ELEMENTARY LESSON PLANS

150th ANNIVERSARY DOCUMENTARY

DIOCESE OF GREEN BAY

**Lesson 1 – INTRODUCTION**

Objective: To appreciate why it is important to celebrate this special anniversary of our diocese

Prayer: Set up a prayer center in your classroom. Place a Bible and candle in it. For each lesson you will be given suggestions for items to add to the center. For this lesson place a diocesan history book and/or pictures of churches in our diocese in the center.

Pray: Dear heavenly Father, we are followers of your Son, Jesus, and members of your Church. We live in the Diocese of Green Bay, which is celebrating the 150th anniversary of it beginning. As we study the history of our diocese, please send your Holy Spirit to guide us, so that we may appreciate the people who have gone before us, become aware of all those who serve in your Church today, and grow in our understanding of what it means to be disciples. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

Procedure:

1. Ask the children what anniversaries they have celebrated in their families. Then ask them why they think celebrating anniversaries is important.
2. Explain to the class that a diocese is a large territory governed by a bishop. In the state of Wisconsin there are five dioceses: Milwaukee, Madison, La Crosse, Superior, and Green Bay. We live in the Diocese of Green Bay. Do they know the name of our bishop?
3. Tell the children that our diocese officially became a diocese on March 3, 1868. In this year of 2018 we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of its beginning. We will be watching a video that tells about the Catholic Church in our diocese.
4. Show Section One of the video.
5. Pass out a map of Wisconsin that shows the counties within the state. Have the children color the counties that are part of the Green Bay Diocese.
6. Recall the fact that there are 324,000 Catholics living in northeastern Wisconsin. Ask the children to tell what kinds of things the Church would have to provide for all those people.
7. Tell the children that a diocese is divided into many small areas called parishes. In what parish do they live? Who is the leader of their parish?
8. As an extra project, invite the students who would like to learn more about their own parish to do a research project and present it to the class.

**Lesson 2 – THE MISSIONARY ERA**

Objective: To recognize the influence of the early explorers and missionaries in our diocese

Prayer: Place a map of the United States and a map of Wisconsin the in prayer center.

Read Matthew 28:16-20.

Pray: Lord Jesus, almost four hundred years ago missionary priests braved many hardships to bring the Gospel to the Wisconsin territory. Help us to follow their example and to have the courage to tell others about you, even when that will be difficult to do. Send your Holy Spirit to lead and guide us so that we tell your story with enthusiasm and joy. Amen.

Procedure:

1. Discuss: If you were one of the first people living in Wisconsin, over three hundred year ago, what hardships might you have had to live with? If you were a priest bringing the Catholic Faith to this part of the world at that time, what difficulties would you have had to face?
2. Tell the children that in this class we are going to learn about the first settlers and missionaries in our diocese. Using a map of North America or the United States, trace the route followed by Jean Nicolet, the first white man to set foot in the Midwest. Move through the St. Lawrence River from Quebec, Canada, to the Great Lakes, to the Straits of Mackinac and Lake Michigan, to Green Bay. Tell the class that Nicolet was hoping to find a route to China; when he stepped out of his boat onto the shore, he was wearing a Chinese robe. Eventually he would travel back up to Lake Huron, where he drowned. He seemingly didn’t know how to swim!
3. Explain that the missionaries were priests who belonged to a group of men called Jesuits. They were started by St. Ignatius of Loyola and they follow a Rule written by him. They are known as the Society of Jesus.
4. Have the following names written on the board: Jean Nicolet St. Ignatius Loyola

St. Francis Xavier Fr. Rene Menard Fr. Claude Allouez Fr. Bonduel

Nancy McCrea Fr. Marquette

Have the children copy the names and leave spaces between them. Tell them that as they watch the next part of the video they should pay attention to what each of these people did. They should jot some notes as quickly as they can while watching the video.

1. Show Section Two: The Missionary Era
2. Review what each person whose name is on the board is known for:

Jean Nicolet – arrived at Red Banks, near Green Bay, was the first white man to set foot in the Midwest

St. Ignatius Loyola – founded the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits

St. Francis Xavier – friend of St. Ignatius, did missionary work in the Far East

Fr. Rene Menard – celebrated the first Mass is Wisconsin

Fr. Clause Allouez – celebrated the first Mass in the Oconto area on the feast of St. Francis Xavier, worked very well with the native people, baptized over 10,000 persons

Fr. Bonduel – the first priest to be ordained in the diocese

Nancy McCrea – offered her home in Kaukauna for church services

Fr. Marquette – traveled through the state with Louis Joliet (Using a map of Wisconsin, point out that they crossed the state diagonally, beginning from Green Bay and traveling along the Fox River. At a place known today as Portage, they carried their canoe and walked about six miles to the Wisconsin River. They traveled on the Wisconsin River to the Mississippi River.)

1. Discuss: Why do you think the early missionaries were willing to face all those hardships to bring the Gospel to the settlers in Wisconsin?

Why were so many immigrants attracted to settling in Wisconsin?

Would you have enjoyed being a settler in Wisconsin at that time? Why or why not?

How important was the life of St. Francis Xavier to the early missionaries? (Point out that today St. Francis Xavier is the patron saint of the diocese. The church where the bishop celebrates Mass is called St. Francis Xavier Cathedral.)

On what date was the Diocese of Green Bay established?

1. Have the children write a report on one of the people featured in the video.

**Lesson 3 – GROWTH IN THE IMMIGRANT ERA**

Objective: To become acquainted with the various ethnic groups that settled in Northeaster Wisconsin

Prayer: Place in the prayer center some items representing the various ethnic cultures in the Diocese of Green Bay.

Pray Psalm 96:1-2.

Sing to God a new song! Sing to God all the earth! Sing to God, bless his name. Proclaim his salvation day after day. Tell of his glory among the nations. Tell his marvelous deeds to all people.

Procedure:

1. Discuss:

Do you know what countries your ancestors came from?

Where did they settle when they arrived in the United States or in Wisconsin?

What customs from their homeland did they continue to carry on in our country?

1. Tell the children that in this lesson we will learn more about the people who came here from other countries. Ask them to pay attention to the particular places where people of each nationality settled.
2. Show Section Three: Growth in the Immigrant Era
3. Ask the class: Who was the first bishop of the Green Bay Diocese? How many bishops have we had in the diocese? (12)
4. Ask them: Which people settled in Pulaski? (Polish) In Scandinavia near Waupaca? (Norwegian) In Brussels and parts of Door County? (Belgian)
5. Review the growth that took place in the diocese during Bishop Melchior’s first years of service:

The Catholic population increased by 50%.

The number of parishes rose from 26 to 40.

1. Tell the children that another very important event took place in our diocese in 1868. A priest by the name of Fr. Edward Francis Daems was working in a parish called Holy Cross at Bay Settlement, a town near Green Bay. He realized that he needed more people to help him. On February 2 of that year he began gathering a group of women to serve in his parish. On February 12 he opened a school at Holy Cross Parish. That school is still open. The group of women became the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross. In this year of 2018 they are also celebrating their 150th Anniversary.
2. Tell the children that a Sister is a woman who gives her life to God and to the Church and makes sacred promises called vows. Sisters live together and spend much time in prayer each day and serve God’s people, especially through teaching, healing, and caring for the poor.
3. Discuss:

What hardships would Sisters have had to face serving the people of that time?

Why would the Sisters have felt happy even though their life in the wilderness was difficult?

1. Have the children interview their parents and/or grandparents to learn about their ethnic heritage. Then have them share what they learned with the class. Encourage them to bring articles or share customs related to their ethnic heritage. Put up a display in the classroom.

**Lesson 4 – THE SHRINE**

Objective: To learn the story of The Shrine and to understand its importance as a place of prayer

Prayer: Place a statue of Mary and a rosary in the prayer center.

Read Luke 1:26-38.

Pray the Hail Mary or a decade of the rosary.

Procedure:

1. Tell the children that in this lesson we are going to learn about a very sacred place in our diocese. It is where people came to pray, especially to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Discuss:

What are some that you know about the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary?

What things would Mary have done to care for Jesus when He was a little Child?

Why do people pray to Mary today?

1. Explain what an apparition is. Some people have had a very special experience; they have seen an image of Jesus or Mary or a saint. Sometimes the person they saw said nothing to them. Other people in the area did not see the image; they may have wondered if the person was really telling the truth about seeing the vision.
2. Tell the class that this is what happened to a young woman by the name of Adele Brise, living in a town called Champion more than a hundred fifty years ago. The Blessed Mother appeared to her several times. In 2010 Bishop David Ricken, after much study had been done about Adele’s experiences and the healings and miracles that took place at that spot, declared his approval for people to believe that Mary really did appear to Adele. That sacred place is called The Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, and today thousands of people come there every year to pray.
3. Show Section Four: The Shrine
4. Discuss:

What did you learn about The Shrine that was especially interesting to you?

What did Mary ask Adele to do?

How did Adele respond?

What things have happened that would help you believe that Mary actually appeared to Adele?

1. Using a map of Wisconsin, trace the path of the Peshtigo fire. (It started near Peshtigo, which is west of the bay of Green Bay, near Marinette, traveled south as far as Suamico, then jumped the bay and went north, covering all of Door County. It also extended to counties south and west of this area.) Point to where the town of Champion would be. Ask:

How would you have felt if you had been in that fire?

How would you have felt if you had been praying by that chapel and had been saved from being burned in the fire?

1. Explain that a few years after the death of Adele in 1896, in 1902, the bishop asked the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross, whose convent was located a few miles from Champion, to take over the care of the chapel and the building that was now attached to it. Following Mary’s advice to teach the children, Adele had begun a boarding school, where children could stay and study and learn the Catholic Faith. The Sisters would continue this work begun by Adele. In 1933 the building became a home for crippled children. A few who died are buried outside the chapel, hear Adele’s grave. In 1953 the building became a high school where girls who wanted to become Sisters lived and studied. In 1968 it became a place of prayer, where people could come for a day or stay for several days and spend their time in quiet and prayer. The Sisters were always available to listen to people’s stories, to pray for their needs, and to offer them words of comfort or encouragement. In 1992, because they didn’t have enough Sisters and enough money to continue caring for this holy place, the Community gave the property back to the diocese. For ninety years the Sisters had faithfully responded to the needs of the people who came to The Shrine.

Ask: How did the service of the Sisters at The Shrine resemble the ways in which Mary cared for the Christ Child?

1. Have the children pretend that they were part of the group that came to the grounds by the chapel to pray during the night of the Peshtigo fire. Have them write a story, describing their experience.

**Lesson 5 – RELIGIOUS ORDERS**

Objective: To learn how men and women in religious orders contributed to the growth of the Church in the Green Bay Diocese.

Prayer: Place in the prayer center pictures of men and women from religious orders in our diocese.

Read Luke 5:1-11.

Pray: O God, throughout the history of the Church You have called men and women to follow Jesus by living a life of prayer in a community and by serving your people. We thank you for the ways in which priests, Sisters, and Brothers have done the works of Jesus in our diocese. We ask that you will bless Your Church with more men and women who are willing to give their lives in service to your people. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Procedure:

1. Ask the children if they remember the name of the group of Sisters who took care of the needs of the people at The Shrine for ninety years. (Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross.) Review the definition of a Sister.
2. Explain that men can also dedicate their lives to God by joining a group of men who make sacred promises to God and serve the needs of the people. Many of them later become priests. Those who do not get ordained are called Brothers. (Point out that a man can become a priest without joining a religious order. He is called a diocesan priest.)
3. Tell the children that in this lesson they will learn about communities of men and women dedicated to God, called religious orders, who have served in our diocese. Ask the children to have a paper and pencil handy, and to write the names of some of the religious orders that are mentioned in the documentary. (Spelling doesn’t count!)
4. Show Section Five: Religious Orders.
5. With the help of the class, list on the board the names of the religious orders mentioned in the documentary:

Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity

Salvatorians

Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross (Bay Settlement Sisters)

School Sisters of Notre Dame

Franciscans

Capuchins

Norbertines

Alexian Brothers

Carmelites

Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother

A New Genesis

Missionaries of the Word

1. Discuss:

Do you know any Sisters or religious order priests?

What do you know about them?

1. Explain that Sisters, Brothers, and religious order priests make vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience. Vows are sacred promises made to God. Through the vow of poverty they promise to live simply and share all their money with the community. Through their vow of celibacy they promise not to get married and to let God be the center of their lives. Through the vow of obedience they promise to obey God, the leaders of the Church, and the leaders of their community. They also promise to obey the rules of their religious order.
2. Discuss:

Would you ever want to be a Sister, Brother, or religious order priest?

What would make you happy about living that kind of life?

What would be difficult about living that way of life?

1. Have the children write questions they would like to ask someone who lives in a religious community.
2. Invite a panel of men and women from a few religious orders to speak about their way of life and to answer the questions that the children have written.

**Lesson 6 – MISSIONARIES IN A NEW ERA**

Objectives: l) To learn what it means to be a missionary disciple; 2) To grow in our desire to spread the Good News of Jesus

Prayer: Place in the prayer center pictures of people at prayer and pictures of people engaged in service to others.

\*\*Pray at the end of class.

Read John 15:15-17

Pray: Heavenly Father, we thank you for all the blessings you have given to the Diocese of Green Bay during these past 150 years. We thank you for the friendship we share with Jesus through our Baptism. Help us to grow in our knowledge and love of Jesus so that we may bear fruit by following His way of living and loving. We pray in his name. Amen.

Procedure:

1. Tell the children that our bishop keeps reminding us that we are to be missionary disciples. Ask them what it means to be a disciple. Ask them what it means to be a missionary.
2. Tell the children that we will be watching the last section of the documentary. As they view it, they should take note of some of the good things going on in our diocese today.
3. Show Section Eight: Missionaries in a New Era
4. Discuss:

What are some of the good things going on in our diocese today?

What have you or your family done to spread the Good News of Jesus?

Who are some people who need to learn about the love of Jesus?

What are the most important things about the life of Jesus that you would want to share with others?

What difficulties might you have to face in teaching others about Jesus?

How have you grown in your relationship with Jesus?

How can you be involved in a life of service in the Church when you become an adult?

1. Summarize the entire documentary by reviewing the titles of the sections you have shown to the class. Then ask the children to share what things they learned that were really interesting and or made an impression on them.
2. Have the children work in groups to create a poster entitled: “The Diocese of Green Bay – Spreading the Good News of Jesus!” Have them use issues of The Compass to get pictures for their posters.
3. Conclude with the prayer.