“It means some people in England mixed different kinds of tea leaves together to make this tea,” his mom said.

Tim continued to read. “And it says that it was packed in Greensboro, N.C. Where’s that?”

“In the United States,” his mother answered. “Does it say where the tea was grown?”

“I don’t think so,” Tim said. “It just says oriental tea.”

“That means it was grown somewhere in Asia,” his mother explained. “So people in England, in the United States, and in Asia worked to make this tea. That’s a lot of people. And someone in Canada sold it to you. Remember? This is the special tea you brought for my birthday.”

Tim jumped up. “I’ve just had a great idea for my poster!”

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On Friday morning Tim took his poster to school. His family thought it looked great, and his mom gave him a ride to school so the poster wouldn’t get dirty.

When he got to his classroom, other people were bringing in their posters. Tim admired Joan’s poster. At the top was a big picture of a dinosaur. Under her drawing, Joan wrote: “Dinosaurs used to be part of my home.” Joan thought Tim’s poster was great. She really liked his whale.

The teacher, Mr. Ross, was very pleased with the work his class did. “This is very good,” he said when he looked at Tim’s poster. “You have a lot of interesting ideas here.”

“I didn’t think of all the ideas myself,” Tim explained. “My whole family helped me.”

“Nothing wrong with that,” Mr. Ross said. “It’s a good idea to talk to your family about your work. I’ll bet you learned a lot about how the world is your home.”

“I sure did,” Tim answered.

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