

Living in Faith – A Catholic Approach to Virtue Education through Shared Reading

Board website: www.npsc.ca

About the project ...

The purpose of the *Living in Faith – A Catholic Approach to Virtue Education through Shared Reading* project was to produce shared reading text for Grade 3 and 6 students that supports character development through a focus on Catholic Virtues. Students, staff, parents and parishioners were invited to contribute stories of virtuous acts to provide students with real-life role models upon which to base the formation of their own actions and character. The project writing team also interviewed parish priests and community members to extend the stories, pictures and connections to Bible stories and familiar folk tales and collected feedback from classrooms across the board that piloted the shared reading lessons. The project was directly aligned with the board's vision and promoted school environments that value the common good and the uniqueness of human beings. The shared reading text also promoted a personalized approach to learning by making meaningful and relevant connections to students and their communities. In addition, two DVDs were produced illustrating the interconnectedness of the local community and global issues through faith.

Impact on student learning and school culture ...

- Students improved their literacy skills through shared reading and follow-up tasks that created authentic connections between the students and their learning.
- The real-life stories from local communities and open response questions in the lessons provided students with opportunities for developing critical thinking skills.
- The project also included text forms that support a variety of learning styles including sports stories about local athletes and local community media images.

Lessons learned for moving forward ...

- The project embedded character and virtues education in current, evidence-informed instructional practices such as shared reading and using a variety of text forms.
- Teachers, schools and the board will use the project's lesson format to blend evidence-informed instructional practices with virtues education.
- By reading local stories in which characters choose to do the right thing at the right time and for the right reason, students are being provided with role models for their future actions. This offers a shift in perspective for student thinking. Similar to the Kielburger brothers' model, every step possible is being taken to shift students from "me" thinking to "we" thinking.

The resource is superb and we will be sharing it extensively within our board and with all Catholic boards in the province.

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