

Unit One: *Encountering Jesus*

Encounter - Ordinary Time-Advent



Essential Question: <i>“Who is my neighbor?” & “With whom does Jesus walk?”</i>		
Lesson Title	Objective	Assessment
1. Called to Share God’s Love <i>Who is God?</i>	<i>Students will be able to</i> describe how love is shared and where God calls them to share love, through the example of Jesus and their own lived experiences.	Students will discuss ways in which people show them love and create posters with these descriptions
2. Sent to the Margins <i>From Where Does Jesus Call Us?</i>	<i>Students will be able to</i> explain where Jesus shared love in his life, and the places where they are called to practice what he modeled.	Students will write responses to the questions: Who are some people on the margins of my community (who do I exclude or ignore)? Do I think that God calls me to show love to those people? Why or why not? How might Jesus be responding to these people? To whom might Jesus be calling me?
3. To Be Called and Sent: Missionary Discipleship <i>Walking in the footsteps of Jesus, and finding where he is pointing us</i>	<i>Students will be able to</i> explain “missionary discipleship” according to the church and share how Jesus’ disciples lived it out.	Students will write responses to the questions: 1) What do you think it means to be a “missionary disciple”? 2) How did Jesus/the disciples model missionary discipleship? 3) What is one situation where you might be called to be a missionary disciple right now? And listen and respond to other students.
Immersion Experience (Plus 2 lessons for the experience)	<i>Students will be able to</i> encounter our neighbors on the margins with knowledge of the importance of encounter and after naming their fears.	Students will name their fears and also write where and to whom they feel called to share God’s love.
4. Who Is My Neighbor? <i>Responding to Jesus</i>	<i>Students will be able to</i> inform peers about people on the margins and realities they face.	Students will write and deliver an “elevator speech” explaining an issue facing people on the margins.

[Faith Extension](#)

Unit Lessons:

1. Called to Share God's Love <i>Who is God?</i>	Objective: <i>Students will be able to</i> describe how love is shared and where God calls them to share love, through the example of Jesus and their own lived experiences. Assessment: Students will discuss ways in which people show them love and create posters with these descriptions. Materials: Sticky notes, pens, whiteboard, poster paper, markers Optional digital extension (if one to one): Mentimeter poll with "God is ____", potential homework worksheet
Standards Met: 7-ME-HC-2 Students will locate and explain New Testament passages with contain Jesus's command to love. 7-KF-T Begin to recognize how we can know characteristics of God, but our understanding of God will always be limited as our human words can never explain the mystery of God. Standards to Include: 7-ME-HP Locate and cite passages from the New Testament where people	Introduction: - Welcome to the Missionary Discipleship Institute! In seventh grade religion, we get to learn about Jesus. It's one thing to learn about Jesus in history, learning where he walked, what he did, who he talked to, 2,000 years ago. It's another way to learn about Jesus by spending the year getting to know him and building a personal relationship with him through learning his story both in historical circumstances as well as within the realities of today. If Jesus came back today, where would he be walking now? What would he be doing? Who would he be talking to? And what would YOU be doing while he did that? - Jesus loves YOU in all your uniqueness, and he invites each of us to live out this call to be missionary disciples acting and loving in the world today. Over the course of the school year, we will talk about what missionary discipleship means and how to live out God's mission for us. He gives us community and people before us to show how this is done, and how we can take the next step forward too! - For today, let's think and learn about the God who sent Jesus to earth: if we're going to get to know Jesus, it helps to know where he comes from! And if we're going to be missionary disciples, we have to know whose mission we are on! In order to understand God's mission, we need to consider what we know about God, the one who is sending us on this mission. Activity: God is Love! - On 1-3 sticky notes, students write words or phrases they associate with "God." - Option: Share with one other person what the word is and why he or she wrote it, or do it in silent reflection - Students walk up and place the sticky notes on the whiteboard. - When finished, teacher or student reads the sticky notes aloud. - Students discuss aloud words/phrases that stick out from the list. Direct Instruction: - Teacher discusses our Christian understanding that God is love: - God is love (1 John 4:16). - We are made in God's image to love God, each other, and creation. - Teacher points out other positive descriptors on the board (i.e.: creator, Father, forgiving) and how those all speak to God being love.

expressed a capacity and desire for God. *(there is a longing for encounter)*

- 7-KF-T Name and define the characteristics of God: eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent.

- Our understanding of God will always be limited as our human words can never explain the mystery of God, but the best we can describe is God as love.

- In order to more deeply understand who God is, we need to look at what we know about love

Activity and Discussion: How We Show Love

- **Partner Discussion:**

- Who are people in your life that you know love you?
- *How do you know* that these people love you? (Specifically, what do they *DO?* - examples: hug me, feed me, house me, say "I love you," etc)
- Teacher to note: Pope Francis said, "Love, after all, can never be just an abstraction. By its very nature, it indicates something concrete: intentions, attitudes, and behaviours that are shown in daily living." (*Misericordiae Vultus*)

- **Small Group Activity:**

- On poster paper, students write/draw ways that they know people love them
- If time permits, small groups present to class

- **De-Brief:**

- If there was not previously time for class sharing, spend 3-5 minutes asking for their ideas and responses, write the concrete actions on the board, and fill in what might be missing. Ask them to specifically point out the concrete actions involved (ie: "She gives me high-fives" instead of "She supports me")
- **Direct Instruction:**
 - Explains that love is really about how we treat other people
 - points out that we know someone loves us by how they act towards us, speak towards us, if they seem happy to be around us, etc.
 - Asks the class: Who else, in our Biblical tradition, did these things? (Ate meals with people, took care of people when they were sick, forgave people, etc)?
 - Jesus! So Jesus came and shared these ways of love, as we are also called to do. And when we love in these ways, we are sharing the love that is God!
 - Explains: All of us have been given the gift of love in our lives, this love that is holy, and the next lesson will explore where we are called to share that love with others

- **God's Commandment to Love:**

- For homework or inclusion in this lesson: have students read examples of God's and Jesus' commandment to love in the Bible, have them draw an image of God as love, write a short reflection on the passage, or come to class prepared to explain the readings

Closing Activity:

- Students write answers in one sentence each in their journals:

	○ What was your strongest feeling today during this lesson? ○ What surprised you? Why? For Standards Inclusion: ● Have students read New Testament passages where people express a longing for God. We are meant for wanting to share and receive love, to have this relationship with God. ● Teach about the other characteristics of God: eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Question for reflection: how do these characteristics of God also speak to love? Potential Homework: ● Ask someone else in your family who taught them about love and how they did it, sharing what you learned in the class. Fill out this worksheet with their answers.
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2. Sent to the Margins <i>From where does Jesus call us?</i>	Objective: <i>Students will be able to explain where Jesus shared love in his life, and the places where they are called to practice what he modeled.</i>
	Assessment: Students will write responses to the questions: Who are some people on the margins of my community (who do I exclude or ignore)? Do I think that God calls me to show love to those people? Why or why not? How might Jesus be responding to these people? To whom might Jesus be calling me?
	Materials: Whiteboard, Three Circles Handout, Jesus Mission Statement Worksheet, PowerPoint 1 and PowerPoint 2 if helpful
Standards Met: Standards in this Lesson: Task 6: Students will understand we are missionaries because of our baptismal call 7-CMLS BCD Students recognize the Church is missionary by nature 7-KF-R-3. Use the Gospels	Bell-Ringer: ● Have students answer the question in their journals: How have you seen, experienced, or shared love since our last lesson? Introduction: ● In our previous lesson, we discussed that God is love, and explored different ways we experience love and give love in our own lives. As we get ready to start today's lesson, let us take a moment to center ourselves by taking 3 deep breaths in and out. Prayer: ● As you listen in a prayerful manner to this passage, identify a word or phrase that calls out to you to write in your journals after. This is a reading from the First Letter from St. Paul to the Corinthians: Prayerfully read 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8a Activity: Discipleship: Sharing God's Love Direct Instruction: ● Teacher recaps previous lessons themes:

to understand Jesus' ministry as one who teaches, forgives, and heals in the name of the Father. 7-CMLS BCD Students recognize the Church is missionary by nature 7- LCH-CF-3 Identify qualities and explain how the Holy Family is the model for all families Standards to Include: 7-KF-R Describe how God's Natural Law helps us listen to our own sacred story to follow Jesus Christ.	- God is love. - We are made in God's image to love. This is our mission. - Love is about how we treat others. Chalk Talk: - Teacher asks students to share what they think the word "disciple" means. - Teacher records responses on the board. - Teacher shares Pope Francis' definition of disciple (<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i>, 127): "Today, as the Church seeks to experience a profound missionary renewal, there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility. It has to do with bringing the Gospel to the people we meet, whether they be our neighbours or complete strangers. This is the informal preaching which takes place in the middle of a conversation, something along the lines of what a missionary does when visiting a home. Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey." - Check for comprehension of students, through asking leading questions or asking a student to summarize. - Who is the Church? We are! - What is our mission? To love - What is the Church's mission? To go out and share Love - The Church has been called to do this throughout history, Jesus did it, many of our saints, holy people, and us too. The Church is missionary by her very nature. - Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of God to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey. - This is our call from our very baptism: to be missionary disciples. Large Group Conversation: Three Circles of Discipleship: - Teacher draws a circle on the board, and asks, "Where do most of us first learn that we are loved?" Wait for answers such as "mother, father, grandparents" (family). - Teacher writes the word "Family" in the circle - Teacher draws a second, larger circle around the first and asks students, "Outside of the family, where do we most often experience love in our lives?" (community). - Teacher writes "Community" in the second circle, explaining that this includes classmates, neighbors, teachers, etc. - Teacher draws a third concentric circle and asks students, "As Christians, as followers of Jesus as missionary disciples, to whom else are we called to share love? Who did Jesus share love with who was unexpected for his time, and who would he go to today?" You can lead students by saying that most people stay in the first two circles, but we know that we are called to go beyond that, which Jesus modeled for us. (the margins) (Help lead students to naming people such
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as people who are: experiencing homelessness, in prison, immigrants and refugees, struggling with mental illness, elderly, etc.)

- Teacher writes “Margins” in the third circle, explaining that these are all the people we ignore, reject, or simply do not know
- Why? → It is how Jesus lived: always being with people on the margins, and we are all Children of God: Agape
- Catholic Social Teaching (CST) → if you pre-taught CST, you can incorporate it here - the tradition of the social teachings of our church (especially call to community participation, dignity of the human person, dignity and rights of the workers, etc)
 - To incorporate standards: connect to God’s Natural Law
- We are called by our baptism and lives to share and receive love in each of these three circles.
 - Jesus spent a lot of his time on earth in that third circle, and so we know we will find Jesus and God there when we do the same:
 - Read Jesus’ Mission Statement: Luke 4:14-21, and give students [Jesus Mission Statement Worksheet](#)
 - Reflection on handout (can be silently written or drawn, shared in the large group, etc): What did Jesus come to do? Why did God become human?

Potential lesson break if running long

Partner Discussion: ([handout](#))

- Who were some of the people Jesus went to in each of these circles, and how did he share and receive love there?
- Divide the class into groups to each read a Gospel story identifying a place where Jesus showed and received love. (examples: Matthew 1:18-2:15; Matthew 6:5-15; Mark 1:16-20; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 2:1-7; Luke 2:41-52; Luke 16:13-20; John 2:1-11; John 5:1-18; John 6:1-15; John 11:17-44; John 13:1-17). Extend this or use further lessons to explore how love was shown and received for each circle for Jesus: including the Holy Family, showing the modeling of love for all families
 - Have students come back and share about the story they read, with reflection, presentation, or artwork, etc.

Class Activity: Individual with Teacher Direction:

- Use the handout to explore the three circles. Have the students draw a line in the middle of the three circles, crossing all of them in half. On the left side, write the people Jesus went to who they can think of in each of the three circles, and on the other, write *how* Jesus showed them love (recall back to Lesson 1).
 - Example: Who: people who had leprosy / How: healing, going close, talking to them

	○ Make point - Jesus is one who teaches, forgives, and heals in the name of the Father ● Invite students to spend some time reflecting on the questions at the bottom of the page: ○ Who are some people on the margins of my community (who do I exclude or ignore)? ○ Do I think that God calls me to show love to those people? Why or why not? ○ <i>How</i> might Jesus be responding to these people? To whom might Jesus be calling me? ● Next, have students add names or people who are in each of the three circles for them. ○ Draw the connection: the ways in which Jesus showed love are the same ways that we are called to show love. When we do this, we are walking as Jesus did. ● <i>Option:</i> for working on listening skills within the classroom, invite students to reflect back what their partner said to them - summarizing or paraphrasing ● <i>Option 2:</i> have students write these answers on butcher paper to hang or share with the class
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To Expand Teach to Standards

3. To Be Called and Sent: Missionary Discipleship <i>Walking in the footsteps of Jesus, and finding where he is pointing</i>	Objective: <i>Students will be able to explain “missionary discipleship” according to the church and share how Jesus’ disciples lived it out.</i>
	Assessment: Students will write responses to the questions: 1) What do you think it means to be a “missionary disciple”? 2) How did Jesus/the disciples model missionary discipleship? 3) What is one situation where you might be called to be a missionary disciple right now? And listen and respond to other students’ answers.
	Materials: Whiteboard, Video: Our Missionary Pope , <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> quotes Worksheet , What Does it Mean to be a Missionary? Reflection
Standards Met: ● 7-ME-HC Find New Testament examples of persons responding to God’s call to serve God and others	Missionary Discipleship: Sent to the Margins Bell Ringer: ● What do you think it means to be a missionary? ● Does anyone know someone who is a missionary? Direct Instruction: ● <u>Introduction:</u> We talked in the last few lessons about being a disciple, being a follower of Christ. We know that God is love, that we are called to share that Holy love in our family, our communities, and on our margins. But we haven’t talked much about the other part of this title: of being a missionary!

● 7-ME-HC Students will understand one's responsibility and ways to serve other people, especially those in most need.	● Ask if any students know what being a missionary means, and if they know anyone who is a missionary ● Teacher explains that Pope Francis says that we are not only disciples, but that we are "missionary disciples." (so, we are ALL missionary disciples) ● Teacher explains that students are going to explore what it means to be a missionary. Video and Discussion: ● Before students watch the video, teacher instructs them to think about what images or words stand out to them. ● Students watch Our Missionary Pope (5 mins). ● In the large group, students share images/words that stood out to them ("What did you notice? What was interesting?") Small Group Discussion: ● Groups read the following quotes from Evangelii Gaudium (<i>The Joy of the Gospel</i>) by Pope Francis ● <i>Option:</i> divide the class into three groups, have each group read one and report back to the class what they think it means - have them also underline what they don't understand as they go. ○ EG 120: Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are "disciples" and "missionaries," but rather that we are always "missionary disciples." ○ EG 20: The word of God constantly shows us how God challenges those who believe in him "to go forth." Abraham received the call to set out for a new land. Moses heard God's call: "Go, I send you" and led the people towards the promised land. To Jeremiah, God says: "To all whom I send you, you shall go." All of us are called to take part in this new missionary "going forth." Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the "peripheries" in need of the light of the Gospel. ○ EG 48: If the whole Church takes up this missionary impulse, she has to go forth to everyone without exception. But to whom should she go first? When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication: not so much our friends and wealthy neighbours, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked, "those who cannot repay you" (Lk 14:14). ● Answer the first question in worksheet ● Groups report to the class what they read in their quotes. Small Group Conversation: New Testament Stories: ● Assign each of the groups to read stories from the Gospels and Acts (examples: Mark 14:13-21; Luke 10:1-9; Acts 2:1-13; Acts 2:42-47; Acts 3:1-10; etc) of how disciples, people who had walked with Jesus, in the New Testament were living out this call
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	• <i>Reporting back:</i> share what they read about the disciples: how did you see the Disciples living out this call that Pope Francis talks about? Individual Written Reflection: • Students answer questions 2-4 in writing (from above worksheet): Possible Homework: • Read and reflect on Michael Leen's reflection on being a Missionary. Ask parents/guardians what they think the difference between missionary and volunteer is from the reading.
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4. Who Is My Neighbor? <i>Responding to Jesus</i>	Objective: <i>Students will be able to</i> inform peers about people on the margins, the realities that they face, and how we are called to respond as disciples of Jesus.
	Assessment: Students will write and deliver an “elevator speech” explaining an issue facing people on the margins and why we are called to respond as missionary disciples.
	Materials: Bible opened to Luke 10:25-37, Explanation of Topics, Online resources for research topics; Lectio Divina explanation; Instructions on writing elevator speech
(This often takes longer than a lesson - decide how long you would like to allow for research/speech preparation) Standards Met: • 7- ME-HC-1 Students will identify societal causes of hunger, disease and poverty. • 7-LCH-MC-3 Name and	Prayer: • Practice Lectio Divina (reading the passage multiple times for the following steps: read, meditate, pray, contemplate, instructions here: Lectio Divina) with the Good Samaritan story: Luke 10:25-37 Teacher to Remind Students of Immersion Experience: • Introduction: Last time we had MDI, we met with people, hearing about their stories, struggles, and hopes, getting to meet them in person. However, due to distance and inequality, it is not possible to meet everyone experiencing injustice face to face, in person or even via Zoom. There are many injustices around the world that are important to know about, so we can raise our voices, pray, and act, even as we may never directly meet the people. So, we do the best we can in this classroom with research, particularly looking for solutions generated by those most impacted. As you research, think about people affected by each of these situations. This class, we will spend time researching the ways God’s love is not being lived out and is not breaking through around the world. As you research, think about people affected by each of these situations of injustice and inequality. Explanation of Topics • Care for Creation • Immigration and the Movement of Peoples

explain situations that do and do not honor chaste living – honoring our bodies as Temples of the Holy Spirit.

- Education
- Gender Equality
- Economic Justice and Poverty
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Mini-Research Assignment

- **Background:**

- Students will be assigned topics related to people on the margins to learn about and share information with classmates.
- Teacher should explain that, in the next unit, students will decide a topic to explore more deeply as a class. This assignment is merely to gather and share information.
- As teacher explains the topics, make note of the situations for Gender or Economic Justice around how sometimes people are forced to take jobs which do not honor our bodies as Temples of the Holy Spirit, such as human trafficking, sweatshops for goods, etc. When we purchase our clothes from places where people were forced into unsafe working conditions to make them, are we honoring their bodies?

- **Topics:**

- Each student should be assigned one of the following topics to [research](#) (in class and/or as homework):
 - Care for Creation
 - Immigration and the Movement of Peoples
 - Education
 - Gender Equality
 - Economic Justice and Poverty
- For her/his assigned topic, each student should gather this information:
 - Definition of the topic
 - Three places in the world where this issue is important
 - Three ways this issue affects people on the margins
 - Imagine: What do the people affected do? Who are they? What would you do if you were in their shoes?

Can divide the lesson here: hold the elevator speeches on another day, after they completed them as homework, or (preferably) give them in-class time to do the research

Elevator Speech

- **Explanation:**

- An “elevator speech” is a 2-3 minute “pitch” for a topic or idea (as if you only had the duration of an elevator ride to explain something).
- For their assigned topics, students should write or outline an elevator speech according to the instructions below.
- Students will deliver their speeches in small groups of students researching the other topics.
- Option: create a space like an elevator (with a box, tape, desks, etc) for them to play-act getting into with another student. Play elevator music for 2 minutes and 30 seconds, and have the other student walk out of the space at the end of the time, when the timer bell rings.

	○ Students will turn in their written speech/outline for teacher to assess. ● Elevator Speech Criteria: ○ Duration: 2-3 minutes ○ Each speech should <u>briefly</u>: ■ <i>Explain the topic</i> (i.e.: What does “economic justice” mean?) ■ <i>Identify where this issue is important</i> (locally and globally) ■ <i>Describe the impact this issue has on God’s people and creation</i> ■ <i>Describe how Jesus might be calling us to respond.</i> ● Direct Instruction: We have seen throughout our Gospel stories that Jesus goes to the places where people are hurting the most. He visits the man who is blind who the rest of the community ignores. He hugs people with leprosy. He talks to a Samaritan woman. Jesus is always going to where the world is hurting. So, if he came back today as a walking, talking human, to whom would he go? Each of you have been researching one possible answer to this question, and you’re going to tell us about it in the time you would be in an elevator! ○ Designate yourself / a timekeeper to set a timer for 2 or 3 minutes, (set time depending on how much time you have) with the timer going off at the end of the time. Have the timer end in a “ding!” which sounds similar to the floor arrival noise on an elevator. ○ After each presentation, the other students can applaud in sign language. ○ Students present their elevator speeches to the other students in their breakout groups or as a class. Designate order of presentations.
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[Advent Standards](#)

