


Teaching the Beatitudes



When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

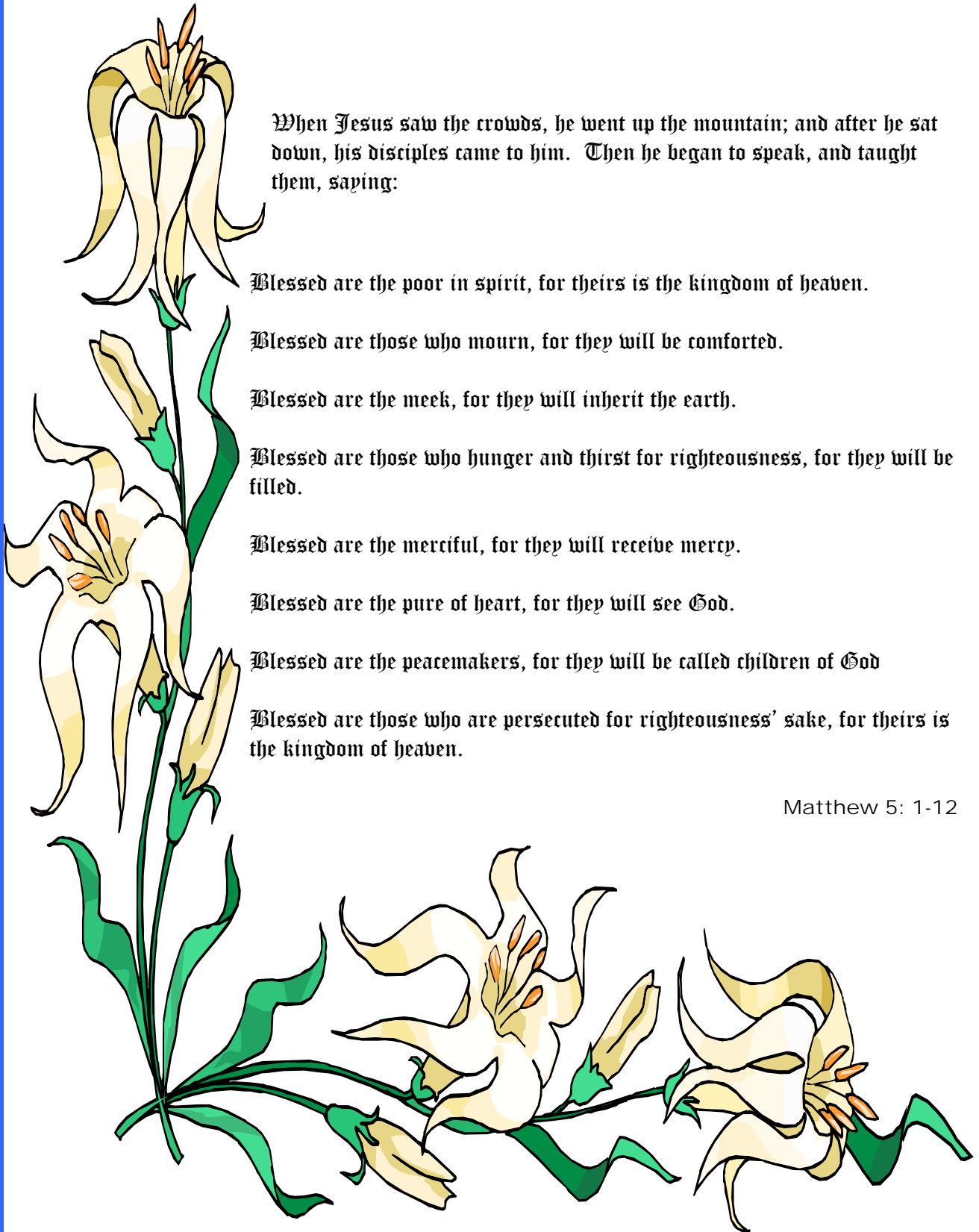
Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5: 1-12





Teaching the Beatitudes

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PREFACE

“In a world which ignores the human thirst for God, we are called to share the living waters of our faith. In a time when there is little reverence for the image of God in the human person, we are summoned to care for human life with an ultimate respect.

In a culture where communication is increasingly commercialized, we are invited to prayer and to worship.

In a world marked by poverty, oppression and war, we are commanded to work for justice and peace.

In a society marked by personality cults, we are called to bear witness to Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, and to reverence him in the poor, the lowly and the marginalized.

In a time which often seems to be without goals or ennobling aspirations, which we are challenged to declare ours, and to dedicate our lives to their achievement.

In an age which seems more fearful of the future, we are directed to give an account of the hope that is within us. **(1 Peter 3.15)** (*This Moment of Promise, Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1989*)

This teacher resource was developed by a teacher who worked with her students to develop a unit on teaching *The Beatitudes*. The students worked diligently to draw a parallel between *The Ten Commandments* and *The Beatitudes*, and in turn, apply them to their daily lives. The students were able to celebrate the diversity of many cultures in our society and they learned to deal with the past and the future of students to better the world in which they live.

As teachers in our Catholic schools, we are invited to celebrate the diversity of many cultures in praise and thanksgiving. In this resource, students will be asked to reflect on the inherent dignity of each individual.

As we continue to be a counter-cultural people, it is our hope that our students will be more aware of the presence of racism in the world around them and have the courage to end the indignities to these humans.

It is our hope that this resource will assist teachers and students in our schools to be a welcoming and caring community for all humankind. This resource will be helpful for all grades throughout the liturgical year and especially helpful to grade 7 and 8 teachers who are preparing their students for the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation. Everyone involved with preparing this resource hopes you will find it to be an exciting and challenging way to celebrate our diversity.

Suzanne Wishak, Executive Director

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Notes from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

1716 The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' preaching. They depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity. They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of his Passion and Resurrection; they shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life; they are the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations; they proclaim the blessings and rewards already secured, however dimly, for Christ's disciples; they have begun in the lives of the Virgin Mary and all the saints.

1718 The Beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness. This desire is of divine origin: God has placed it in the human heart in order to draw man to the One who alone can fulfill it.

1719 The Beatitudes reveal the goal of human existence, the ultimate end of human acts: God calls us to his own beatitude. This vocation is addressed to each individual personally, but also to the Church as a whole, the new people made up of those who have accepted the promise and live from it in faith.

1721 God puts us in the world to know, to love, and to serve him, and so to come to paradise. Beatitude makes us "partakers of the divine nature" and of eternal life. With beatitude, man enters into the glory of Christ and into the joy of the Trinitarian life.

IN BRIEF

1725 The Beatitudes take up and fulfill God's promises from Abraham on by ordering them to the Kingdom of heaven. They respond to the desire for happiness that God has placed in the human heart.

1726 The beatitude of eternal life is a gratuitous gift of God. It is supernatural, as is the grace that leads us there.



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Scriptural Quotations Which Provide a Catholic Context for This Unit

“...and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20: 2-28)

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13: 34-35)

“For God shows no partiality.” (Romans 2:11)

“So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Give no offence to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. Be imitations of me, as I am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 10: 31 - 33)

“For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12: 13)

“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3: 28-29)

“For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1)

“For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Galatians 5: 13-14)

“For the Lord of all will not stand in awe of anyone, or show deference to greatness; because he himself made both small and great, and he takes all thought for all alike. (Wisdom 6:7)

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EXPECTATIONS OF THE ONTARIO CATHOLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE CATHOLICISM'S CORE UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMAN CONDITION

“Distinctive expectations for graduates of Catholic schools are determined and shaped by the vision and destiny of the human person emerging from our faith tradition. This Christian anthropology or world view, reveals the dignity and value of the person....

This Christian vision of the human journey is best understood within the context of relationship. It is accomplished in community, in solidarity with brothers and sisters in the Church and beyond.

Catholic education views human life as an integration of body, mind, and spirit. Rooted in this vision, Catholic education fosters the search for knowledge as a lifelong spiritual and academic quest. The expectations of Catholic graduates, therefore are described not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but in terms of values, attitudes and actions.”

VISION OF THE LEARNER

- (1) *A discerning believer*
- (2) *An effective communicator*
- (3) *A reflective, creative and holistic thinker*
- (4) *A self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner*
- (5) *A collaborative contributor*
- (6) *A caring family member*
- (7) *A responsible citizen*

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An Exposition of the Beatitudes

The text of St. Matthew runs as follows:

- Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land.
- Blessed are they who mourn: for they shall be comforted.
- Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill.
- Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
- Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
- Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **Matthew 5: 1-12**

From a book entitled Catholic Morality and You: Living a Virtuous Life, by Michael Francis Pennock

The Beatitudes (Mt. 5: 3-12)

God implanted in us a desire for happiness, eternal happiness. In truth, the things of this world - money, athletic or scholarly achievement, fame, possessions - can never satisfy the hungry heart we all possess. Only God's goodness and love, can quench our thirst for happiness. Jesus teaches us what we have to do right now to develop the kind of attitudes that lead to happiness, even in this life. Think of the Beatitudes as Jesus taught us as attitudes for happiness. They will require us to change our lives.



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Beatitude #1

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.”

Spiritual poverty recognizes that all we have and all we are is a total gift from God. We are totally dependent on God, a good and loving God, who is in charge of the universe and of our lives. We should not horde what we have been given as gifts. Rather, we should use our talents, intelligence, possessions, and the like to help others.

Beatitude #2

“Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

Those who mourn know how little they are without God. In their sorrow, they will be comforted. But their sorrow helps them see the many around them who are much worse off - the poor, the abused, the hungry, the discriminated against, the victims of crime and war and disease and prejudice. Their sorrow can move them to lend a helping hand to those who suffer and be Jesus’ instrument of comfort to them.

Beatitude #3

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.”

The “meek” are gentle people, not pushy, self-centered, or controlling. In humility, they treat others with utmost respect, understanding, and compassion. They do not gripe when hurting or when they are ridiculed for their beliefs. Rather, they identify with the Lord who suffered wrongs patiently and with forgiveness in his heart. They are good stewards of God’s good earth, treating creation with joyful and gentle gratitude. They will inherit the earth.

Beatitude #4

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.”

Jesus’ followers must have high ideals and goals and not be satisfied with mediocrity. The highest ideal of all is to desire above all else to put God’s righteous will into action and then work unceasingly with his help to grow in holiness, justice, and truth. Part of the striving to

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do God's will is to realize that God teaches that we prove our love for him by taking care of each other, as Mother Theresa of Calcutta put it, "by doing something beautiful for God."

Beatitude # 5

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."

God has shown us profound compassion by loving us into existence, by forgiving our sins, by giving us the Lord Jesus to die so that we might live. As disciples of Jesus we must forgive others, without strings attached, even our enemies. We must stop holding grudges. We must stop harping on the faults of those who have hurt us. We must genuinely care for others by showing true compassion, as Jesus did when he died on the cross for everyone, even the person standing next to us who may have hurt us. If we give mercy, God will be sure to be merciful to us as well.

Beatitude #6

"Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God."

Those who are clean of heart are single-hearted, undivided in their loyalties, without fakery or pretense. They put on the mind and heart of God, looking on others with the eyes of Jesus, accepting them as brothers and sisters, persons of incomparable inner beauty and worth. The pure of heart know what is really important - closeness to the Lord who alone can satisfy their inner longings for love and understanding. The clean of heart will not allow anything - wealth, fame, various pastimes, job, academic achievement, the opinion of others - sway them from what is really important, seeing God in others and responding to them as other Christ's.

Beatitude #7

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

Since we are all God's children, it is silly to fight and quarrel and cause dissension. This only tears down the human family. Rather, we are called to side with the Prince of Peace, to work to settle disputes, to root out violence, to forgive and show compassion. We are to be those who unite, not those who divide; those who cooperate, not those who compete; those who build

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bridges, not those who erect walls. The Risen Lord says, “Peace be with you” (Jn 20:19). His followers have this same message.

Beatitude # 8

“Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

To stand up for what is right, especially in the face of mockery, rejection, and verbal and even physical abuse, is to stand with Jesus Christ and help him carry his cross. Jesus never promised us a rose garden; he did promise us eternal happiness united to the Blessed Trinity. At times we might have to pay the price of our convictions, even to the point of paying with our lives. But for Christians, the cross is not a sign of defeat. It is the ultimate sign of victory, of life with our Lord and Savior Jesus. To be willing to stand with him guarantees that he will never abandon us.



“Lord, when was it that I saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink.?” **Matthew 25:37**

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The Beatitudes / Advent & Christmas

“The family finds in the plan of God the Creator & Redeemer not only its identity, what it is, but also its mission, what it should be.”

John Paul II

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TODAY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Most Reverend J.A. Plourde

“Young people must believe strongly in their Catholic values to promote them everywhere and by all means. Young people must learn them from schools where the avowed goal is not only to form scientists and technicians, producers and consumers, but also persons ready to give these values prepeity over money, comfort, pleasure and power. Without this kind of school, the world will never really become more human, more just, more fraternal.

Even a person who has no faith can discover that man's happiness on earth demands love, justice and fraternity. What then does faith contribute towards fostering these values? It broadens their scope and gives man new reasons for living up to them and bearing witness. When rooted in the love of God, they are called beatitudes:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 4: 3-10

By incorporating these values into our lives, in both their human and Christian dimensions, we simultaneously enhance our relationship with God and our neighbor; we open up to God and to our fellowmen; we work to bring about God's kingdom and the happiness of our brothers; we build Christ's body and a whole new world. All this is what a Catholic school must help youth to discover; these are the values it must promote if it is to be genuinely Catholic and different from schools without a religious commitment. This is its response to the ideal St. Paul proposes to all Christians:

**Bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in
the heavens and everything on earth. *Eph. 1:10***

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CELEBRATING BEATITUDES IN ADVENT

ADVENT PRAYER

Henri J.M Nouwen

Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

You have told us, "*Happy the pure in heart; they shall see God.*"

Happy the peacemakers; they shall be called sons of God."

To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Amen



Catholic Information Network, November, 1997

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Grade 4-6

Eight Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments

Using the master included in this resource, copy and distribute the Ten Commandments and the Eight Beatitudes for each child. Review the Ten Commandments with the children and likewise the Eight Beatitudes. After the children are familiar with the similarities and differences between the Ten Commandments and the Eight Beatitudes, some of the following can be used for instruction:

- Read Matthew 5: 1-12
- Choose one of the Beatitudes and copy it on the board.
- List any person or persons that this Beatitude might have applied to in Christ's time.
- In your own words, tell what you think the Beatitude means.
- List any person or persons that this Beatitude might apply to today.
- Are there any ways that you can help these people or will be able to help them in the future? If so, please list.
- The Beatitudes are guides for Christian living. Do you think practicing them is hard or easy? Explain.

**The Center for Learning, Villa Maria
Used with permission.**

As part of this exercise, ask the children to work in groups to develop a mosaic. Ask the children to bring in newspaper clippings and/or old magazines that depict issues that are both related to one of the Beatitudes or one of the Ten Commandments that include a person living a Beatitude or one of the Ten Commandments.

This is a good opportunity to discuss diversity among Canadians of all ethnic backgrounds. Have the children depict an ethnic group or groups that are benefiting by a Beatitude.

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THE BEATITUDES

Read the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 5, verses 1 to 12, from the Bible. Ask the children to match each action or attitude in the Beatitudes with God's promise for each one.

- | | | | |
|----------|--|----|----------------------------------|
| 1. _____ | the poor in spirit | a. | shall obtain mercy. |
| 2. _____ | those who mourn.... | b. | shall be comforted. |
| 3. _____ | the meek | c. | theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. |
| 4. _____ | those who hunger and thirst for Righteousness | d. | shall inherit the earth. |
| 5. _____ | the merciful | e. | shall be satisfied. |
| 6. _____ | the pure in heart | f. | shall see God. |
| 7. _____ | the peacemakers | g. | shall be called sons of God. |
| 8. _____ | those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake | h. | theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. |

Used with permission from Ignatius Press
100 Activities Based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church



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Being On God's Team / *The Beatitudes*

Theme

The Beatitudes are a moral revolution. If the disciples of Christ lived them as a team, Christians could change society.

Materials Needed

Bibles, individual Beatitudes written on papers and put in a box.

Call To Prayer...

Leader

Coach Jesus, we are your team. Sometimes we play well and hard, and we give you praise for giving us the grace to lead good lives.

All

We thank you for giving us the courage to follow you, even when we may suffer for it. We glorify you for the times our friends and families united as a team to show we were your followers.

Leader

But sometimes, we forget the team rules, we don't live your Gospel slogans, and we show poor team spirit.

All

Please forgive us, and we ask your gift of wisdom now as we pray and study your game plan, the Beatitudes.

Reading: Matthew 5: 1-12

Reader One

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

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Reader Two: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Reader Three: Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Reader Two: Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Reader Three: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Reader Two: Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Reader Three: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Reader Two: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Reader Three: Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Leader:

The Beatitudes sound so simple: be a peacemaker, be merciful, work for justice. Yet they spell out a moral revolution that rocked the world in Jesus' time and still rocks the world today wherever they are lived to their fullness. Their principles opposed many of the conventional values of the Jewish and Roman world of Jesus' day and they still are in direct opposition to the values of many governments, most advertisements, and many persons today.

Living these beatitudes makes us anomalies, persons who live so differently from the normal way that we stand out. Of course, standing out is something we usually do like to do; but let's face it, in many ways we live in an unchristian world, and when the world sees any of us being real Christians, it notices. What advertisements, for example, promise happiness by being poor in spirit (not showing off our wealth, giving deference to others, being content with what we have)? What government calls its citizens to put their complete trust in God rather than weapons and the stock market? What professional athletic team promotes forgiveness and compassion?

The Beatitudes come early in the Gospel. It is as if they herald the rest of the good news and call forth the beginning of the reign of God. In what ways are the beatitudes good news?

If the Beatitudes are the charter or constitution of the reign of God, then we must live them daily. What are some ways we can live the beatitudes in school and at home?

On a scale of 1-10, how well is our society practicing these Beatitudes? For God's kingdom to come,

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what changes would you suggest in our society to bring about the fullness of the reign of God? What could we do to become better players on God's team?

Activities (choose one)

1. Write a pep talk or motivational speech that Jesus might give to his team of disciples. Use as many phrases from the beatitudes as you can.
2. The general statements of the Beatitudes are further explained by many concrete examples from the life of Jesus. Divide into groups, each group taking two Beatitudes. Search the four Gospels to find concrete examples of mercy, meekness, efforts to achieve justice, persecution, etc.
3. Divide into groups of 5 or 6 students. Select a Beatitude from a box. Prepare a skit to show how that Beatitude could be practiced today.

Closing Prayer

Leader

Coach Jesus, we have just reflected on your game plan and role book. We know what we have to do.

All

Help us each day to practice the Beatitudes so that we can preach the Gospel with our lives. May all people know we are your followers by our mercy, trust, purity of heart, peacemaking, and perseverance under persecution. AMEN

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CREATING AN ADVENT / BEATITUDE STAR



- Using a recipe for play dough or a regular sugar cookie recipe, prepare dough and cut out eight stars, one to represent each one of the eight beatitudes.
- Before baking the dough, use a straw and make a hole in the top point so it can be hung on a tree.
- Bring a pine bough into the classroom and stand it in a container.
- Write one of the Beatitudes on each star and hang each one of the stars on the pine bough.
- Throughout the Advent season write the child's name on the star that has the beatitude that best portrays the thoughtful action/word that an individual child may have done or said throughout the season.
- You might choose to have enough stars on the tree so that each child will receive one before the Christmas season ends.
- Before the Christmas holiday, write a thank-you note to the child and attach it to the star.
- Prepare a short celebration to distribute the stars being sure to use the reading from the Bible that teaches the eight Beatitudes. (Matthew 2: 1-10)

The Advent/Beatitude tree will help the children remain focused throughout the Advent season, and will build within the child the attitude that in small ways we can all live a lifestyle that incorporates the eight Beatitudes.

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BEE—ATTITUDES FOR CHILDREN

Remember that some children do not have as much as you do,
Bee nice to everyone and make Jesus happy.



Remember that some children are sad when they have to send a special
person home to God,
Bee kind and friendly and Jesus will be kind to you.

Remember to let others be first in the line-up, even when it is
your turn to be first,
Bee thoughtful and Jesus will smile on your actions.



Remember that not all children have enough to eat,
Bee giving and share your treats with them.

Remember that there will always be a bully in the playground,
Bee forgiving and Jesus will smile on you,

Remember that there are children who will not be nice, because
no one has ever been nice to them,
Bee nice to everyone and Jesus will be happy.



Remember when other children argue with you, they just might need a little
extra attention,
Bee a peacemaker and Jesus will bless you abundantly.

Based on *The Beatitudes: Matthew 5: 1-12*



The Beatitudes/Lent & Easter

“It is precisely in the Passion, when the mercy of Christ is about to vanquish it, that sin most clearly manifests its violence and its many forms: unbelief, murderous hatred, shunning and mockery by the leaders and the people. Pilate’s cowardice and the cruelty of the soldiers, Judas’ betrayal - so bitter to Jesus, Peter’s denial and the disciples’ flight. However, at the very hour of darkness, the hour of the prince of this world, the sacrifice of Christ secretly becomes the source from which the forgiveness of our sins will pour forth inexhaustibly.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Para 1851



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“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and the neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27

For those teachers who choose to instruct their students during the season of Lent and Easter, the Beatitudes are an excellent time to address issues of diversity. Between the ages of thirteen and fifteen is a good time to introduce the eight Beatitudes and have the students examine their lives and attitudes to their peers and other family members. The students can draw a parallel between the Ten Commandments and the Eight Beatitudes and find within themselves that sin which prevents them from being truly open and present to the call of God. It is significant to note that the verses which follow the Beatitudes are;

Verse 13 - “The Salt of the Earth”

Verse 14 - “The Light of the World”

Verse 15 - “No Candle Ever Hidden Under a Bushel Basket”

Verse 16 - “Let Your Light Shine”

Understanding the significance of the verses that follow the Beatitudes will help the students more clearly understand the Beatitudes themselves.

Teaching the Beatitudes throughout the Lenten season offers the teacher the opportunity to present the Beatitudes as an examination of conscience. The penitential season of Lent is the period of forty week-days beginning on Ash Wednesday. It is a season of the Church year that commemorates the forty days Jesus fasted and prayed in the wilderness before He began His public ministry of preaching for repentance.

The Church has devoted a period of time to prayer and fasting as a preparation for the liturgical commemoration of the Passion of Christ and the celebrations of the feast of the Resurrection, Easter Day. For forty days Christians are asked to pray, fast and practice acts of compassion that help people to comprehend the significance of Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection for their own lives and for the world. Lent’s solemnity and focus on suffering helps Christians to embrace more fully Easter’s joy and good news of resurrection. Lent is a season of soul-searching and repentance. It is a season for reflection and taking stock of our lives. Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter. It is a time when the faithful rededicate themselves and when converts are instructed in the faith and prepared for Baptism. By observing the forty days of Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus’ withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days.

Using the eight Beatitudes, the students will enter into a spirit of repentance, as they examine their attitudes to the world around them.

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Pre-Lenten Days

In the Eastern Churches the penitential season before Easter begins before the fourth days, and eventually the Roman Church also anticipated the season for several weeks before the actual beginning of Lent.

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, the pre-Lenten penitential season began on the Sunday three weeks before the beginning of Lent, called *Septuagesima*. The word *Septuagesima* (seventieth) was supposed to be a reminder of the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity of the Jewish people, and thus of our captivity in sin, although this Sunday was actually only sixty-three days before Easter. The succeeding pre-Lenten Sundays were called *Sexagesima* and *Quinquagesima*. Just as in Lent, violet vestments were worn and the Alleluia was omitted from Mass.

The liturgical changes initiated by the Council removed this anticipated pre-Lenten penitential season, however, and the Church returned to the earlier practice of beginning Lent on Ash Wednesday. The Sundays between Epiphany and the beginning of Lent are now in the liturgical season called Ordinary Time.

Movable Feasts

The date of Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal (spring) equinox. Easter is unlike Christmas in that it is celebrated on the same day each year. Easter and feasts and celebrations of the Church year related to Easter are called “movable feasts”. The movable feasts include the *Ascension* (forty days after Easter), *Pentecost* (50 days after Easter), and *Trinity Sunday*, the first Sunday after Pentecost. *Christ the King*, the last Sunday of the liturgical year, or the Sunday before Advent, is also a movable feast, although its date is not determined by the date of Easter, but by the first Sunday of Advent, which is the Sunday nearest the Feast of St. Andrew, November 30.)

Carnival Shrove Tuesday - Mardi Gras

Carnival is from the Latin *Carnevale* or “farewell to meat”, and it is a time of joyful feasting and fun. The practice of celebrating carnival probably began in ancient times when the Sunday a week before the beginning of Lent was called *Dominica Carnevala*, or “farewell to meat Sunday” -- referring to the Lenten fast from meat and animal products.

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The official day of “farewell” is Mardi Gras, French for “Fat Tuesday”. The day was also called “Butter Tuesday”, because the last of the animal products had to be used up sometimes in fried pancakes. It is also known as Shrove Tuesday, which may refer to the diet being deprived or “shriven” of meat; or possibly that after the customary confession in preparation for Lent, one is “shriven” of sin. The famous celebration of Mardi Gras in New Orleans has become largely a secular festival, its religious meaning having been virtually obliterated in the revelries. The word “carnival” has long since lost its religious significance.

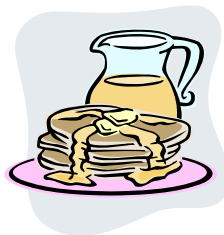
Carnival celebrations are not confined only to Mardi Gras, however, In some parts of the world, the carnival season extends several weeks prior to Ash Wednesday. Even today, the carnival celebrations, especially in the Caribbean, South America and some European countries, begin on January 6 (**Epiphany**) and end on midnight before Ash Wednesday.

Celebrating Carnival with family, friends and parish community helps children and adults to understand and appreciate “that wonderful, eternal rhythm of high and low tide that makes up the year of the Church: times of waiting alternate with times of fulfillment, the lean weeks of Lent with the feasts of Easter and Pentecost, times of mourning with seasons of rejoicing.

One of the reasons for the development of the Carnival season and the emphasis on revelry and merry-making was the very rigorous practice of Lenten fasting during the Middle Ages and beyond. During Carnival, housewives of the past rid their pantries of all butter, lard, eggs, bacon, cream and cheese in preparation for the Lenten fast. From the Middle Ages until the late Renaissance, eating all animal products except fish (which was considered bloodless) was forbidden.

Now, however, the Lenten fast and abstinence from meat in most parts of the world is confined to Ash Wednesday and all Fridays during Lent, and in modern times abstinence from meat does not include other animal products (eggs, milk, and cheese, for example)

Women for Faith & Family, 1999-2000



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Activities to Prepare for Lent

Pancake Breakfast:

The grade 7 and 8 students can organize a pancake breakfast or lunch for the entire school. The older students can solicit the assistance of the parent committee for the event and request that they be involved with the provision of skillets and take the responsibility for cooking the pancakes. The older students can set up the gymnasium in Mardi Gras fashion and be responsible for serving the younger children. When the entire school participates, the pre-Lenten celebration will help children become more aware of the liturgical season.

Mardi Gras Parade:

The grade seven and eight students can challenge the other classes to participate in a Mardi Gras parade. The grade appropriate activity could include the making of dragons, etc. On Ash Wednesday all the classes can enter the gymnasium in Mardi Gras style. Once the school is assembled, a celebration could be held to introduce the entire student body to the meaning of Mardi Gras and its role in the pre-Lenten celebrations.

Preparing our Souls:

Those schools that are fortunate to have a priest who is actively involved with them, could arrange for a celebration to encourage the sacrament of penance. Teachers need to remind the students that Lent is a time of repentance and just as our bodies require food to survive, so to do our souls. Receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation is a good beginning to Lent.

Older students should be given time to reflect on their Lenten sacrifice. It is not only in giving up things that we are blessed, but in giving things to the less fortunate that can constitute a Lenten activity. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving will help each one of us to renew our Baptismal commitment by reminding us of our need for God and by affirming our oneness with those who are suffering. Students should be encouraged to reach out to other children in the playground, especially children who have no one to play with. Throughout the Lenten season, it is a good time to reflect on bullying both in the school and in the playground.

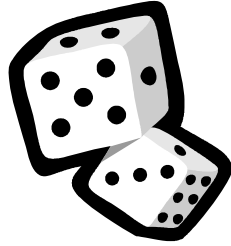
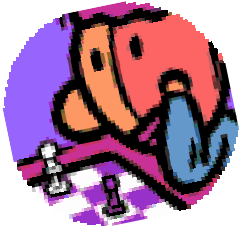


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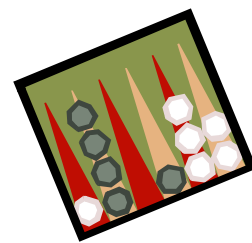
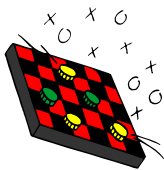
TEACHING THE BEATITUDES GRADE 7 AND 8 STUDENTS SACRED HEART SCHOOL NORTH BAY, ONTARIO



This lesson was prepared by Tanya Bealieu, teacher of the grade 7 and 8 students of Sacred Heart School of the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board.

INTRODUCTION

- Separate the students into groups of 4 to 6.
- Provide each group with a board game.
- Instruct the students to begin playing the game using none of the rules to play. In a short time, chaos develops: the students argue, they fight, they complain that it is not fun and they don't want to play anymore.
- Give the students another opportunity to play the game. This time, the rules apply.
- Once this has happened, it is time for a class discussion. While playing the games, what went well and what did not?
- The goal is for students to come to the realization that we need rules in life for guidance, direction and order.



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USING THE BEATITUDES IN PREPARATION FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Tanya Bealeau, Teacher, Grade 7/8
Sacred Heart School
North Bay, Ontario

YEAR 8 - STAND BY ME

The Purpose of the Program:

“The purpose of the Grade 7 and 8 programs is to assist young believers in nurturing their relationship with God in and through Christ in the context of a Spirit-filled community. By using the “*faith summary*” of the Apostles’ Creed, this program allows young believers to participate with the Church in exploring the dimensions of our relationship with God, Jesus and the community of the Holy Spirit.” *Stand By Me, page 6*

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.

Amen

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USING THE BEATITUDES IN PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

LESSON 1

Stand By Me—Unit 5—We believe in the forgiveness of sins

At the beginning of the Unit the students were asked the following questions:

- **WHY DO WE HAVE RULES?**
- **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REVIEW RULES?**
- **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT THESE RULES APPLY TO EVERYONE?**

After a discussion on rules that inevitably will lead to the 10 Commandments the children were asked to use the same criteria that they used for the 10 Commandments, for the 8 Beatitudes. The students were given copies of the 10 Commandments and the 8 Beatitudes and they were asked to apply both to their lives. Since the students understand the concept of rules, it was easy for them to use either the 10 Commandments or the 8 Beatitudes.

The classroom was divided in half and one half of the class was asked to identify the rules from a Catholic perspective that they found in The 10 Commandments. The other half of the class did the same exercise using the 8 Beatitudes.

The outline found in Unit 5 of the year 8 Teacher's Manual, *Stand By Me* can be used. The students were invited to answer the following questions based on either the 10 Commandments or the 8 Beatitudes:

1. identify the way rules help them to live life to the fullest
2. restate each of the 10 Commandments or 8 Beatitudes in terms of the challenges that they pose for grade 7 or 8 students today
3. create a personal guide for living based on either the 10 Commandments or the 8 Beatitudes
4. examine their conscience.

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ACTIVITY #1

- Divide the students into small groups for discussion. Assign each student one Beatitude.
- Allow students a reasonable amount of time to think and discuss the Beatitude they were assigned.
- Have resources available such as The Catechism of the Catholic Church so that students can re-search their individual Beatitude.
- After a reasonable amount of time, arrange all the students who were given the same Beatitude into one group.
- Allow the students time to share and discuss among themselves what they learned.
- Follow-up the activity with a class discussion to clarify and answer questions.

ACTIVITY #2

- Divide the students into groups of 2 or 3.
- Present each group with a Beatitude and ask them to re-word it so that it has significant meaning to them.
- Once this is completed, instruct the students to create a poster using pictures, drawings, etc. that signify the new Beatitude that they have created.
- Once all the posters are completed, creating a bulletin board in the school hallway is a good idea.

ACTIVITY #3

- In order to apply the Beatitudes to their own lives, students can be invited to keep a journal over several weeks.
- Instruct the students to record different times or incidents in their lives where they believe they were directed to lead their lives according to the Beatitudes.
- At the close of two or three weeks, invite the students to share their experiences with their classmates.

ACTIVITY #4

- Invite the students to be aware of their own music to determine if any given song reflects one or more of the Beatitudes.

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CELEBRATION IN PREPARATION FOR RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

NOTE:

This celebration is suggested, in case your diocese doesn't provide one and you wish to have a school celebration for your students who are preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

ACTIVITY:

- The classroom could be decorated with flames with the names of the gifts of the Holy Spirit on each.
- Students could complete saint posters which would include:
 - - a short history of the saint
 - - a picture of the saint
 - - how the saint imitated Jesus
 - - why they chose that saint and how they think that saint lived a life according to the Beatitudes

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS:

1. We bring a baptismal candle to recall that our initiation into the Church and our faith began with our Baptism. This symbolizes our affirmation in Confirmation of the promises made for us in Baptism.
2. We bring a Bible to symbolize our promise to study, to pray and to bear witness to its message in our lives. We will try to hear the good news and make it a part of our lives and share our Gospel values with all we meet.
3. We bring the Catechism of the Catholic Church that symbolizes our responsibility to learn about our faith and to serve others.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen

Leader: Peace be with you.

All: And also with you.

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Student Reader: (*1 Corinthians 12:4-11*)

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit and there are varieties of services but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another other gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

Homily Hints:

- Jesus promised the Spirit to the apostles to help them to remember and spread what they had been taught; the Spirit helps truth to be planted in our minds and reminds us of it when we stray from it.
- Discuss the 10 Commandments and the 8 Beatitudes that the children have been studying in preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation
- Discuss *The Apostles' Creed* as it relates to the students' affirmation of faith.
- We are responsible to use our gifts, but we can take no credit for what God has freely given us.
- Fruits of the Spirit are the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit working in us.
- These are character traits of Christ and we can only obtain them through Jesus and the Spirit; if we know, love and imitate Jesus these fruits will grow in us.
- Being open to the Holy Spirit to help us become more Christ-like and be a witness for Jesus in the world.

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All Stand

Leader: All powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit, you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide. Give them the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of right judgment and courage, the Spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the Spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ the Lord.

All: Amen

Prayers of the Faithful

Student #1: Let us ask the Lord Jesus for the fullness and the grace of the Spirit, that we may serve God and our neighbour ever more faithfully.

All: Lord, send your Spirit upon us.

Student #2: For our parents, godparents and teachers, that the love and example they have given will be nurtured and cherished throughout our lives and that they will continue to follow the way of Jesus Christ. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, send your Spirit upon us.

Student #3: For all those suffering in body, mind and spirit, that the healing power of the Lord will bring them hope, joy and peace. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, send your Spirit upon us.

Leader: Spirit of God, as we your faithful people unite to serve you, bless us with a most generous outpouring of your grace. Fill each of us to overflowing with your love so that we might share it abundantly. We ask for your blessing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

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Each student lights a candle from the Christ candle at the front of the classroom or Church.

The students sing, *Children of the Light*.

The candles are extinguished.

Leader: Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing. God our Father, complete the work you have begun and keep the gifts of your Holy Spirit active in the hearts of your people. Make them ready to live his Gospel, and eager to do his will. May they never be ashamed to proclaim to all the world Christ crucified, living and reigning for ever and ever.

May the blessing of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you today and every day.

All: Amen

Adapted from *Celebrating our Faith, NOCCC*, Volume III, Confirmation, pg. 18

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Suggested Resources

SUGGESTED READING:

Blanchard, John: *Beatitudes for Today*, 1999

Calvin, John: *Sermons on the Beatitudes*, 2006

Egan, Eileen, Egan, Kathleen: *Blessed Are You: Mother Teresa & the Beatitudes*, 1999

Kolbell, Erik: *What Jesus Meant: The Beatitudes and a Meaningful Life*, 2003

Hinnchbush, Paul: *The Beatitudes: Seeking the Joy of God's Kingdom*, 2000

Murphy, William: *The Beatitudes for Children*, 1982

Parry, Allan, Parry, William: *Happy Am I: The Beatitudes for Children*, 1999

Powell, James C.: *The Beatitudes for Today*, 2005

Redhead, John: *Finding Meaning in the Beatitudes*, 1968

Sheen, Fulton J.: *The Cross and the Beatitudes: Lesson on Love and Forgiveness*, 2000

Watson, Thomas, D: *The Beatitudes: An Exposition of Matthew 5: 1-12*, 2004

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Suggested Resources

RESOURCES:

Born of the Spirit English Canadian Catechetical Series, *Stand By Me*, Teacher's Manual, Year 8, Catechetical resource of the "*We are Strong Together*", written and produced by the National Office of Religious Education of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Ottawa, Canada

Catechism of the Catholic Church, {CCC}, Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994

Catholic Encyclopedia (*The*), Nelson, Inc., Published and Distributed in Canada, 2001

Holy Bible: The New Revised Standard Version (*Catholic Edition*) Nashville, Tenn: 1970, Encinco, Cal.: Benziger division of the Glencoe Publishing Company

Celebrating our Faith, NOCCC Resource, Volume 3, pg. 18, 2002

INTERNET RESOURCES:

- www.adoremusbooks.com
-
- www.newadvent.org/cathen/02371a.htm
-
- www.interviewwithGod.com/beatitudes
-
- www.jesuschristsavior.net/beatitudes
-
- www.biblepath.com/beatitudes
-
- www.catholic.org.ok/library/catechism
-
- www.lifeofchrist.com/teachings/servons/beatitudes.html
-
- www.silk.net/RelEd/1502Kplan.htm
-
- www.gotquestions.org/beatitudes.html
-
- www.amazon.com/Cross-Beatitudes

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- Barclay, William. The Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer for Every Man, San Fransisco, California: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963.
- Loffrey, Alech. Appreciating God's Creation Through Scripture. New York, New York: Paulist Press, 1997.
- McBride, Alfred, O. Praem. The Kingdom and the Glory: Meditations and Commentary on the Gospel of Mathew. Huntington Indiana, 1992.
- Oback, Robert E. and Kirk, Albert. A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew. Huntington Indiana, 1992.
- Rahner, Karl, Watch With Me: The Seven Last Words: New York, New York, 1966.
- Toritto, Joseph. Exploring The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Winona Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 1990.

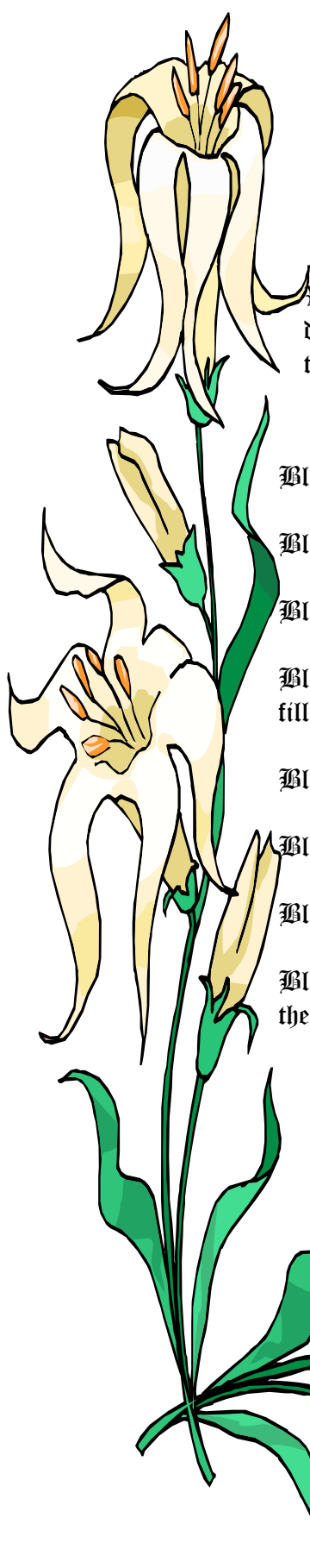
OTHER INTERESTING INTERNET SOURCES:

- www.sborromeo.org/cc/p3slcka2.htm
- www.catholic.net/rcc/Periodicals/Faith/2001-10/hardon.html
- www.catholic.net/ree/Periodicals/Faith/2001-10.html
- www.bringy.to/apologetics/s9.htm
- www.newadvent.org/cathen/0231a.htm
- <http://wordbytes.org/holyland/beatitudes.htm>
- www.americancatholic.org/Newsletters/EDC/ag0102.asp
- Www.catholic-forum.com/saints/litany15.htm
- www.cfpeople.org/FrRay/4Sun02a.htm
- www.silk.net/RelEd15052kplan.htm
- www.domestic-church.com
- www.catholicity.com/catechism/the_html
- Www.crossroadsinitiative.com/library
- www.catholic.com/library
- www.mbowman.com/catholic/s98021_4h.htm
- www.catholicdoors.com
- www.vatican.va/archive/catechism
- www.sfcabriniparish.org/29.html

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APPENDIX PAGES

The Beatitudes



When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

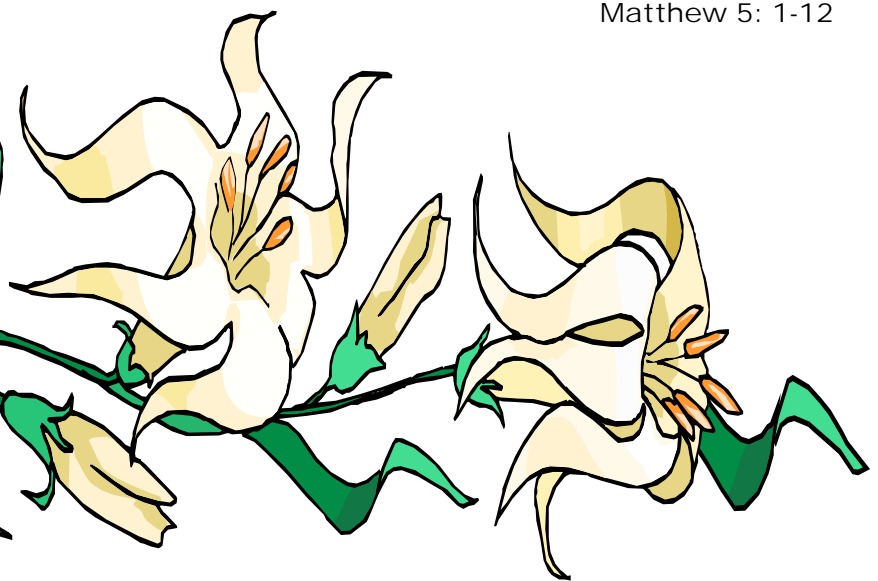
Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5: 1-12



TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. *I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange Gods before me.*
2. *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.*
3. *Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.*
4. *Honour your father and your mother.*
5. *You shall not kill.*
6. *You shall not commit adultery.*
7. *You shall not steal.*
8. *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.*
9. *You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.*
10. *You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.*

EIGHT BEATITUDES

1. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
2. *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
3. *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*
4. *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*
5. *Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*
6. *Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.*
7. *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*
8. *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

BEE—ATTITUDES FOR CHILDREN



Remember that some children do not have as much as you do,
Bee nice to everyone and make Jesus happy.

Remember that some children are sad when they have to send a special
person home to God,
Bee kind and friendly and Jesus will be kind to you.

Remember to let others be first in the line-up, even when it is your turn to
be first,
Bee thoughtful and Jesus will smile on your actions.

Remember that not all children have enough to eat,
Bee giving and share your treats with them.



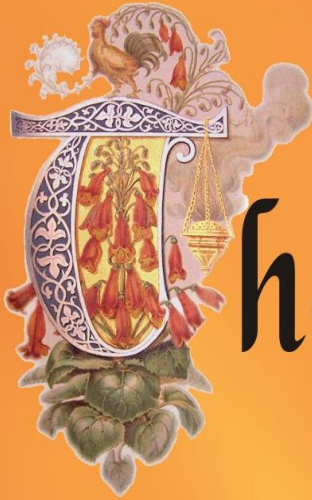
Remember that there will always be a bully in the playground,
Bee forgiving and Jesus will smile on you,

Remember that there are children who will not be nice, because no one
has every been nice to them,
Bee nice to everyone and Jesus will be happy.

Remember when other children argue with you, they just might need a lit-
tle extra attention,
Bee a peacemaker and Jesus will bless you abundantly.

Based on *The Beatitudes*: Matthew 5: 3-9





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eatitudes



Blessed are the poor in spirit:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they that mourn:
for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek:
for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are they which do hunger
and thirst after righteousness:
for they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful:
for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart:
for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers:
for they shall be called the children of God.
Blessed are they which are persecuted
for righteousness' sake:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you,
and persecute you, and shall say all manner
of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is
your reward in heaven: for so persecuted
they the prophets which were before you.

- Matthew 5:3-12