

Date: February 2012

Edition: Volume 11 No. 4
interimplus@theinterim.com

Contents:

Seventh Billion Human	p.1
Sports Personalities and Free Speech	p. 6
Family, Kindness	p. 7
Valentine's Day Activities	p. 10

Curriculum Supplement For Schools

The *Interim Plus* is a periodical dedicated to educational matters and specifically designed to assist teachers in integrating relevant life issues in their lesson planning.

Editor: Dan Di Rocco
Editorial Board: Dan Di Rocco,
Alissa Golob, Matt Dineen

Despite dark clouds on the economic and employment horizons, there are signs of hope everywhere. The participation level and quality of the candidates for the Father Ted Colleton Scholarship attest to this. A later edition of *The Interim Plus* will focus on this theme. This edition is divided into two parts: the first, devoted to the paradox of population growth and reduction of poverty in the world; and the second, on the topic of friendship, family, LOVE AND Valentine day activities.

We welcome writers for this digital publication available freely online at www.theinterim.com. You would be sharing with other educators across Canada. If you have developed lesson plans with a strong moral perspective dealing with life issues why not share them with colleagues in search of and in need of curriculum assistance in this field. You would be doing a tremendous service to fellow teachers and the young people whom they teach.

Of note, in this edition we are very happy to welcome the efforts of Elizabeth Seguin who has developed interesting St. Valentine's Day lesson material for primary grades.



PART A

Happy 7 billion, *The Interim* December 2011, Paul Tuns

Population pessimists have been braying about overpopulation for more than two centuries, but the doomsayers notwithstanding, life is getting better all the time.

On Oct. 31, the 7 billionth person was born. Maybe. Well, probably not. Sometime between last Summer and next Summer the 7 billionth person was added to the global population, depending who you believe and how accurate the statistics are.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) took the estimate of the UN Population Division (UNPD), whose numbers and estimates seldom match the's, that the 7 billionth baby would be born in the second half of 2011 and symbolically scheduled Oct. 31 as the date to reach the milestone. The UNFPA admits a one per cent margin of error which doesn't sound like much but which puts actual arrival of number seven billion up to six months of either side of Oct. 31. The U.S. Census Bureau's World Population Clock says "Baby 7 Billion" will arrive March 1, 2012. It assumes that the collected national stats of populations, fertility rates, and population growth are accurate. Looking forward, estimates just five decades out can have top and bottom limits billions of people apart. Population growth is not a pre-ordained destiny and models are often inaccurate

Earlier this year, the United Nations Population Division predicted the world's population could reach 10.1 billion by 2100. Could. The media focussed on the nice, round 10 billion number but

the UNPD’s projections included a high variant, medium variant, and low variant. It gets a little technical, but it all depends on certain assumptions and the 10 billion figure was the medium variant projection between a high of more than 15 billion and a low of 6.1 billion – or about 900 million fewer souls than are alive today. Let us be clear: the UN’s own projections for 89 years from now has a spread of 9 billion, from a low of just over 6 billion to a high of more than 15 billion. Those very projections tell you how predicting future populations is a mug’s game because there is no way to know what might impact child-bearing decisions 20, 40, 60 and 80 years from now. Which countries might suffer declines similar to Oman’s which saw fertility rates fall from 7.9 in the late 1980s to just 2.5 now.

Estimates that take into account the fact that fertility rates generally fall as economic well-being increases – and most of the developing world is experiencing economic development consistent with declining fertility – show an increase of another



billion or so over the next 50 years and then a gradual decline in global population.



Thomas Malthus, the Anglican vicar and population pessimist, famously predicted in the early 1800s that “population, when unchecked increases in a geometric ratio,” while “subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio.” In other words, food increases incrementally while population increases by leaps and bounds. Except, that’s

not quite how it works.

econc10.bu.edu

In July 2008, *The Interim* published a cover story entitled “Why concern with overpopulation is wrong.” In it we looked at economic growth from the time of Malthus – and his prediction of a future that would be nasty, short, and brutish because population pressures would lead us to a Hobbesian war of all versus all as we fought over ever smaller pieces of what could be produced – to the present. In brief, technological and agricultural innovation in the early 19th century and late 20th century led to improvements in harvesting and yields that prevented mass starvation; indeed, the economy and its ability to feed the growing number of mouths increased faster than population, and people, rather than becoming poorer and hungrier, became wealthier. It is a continuing shame that Norman Borlaug, father of the Green Revolution – the agricultural changes that increased crop yields in the late 1960s and early 1970s – is less famous than Paul Ehrlich, the modern Malthus, who has been incorrectly predicting population-growth related catastrophe for nearly a half century.



Paul Ehrlich
cchange.net

Borlaug helped feed billions of people by increasing wheat and rice yields in precisely the countries (most notably Pakistan and India) Ehrlich was predicting doom for in his book *The Population Bomb*, published in 1968. Despite having failed massively in his predictions – writing in ‘68 that “if I were a gambler, I would take even money that England will not exist in the year 2000” and “the battle to feed all humanity is over. In the 1970s the world will undergo famine (and) hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now” – Ehrlich is something of a celebrity in population control circles. MSNBC invited Ehrlich to address the arrival of baby number 7 billion and on cue Ehrlich predicted end-of-world scenarios: “a billion hungry people,” “catastrophic climate disruption,” and “a global civilization ... in peril.” To have any chance of survival, he said, family size had to be limited to a pair of children and penalties imposed on “over-producers.”

It is no consolation that Ehrlich’s dystopia permits twice as many children as Red China’s one-child policy; it is barbaric to punish future children for a

problem that does not exist. Whether by abortion or contraception, population control fanatics think the solution to the problem of famine, global warming, or war is fewer people.

But why eliminate the babies. Population growth is the result not of too many babies being born but an ever-increasing number of adults living longer. If population growth is a problem, so is a long life

In 8000 B.C., the global population was about 5 million and it took nearly a half-million years to reach that point. As the *Weekly Standard's* Jonathan Last points out, "the reason it took so long to get to 5 million was that it was devilishly hard to keep 5 million people alive at once." Then man learned about agriculture and world population grew to approximately 300 million by 45 B.C, and added another 500 million people from the time of Julius Ceasar to the Middle Ages (1750). Once it reached a billion later that century, it took another century to add the next billion people. From 1925 to 1960, global population grew from 2 billion to 3 billion. By 1974, the world's population hit 4 billion. Another two billion were added by 1999 and it took another 12 years to reach the 7 billion mark. Until the mid-1900s, fertility rates did not change much; what changed was life expectancy, roughly doubling in two centuries.

In 1810, only two countries had a high life expectancy of 40: the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The industrial revolution made Europe richer and slowly life expectancy grew and in the 1850s, the first country reached an average life expectancy of 50. By the turn of the century, most people in the United States and western Europe lived to be 50. It is no coincidence that population growth in the 19th century was mostly in the U.S. and Europe.

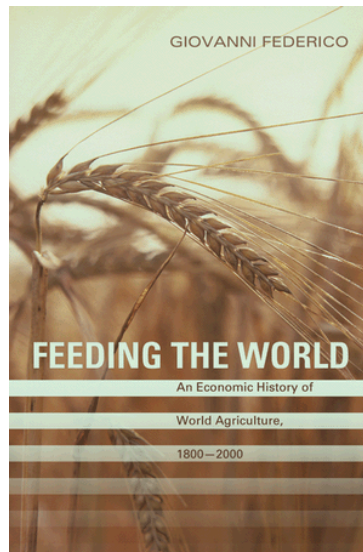
During the Great War and the Spanish Flu Epidemic populations declined, as did how long people could expect to live. As the BBC's Hans Rosling has noted, "despite the Great Depression, western countries forged on to greater wealth and health," although no country had a life expectancy of 75 until the 1950s (with Sweden being the first to reach that level). By the 1970s, many Latin American and Asian countries were becoming wealthier and most had life expectancies in the 60s and 70s. By 1995, only three war-torn countries had life expectancies under 40 and all but a few African states had life expectancies in the 60s. Red China's population is growing not because so many children are born; indeed, its brutal one-child policy has pushed fertility rates below replacement and within a generation, China, like Japan today, is expected to experience population decline. Rather, as wealth and health both improved in the past three decades, life expectancy reached Western rates in the mid-70s

(and in cities like Shanghai, it is in the high 80s). Economist Julian Simon said "the increase in the world's population represents our victory over death."

While life expectancy increased to the late 70s and early 80s for most wealthy western nations, nearly every developed country and a growing number of developing countries have birth rates under replacement level (2.1 children per woman of child-bearing age). By 2020, the majority of the world's population will live in countries with sub-replacement level fertility, including China, all of Europe, and Canada. Indeed, we've known this since Malthus's time; the old Anglican vicar predicted world food supply would run out by 1890 due to decreased mortality rates, not the rapid increase in offspring.

So blame senior citizens for population growth, if you must, but not babies. Of course, it is easier to eliminate the unborn through abortion because it is done in private; culling grandparents would be a public relations nightmare which is probably why the UN and population control supporters haven't advocated it (yet). As the saying goes, it is no coincidence that all the advocates of abortion are already born. A population control program that relied on euthanasia rather than abortion might mean a few population control advocates surrendering their lives, but none are volunteering to personally reduce the world's population. As Chesterton said, those who fret about over-population always point to other populations; Englishmen don't think there are too many Englishmen and doctors and lawyers don't think there is an over-abundance of doctors and lawyers.

As the American Enterprise Institute's Nicholas Eberstadt has noted, real demographers do not use the term over-population. By which measure are there too many people? The term is too subjective. If population growth is mostly the result of rising life expectancy, it should be considered a good thing.



Improvements in nutrition, sanitation, and basic medicine produced most of the initial increase in life expectancy from about 40 to near 60 or 65. But who doesn't think soap, garbage pickup, healthy food, inoculations, antibiotics, and basic surgery are not things that have improved the world.

press.princeton.edu

The world produces enough food. Malthus and Ehrlich were simply wrong, Ehrlich pig-headedly so. In 1950, there were 2.2 billion people in the world and they produced 692 tons of grain. By 1992, there were 5.6 billion people and they produced 1.9 billion tons of grain. There was a 220 per cent increase in global population, but a 280 per cent increase in global wheat production. As *Nature* magazine reported last year, with new agriculture technologies and genetically modified food, the nutritional needs of everyone should be met even with the addition of another billion or so people.

Giovanni Federico in his book *Feeding the World: An Economic History of Agriculture, 1800-2000*, says that given the right policy environment, farmers have successfully risen to the challenge of meeting rising demand and he is confident that they will continue to do so. Right now, the world produces more calories than is necessary to meet the needs of the people who populate it. Unfortunately for those who are undernourished and malnourished, the distribution of the global food supply is far from efficient. MSNBC reported in 2007 that the number of people who are clinically overweight exceeds those who are undernourished. According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the problem of hunger is not related to population or supply, but poverty. Both the FAO and England's Royal Society say that with the right agricultural policies, the necessary 70 per cent increase in food production to meet growing demand due to changing diets and increasing populations, is achievable. Obviously, the focus should be on getting the right agricultural and food policies and distributing production more efficiently, not in actively reducing population.

http://www.wildland.com/trips/africa/100081/eth_tr_ipreviews.aspx



Neither is over-crowding a problem. Robert L. Sassone, author of the *Handbook on Population*,

pointed out that every human being could be given 1000-square feet of land (about the population density of New York City) and everyone could fit comfortably in the state of Texas. That's a decent sized-house with a yard for the average family. There is obviously enough space for the seven billion people in the world now and another billion or so.

The doomsayers have predicted that with more people comes more war and conflict. Well, just like their predictions that population growth inevitably comes with famine and poverty – just the opposite has occurred over the past five decades, with the UN's Human Development Report indicating almost universal increases in the standard of living – the warnings about conflict have proven false. As development economist Peter Bauer pointed out in the 1970s, "rapid population growth has not been an obstacle to sustained economic advance either in the Third World or in the West."

Famines are caused by bad government policies. Democratic and accountable governments can get food to the hungry in emergencies, but corrupt governments do not. Most of the worst famines of the 20th century -- Russia, Red China, North Korea, and Ethiopia -- occurred in communist countries while other cases of starvations (Zimbabwe) occurred as a direct result of agricultural central planning. What most places need is better government, not fewer people. But if having billions of people populate the world doesn't cause poverty or famine, doesn't it lead to more conflict? With less room to stretch out before we bump into our neighbours, people are likely to get testy, aren't they?

According to the Simon Fraser University "Human Security Report" released in 2010, the number of conflicts and wars has actually declined over the past six decades. In 1950s, it noted, the average international conflict killed 21,000 people annually, but today the average conflict causes under 18,000 deaths, and there are fewer conflicts. It finds the "world is getting more peaceful." That is the thesis of Steven Pinker's new book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, which argues that human beings have never lived through such peaceful times as they do now at the beginning of the 21st century. Since the end of World War II, there have been a growing number of countries amongst which war is unthinkable. Indeed, the greatest violent international threat is Islamic terror which is ideological in nature and has nothing to do with population density or any supposed population-related problems.

This may sound like Voltaire's Pangloss who always thought this was the best of all possible worlds. But the evidence overwhelmingly backs the so-called Cornucopianists who know that human ingenuity will help a growing population meet the challenges of tomorrow.



The late economist Julian Simon, who battled with Ehrlich in the 1970s and '80s, called human beings "the ultimate resource" – the world needs more people, not less. The most important biological fact about people is their brains (which create things), not their mouths (which consume resources); the former helps solve problems related to the latter.

Eliminating people, even if it were "necessary" – which it isn't – is barbaric. As Steven Pinker notes in his book, we have largely evolved as species to a point where most people do not think violence is the solution to their problems. So why would governments and non-governmental organizations promote violence against the unborn to solve the non-problem of population. Ultimately, however, the population control crowd sets up a false dichotomy between Earth and its people. The evidence of the past two centuries, but especially the past 40 years, indicates that man is perfectly capable of coping with living among a growing number of his own species.

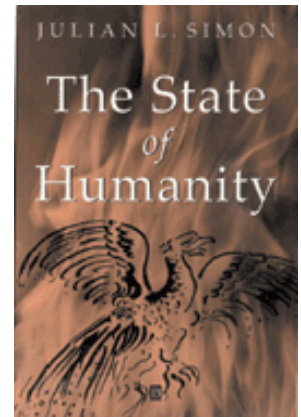
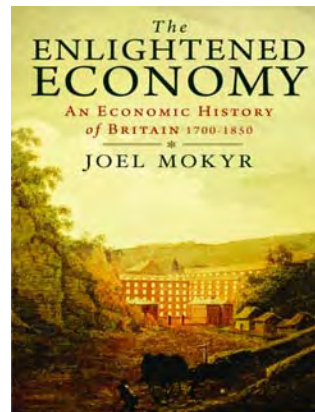
Questions

1. What caution should be taken with models that purport to estimate future population growth?
2. How has the Malthus model proven wrong?
3. Who was Norman Borlaug and who was Paul Ehrlich?
4. Is the problem too births or longer lives?
5. By 2020, the majority of the world's population will live in countries with sub-replacement level fertility, including China, all of Europe, and Canada.
6. What factors determine the life expectancy of people? How does it differ from country to country? What is meant by "life expectancy"?
7. What is the irony presented by Tuns in explaining the birth rate vs death rate predicament?
8. Have students discuss the relative importance of the various factors.
9. How have agricultural breakthroughs (the Green Revolution) been responsible for food production surpassing the population growth?
10. Food distribution, over-crowding, war, famine,

poverty - What is the cause and effect relationship between these factors?

11. What factors cause hunger, famines?
12. Has Tuns made a good case for the positives of population growth, the real benefits of normal population growth?
13. Ultimately, the population control extremists want fewer people, whether fewer babies to be born, or fewer old people to hang around past their prime. Is such thinking dangerous?

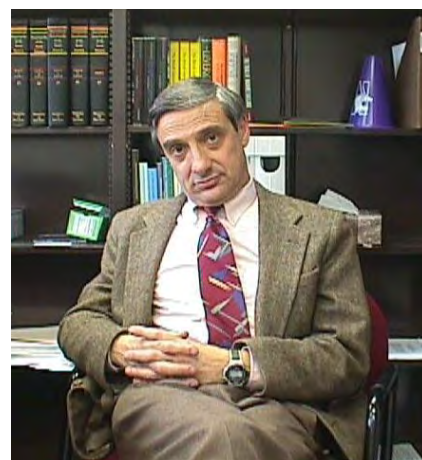
What others are saying



http://books.google.ca/books/about/Gender_work_and_wages_in_industrial_revo.html?id=gJEWvlqIEoIC&redir_esc=y

Joel Mokyr below

faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu



Population and poverty are not inextricably linked

According to demographers Joyce Burnette and Joel Mokyr, as humanity's numbers have grown, our average standard of living has grown as well. These scientists wrote a paper

entitled "The Standard of Living Through the Ages," found in the book *The State of Humanity*. In it, they point out that every single statistic that we have on this subject points to one simple truth: that as population has grown over time, the average person has become better off.

They measured this in almost every way imaginable. Burnette and Mokyr have graphs showing rising per

capita income. They have graphs showing average life expectancy, average height, caloric consumption, sugar consumption, cotton consumption, even beer consumption! Every single one of these averages has been steadily increasing over time as the population has grown.

This is in direct contradiction to overpopulation alarmists, who hold that as population increases poverty becomes more severe. They claim that this is simple common sense. As counter-intuitive as it may seem, science actually shows the opposite. As population grows, productivity and innovation grow, which means that more and more people have access to the goods and services that they need.

– OverpopulationIsAMyth.com

en.wikipedia.org

The implicit racism of Malthusianism

Now, the theory of Thomas Malthus has been used as the scientific justification for anti-human policies from his own time down to the present. But is it true?



On the surface, the idea that the more people there are, the less there will be to go around appears to make sense. It therefore follows that if we get rid of some people (especially those we don't like, anyway), we'll all be better off. Thus, those interested in eliminating Indians, Irish, Jews, Slavs, Africans, or whomever have been able to argue that their policies, while harsh, are simply necessary to make the world a better place.

Robert Zubrin, "Welcome, Child Seven Billion," National Review Online, Nov. 1.

The arrival of the 7 billionth child

United Nations officials chose Halloween as the milestone birthday despite demographers stating that it is impossible to know the arrival of the 7 billionth person. And it is unclear if they intended to emphasize this on the "scariest" day of the year. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the world's population won't reach 7 billion until March of 2012. Other scholars calculate November 2012 and even into 2013 or 2014, since population growth rates are falling in nearly every country.

Wendy Wright, Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, Nov. 4

Questions

1. How does science belie the claim by population control proponents about the link between poverty and population growth?
2. If facts prove the opposite of what they claim why is the myth propagated by many in the media?
3. How is the threat of overpopulation a cover for an "implicit racism" program?
4. Have students research and then compare and contrast how the announcement of the birth of the 7 billionth person was carried by different media: for example, television channels like the CBC, CTV, FOX NEWS, and large daily newspapers in Canada.

Sports Personalities and Free Speech

In the recent past there has been criticism of sports personalities (athletes and sports commentators) who dared to speak out on non-sports related issues. Examples abound in North America as well as in other parts of the world. Athletes may make a comment that is considered inappropriate, Commentators may tweet something that gets them in hot water. Muhammad Ali, the boxing champion took a stand against the Vietnam War and went to jail for his refusal to be drafted into the American army. Ultra soccer fans may shout racist slogans. Coach's Corner host Don Cherry has made statements that landed him in hot water with some journalists and the CBC brass. Brian Burke, General Manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs has marched in the GAY Pride Parade in solidarity with LGBTQ groups. Sean Avery, New York Rangers hockey player, made a commercial in favour of the legalization of same-sex marriage in the state of New York. There are many other instances of athletes saying or doing something that attracted criticism or praise.

Most recently there have been two interesting examples involving free speech. In one instance a sportscaster was fired from his job for tweeting outside of the workplace, but his employer seems to have taken exception to his comments that supported a player agent who had criticized his own player over that player's support for legalizing gay marriage in the state of New York. Damian Goddard lost his job for standing up for traditional marriage. His story follows below. Then there was Tim Thomas, the goalie

of the Boston Bruins, who chose not to participate in his team’s recognition at the White House for winning the Stanley Cup last June. Thomas has been mostly excoriated by the press for his principled stand of not going to the White House reception because he does not agree with the general direction of the American government, whether Democrat or Republican. Celebrities enjoy a great deal of public adulation and so their views count for something when it comes to public issues. When some of these personalities speak out or choose an unpopular course of action the media jumps all over them. The question is whether the criticism is fair or excessive, or done for the wrong reasons to push the critics’ own brand of politics. This makes for an interesting study of the type of treatment received by different athletes and commentators depending on the times, the issue, the person involved and the politics of the person.

Example 1



Sports anchor fired after speaking out against gay ‘marriage’ Patrick Craine Special to The Interim

A TV sports anchor fired in the spring

after tweeting his support for true marriage says he hopes the case will inspire other Canadians to take up the marriage battle, which is experiencing a lull in Canada six years after Parliament legalized same-sex “marriage.”

Damian Goddard, the former host of Connected, was fired by Rogers Sportsnet in May after tweeting his support for an NHL hockey agent who had opposed same-sex “marriage” on the Twitter social media website. In June, he launched a human rights complaint against Rogers, contending that the case affects all Canadians with deeply-held religious views.

“I want to ... tell people that what I did wasn’t special at all,” Goddard told LifeSiteNews. “I want to tell people of faith that we are commissioned by Christ to speak boldly for the faith.”

.....Rogers said the firing was unrelated to Goddard’s tweet, claiming that for “weeks” leading up to his termination, “it had become clear that he is not the right fit for our organization.” Spokesman Dave Rashford said Goddard is “aware of the reasons (for his termination) – which are well documented.”

But Goddard points out that he was fired within 24

hours of the tweet. Rogers had immediately distanced themselves from the tweet, and then called him in for a meeting within hours, which he could not attend because of family duties. Goddard says he was given a “ringing endorsement” only a week before his dismissal.

“My goodness, all I said was that I believe in one man and one woman. That’s all I said. And I lost my job the next day. So what’s next?” he asked.

A devout Roman Catholic, Goddard believes his defense of hockey agent Todd Reynolds on Twitter was a response to God’s call. “For years I just prayed. I said ‘God, I just want to be a tool for you, however, wherever, whenever,’” he explained. “I love being a sports broadcaster, but when I saw that tweet last May, I just had to defend this man who’s defending the Christian meaning of marriage.”

.....He said he filed the human rights complaint because he wants to be an example to fellow Christians of the need to defend the faith in the public square. “You don’t want to lose your job if you say the wrong thing, but that’s where we’ve come to obviously in this society. And it’s a crying, crying shame,” he said.

.....Goddard emphasized that his opposition to the homosexual agenda is rooted in a deep love for men and women who are tempted toward homosexuality. “All of these so-called Christians who say ‘God hates fags’ couldn’t be more wrong,” he insisted.

“There is amazing love in the word ‘no.’ No, what you’re doing is you’re basically throwing away a gift that’s been given to you by God,” he said. “You are carrying a cross, but you are not the only one to have ever carried a cross. They have no concept of how close proximately they are to Christ crucified.”

This article originally appeared Nov. 21 at LifeSiteNews.com and is reprinted with permission.

Example 2

Strangely, Canadian sportscasters took an inordinate interest in the action of Boston Bruins goalkeeper Tim Thomas who chose not to attend the traditional White House reception for championship sports teams (World Series winner, NFL Super Bowl winner, Stanley Cup winner, NBA champions, NCAA football champions and ditto for NCAA basketball champions). As it happens, Thomas is the only American on the Boston team. The rest of the players are mostly Canadians and a few Europeans. Yet it was the lone American who decided for his own personal reasons not to meet the President of the day. Here is what he had to say on his Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/TimThomasOfficialPage?filter=2>

I believe the Federal government has grown out of control, threatening the Rights, Liberties, and Property of the People.

This is being done at the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial level. This is in direct opposition to the Constitution and the Founding Fathers vision for the Federal government.

Because I believe this, today I exercised my right as a Free Citizen, and did not visit the White House. This was not about politics or party, as in my opinion both parties are responsible for the situation we are in as a country. This was about a choice I had to make as an



INDIVIDUAL. This is the only public statement I will be making on this topic. TT

Questions

1. Are there any principles of human freedom involved in these examples? Explain.
2. Why did Damian Goddard take his dismissal by Rogers Sportsnet to the human rights commission?
3. Assuming that Goddard was dismissed for the reason he alleges, did the employer act justly?
4. Should celebrities, whether in sports or in the field of entertainment, take public stands on “controversial issues”? Do they influence public opinion? Does it cost them endorsements?
5. Have students compare and contrast the type of coverage and commentary given by leading media of the day regarding the following or other similar examples:
 - a) Muhammad Ali (refused to be drafted into the army)
 - b) Jimmy the Greek (made remarks deemed racial)
 - c) Don Cherry (has spoken out about hockey fighting)
 - d) Joachim Noah (refused to go to White House as member of NCAA basketball champion Florida)

PART B

In our families, in our schools and in our communities we do not always appreciate the special gifts of people who appear to be different. We believe in the uniqueness and dignity of every human being no matter their age, size, level of awareness or degree of intelligence. Teachers may wish to employ the following story to illustrate the presence of someone who appears to be less “gifted” but from whom one could learn much.

God Lives Under the Bed

I envy Kevin.

My brother, Kevin, thinks God lives under his bed.

At least that's what I heard him say one night. He was praying out loud in his dark bedroom, and I stopped to listen, 'Are you there, God?' he said. 'Where are you? Oh, I see. Under the bed...'

I giggled softly and tiptoed off to my own room. Kevin's unique perspectives are often a source of amusement. But that night something else lingered long after the humor. I realized for the first time the very different world Kevin lives in.

He was born 30 years ago, mentally disabled as a result of difficulties during labor. Apart from his size (he's 6-foot-2), there are few ways in which he is an adult.

He reasons and communicates with the capabilities of a 7-year-old, and he always will. He will probably always believe that God lives under his bed, that Santa Claus is the one who fills the space under our tree every Christmas and that airplanes stay up in the sky because angels carry them.

I remember wondering if Kevin realizes he is different. Is he ever dissatisfied with his monotonous life? Up before dawn each day, off to work at a workshop for the disabled, home to walk our cocker spaniel, return to eat his favorite macaroni-and-cheese for dinner, and later to bed. The only variation in the entire scheme is laundry, when he hovers excitedly over the washing machine like a mother with her newborn child.

He does not seem dissatisfied.

He lopes out to the bus every morning at 7:05, eager for a day of simple work. He wrings his hands excitedly while the water boils on the stove before dinner, and he stays up late twice a week to gather our dirty laundry for his next day's laundry chores.

And Saturdays - oh, the bliss of Saturdays! That's the day my Dad takes Kevin to the airport to have a soft drink, watch the planes land, and speculate loudly on the destination of each passenger inside. 'That one's goin' to Chi-car-go!' Kevin shouts as he claps his hands. His anticipation is so great he can hardly sleep on Friday nights.

And so goes his world of daily rituals and weekend field trips. He doesn't know what it means to be discontent. His life is simple.

He will never know the entanglements of wealth or power, and he does not care what brand of clothing he wears or what kind of food he eats. His needs have always been met, and he never worries that one day they may not be.

His hands are diligent. Kevin is never so happy as when he is working. When he unloads the dishwasher or vacuums the carpet, his heart is completely in it. He does not shrink from a job when it is begun, and he does not leave a job until it is finished. But when his tasks are done, Kevin knows how to relax.

He is not obsessed with his work or the work of others. His heart is pure. He still believes everyone tells the truth, promises must be kept, and when you are wrong, you apologize instead of argue.

Free from pride and unconcerned with appearances, Kevin is not afraid to cry when he is hurt, angry or sorry. He is always transparent, always sincere. And he trusts God.

Not confined by intellectual reasoning, when he comes to the Lord, he comes as a child. Kevin seems to know God - to really be friends with Him in a way that is difficult for an 'educated' person to grasp. God seems like his closest companion.

In my moments of doubt and frustrations with my beliefs, I envy the security Kevin has in his simple faith. It is then that I am most willing to admit that he has some divine knowledge that rises above my mortal questions.

It is then I realize that perhaps he is not the one with the handicap. I am. My obligations, my fear, my pride, my circumstances - they all become disabilities when I do not trust them to God's care.

Who knows if Kevin comprehends things I can never learn? After all, he has spent his whole life in that kind of innocence, praying after dark and soaking up the goodness and love of God.

And one day, when the mysteries of heaven are opened, and we are all amazed at how close God really is to our hearts, I'll realize that God heard the simple prayers of a boy who believed that God lived under his bed.

Kevin won't be surprised at all!

Questions for reflection

1. What insights if any does this simple story offer about
 - a) love in a family
 - b) sources of inspiration
 - c) attitudes toward people with some disability
 - d) treatment of fellow students who may be different
 - e) adulthood vs childhood
 - f) importance of routines
 - g) beauty of innocence
 - h) the nature of faith
2. Where does God live for you?

Use of the Internet

Teachers can make use of internet technology and use some of the material to be found on youtube.com. If the theme is kindness there is a lot of material. Often, an illustration of a quality in action goes a lot farther. There are many opportunities for students and teachers to show kindness in the school setting and then applying it in the wider community. Students can view two different videos with a common theme and then they can discuss the



- a) nature of kindness
- b) obstacles to exercising charity
- c) the ease in being kind
- d) the possible rewards for the whole community
- e) the lyrics of One Day song, too naïve?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h55P7F8rW8A&feature=related>

LifeVest Inside video on Kindness Boomerang – One Day

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwAYpLVyeFU>



Random Act of Kindness

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaHFj_68cKs&feature=related

St. Valentine's Day - Another Day?

By Elizabeth Marie Seguin

Why is there only one calendar day in which we tell someone we love them? St. Valentine's Day is seen as

the one day in which we shop around for the perfect gift to give to that special someone we care about. Many wonder why this sharing and expressing of love and friendship is not celebrated many days in the year if not every day of the year. Of course it should be, but, in today's modern and fast-



paced world, sometimes we forget to do just that. The

calendar reminder is very fitting.

As teachers, the demands of lesson planning, marking assignments, and keeping the classroom organized can be all-consuming! So we can be thankful we have a specific day that reminds us to stop and acknowledge those whom we love and who are important in our lives and even more so, with our students.

The Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter seasons have specific dates in our calendar and we often fail to realize that we need to carry these liturgical and life-giving seasons with us in the classroom throughout the entire year. The same goes for the feast of St. Valentine.

In 496 A.D. Pope Gelasius I decreed a feast day honouring St. Valentine. February 14th is there to remind us of the eternal love of Christ's life, death, and resurrection and how we are to share this with our neighbour and those whom we love. Nothing should prevent us from giving love to others as St. Valentine was able to do despite persecution and imprisonment. Followers sought him out and under dangerous circumstances he blessed their marriages. St. Valentine knew that his role was to spread the greatest love, the love of Jesus Christ, no matter what the outcome would be.

St Valentine is the patron saint of love, the love of Christ and the love of neighbour. We are to imitate him and his heroic witness on this special day, bring it to the forefront in our classrooms and teach our students to grow in the image of Christ.

"God is love" (Deus Caritas Est)



St. Valentine's Day Activities

Traditional Letter Writing

In today's society, everything has become "paperless" and available mostly through online resources. How many people receive letters in the mail anymore?



Students can bring back this great tradition and write a letter to someone they love this Valentine's day. Have students write a ½ - 1 page letter telling someone how much they care about them, they are thankful for them, or how they have inspired them.

**Some people that students may think to write to: Parents/guardians, brother, sister, coach, teacher, classroom friend, neighbour.*

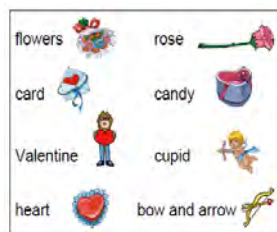
(Make your own envelopes or bring some in for students to put their letters to deliver!)

Home-made Valentine's

Give-A Hand valentine for a classmate or family member. Have your students trace their own hand on coloured or patterned paper of their choice, cut it out, and then decorate. Students can use beads, stickers, glitter, or any other accessible and safe materials to decorate!

Valentine's Day LOVE Word Wall!

Have students create a classroom word wall or bulletin board around the word LOVE. This word wall or bulletin board can stay up all year as love is a virtue that should be practised and discussed often.



**Use the Bible verses from*

1 Corinthians 13 to get students reading and ideas flowing!

Valentine's Treasure Chest



Instead of students giving and receiving chocolates or candy that is unhealthy for children, have

your students create a *Valentine's Treasure Chest* to give to someone special. Use this great link to print a template for a homemade box or have students bring in any small show box from home.

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/papercrafts/box/>

To put inside the chest students can make little tokens such as notes for free hugs, Bible verses/quotes, good deeds, words of love, to give to someone special. (Decorate the box too!)

'Love You Forever' - by Robert Munsch:

Read the story *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch to the class.



Lesson plan ideas:

- Students can create their own poem titled *Love You Forever* and re-invent the remaining 3 last verses. Poems can be decorated and put up on a bulletin board!
- Discuss as a whole group the events in the book, making inferences and connections. Have students break off into small groups to make a comparison chart between this story and St. Valentine's day. Ask students how both the story and St. Valentine's day relate to each other. Students will present their charts to the class.

Folding Envelope Hearts

Students will love to give and receive envelopes that turn into valentine hearts!



Tools and Materials
Scissors
Patterned paper of your choosing
Sticker to seal envelope

Steps

1. Draw a fat heart on paper that has a white side and a patterned side - wrapping paper or patterned paper (dollar store) works well. Cut it out.

2. Students will write a message to their valentine / friend on the white side of the heart. (Remember to

have them or a buddy edit their work!)

3. Lay the heart with the patterned side down and fold in the sides.

4. Fold the top of the heart down just above the middle.

5. Fold the bottom point up.

6. Turn the envelope so that the flap is at the top, and seal with a sticker.



ST. VALENTINE

In His Own Words

- St. Valentine

(Great for a Read-A Loud or to copy and give to each students for guided/shared reading)

Boys and girls, my name is Valentine. I come from a place called Rome, in Italy a long, long

time ago, as far back as the third century! Yes, I know, that is way back in the day! During that time there was an emperor named Claudius who ruled Rome. Claudius and I did not get along, in fact many people did not like him very much.

Claudius was interested in having a strong and powerful army and he expected many men to simply volunteer to enter the army. Most men at that time did not sign up as they had wives and families and did not want to leave them to fight in a war. Claudius became angry and frustrated and began to have a very silly idea. He decided he was not going to allow any more marriages to take place because if men were not married, they would choose to join the army. This new law was ridiculous, and I was definitely not going to support it! Many men and women agreed this was not right and also very cruel. However, Emperor Claudius passed his law and it was devastating to Rome.

One thing you must know that made this even more difficult is that I was a priest! Being a priest I had the privilege of marrying couples and it happened to be one of my most favourite activities. Even with this new law in place, I did not stop performing marriage ceremonies but I had to change how they were performed. Imagine a plain old room, small and empty, with only the bride and groom and myself. You see, I had to perform marriage ceremonies in secret! It was risky yet exciting! We would listen for the steps of the soldiers as I would whisper the sacred words to the couple.

A couple visited me one night and that was the night it all ended. The fast and loud footsteps of the soldiers

barged into the room as the couple managed to escape in time. I was caught and thrown in jail. I was to experience the worst punishment for my actions, I was going to be put to death.

As I waited and prayed every day in jail I managed to stay positive and trust in Christ. I knew that He would take care of me and bring me peace and comfort. All of a sudden, magnificent things began to occur! People were coming to the jail to visit me, young people! All of these people stood outside for love of me, for love itself, they believed in love! I saw notes and flowers being tossed up to the window in my tiny jail cell.

There was a young daughter of the prison guard that would come to visit me at my cell. She was always so kind to me and was happy that I kept on marrying couples despite the Emperor. I wrote her a letter before I died to thank her for her loyalty and friendship. I signed it, "Love from your Valentine."

You know boys and girls, I think that note I wrote started the very popular tradition we have today of exchanging valentine cards and notes on Valentine's Day, which is the day that I died, February 14, 269 A.D. It is wonderful that every year on this day, people remember me and how I stood up for the truth, for love, and for Christ. Everyone on this day thinks of friendship and love! May we always remember how back then Emperor Claudius wanted to stand in the way of love and today many people do too. But true love, the love of God will always win and it is up to you to carry it onward!

Dramatic Arts Lesson Plan:

Students will read *In His Own Words - St. Valentine* and create and present a dramatization of the story of St. Valentine.

Using props and costumes, students will re-enact the main ideas and story of St. Valentine to deliver the true message of this special day.

Objective: *The Arts Curriculum B1.1* Students will engage in dramatic play and role play, with a focus on exploring themes, ideas, characters, and issues from stories from diverse times and places.



Fun Facts!



www.mint.com

- ❖ According to Hallmark, more than 163 million Valentine's Day cards are exchanged.
- ❖ Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, the United States, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, Italy and Denmark.
- ❖ The practice of writing letters has been around for a long time. In fact, the Bible is filled with letters to the Romans, the Corinthians, Timothy, and many more.
- ❖ According to the American National Retail Federation over \$15.7 billion dollars in consumer spending will occur this Valentine's Day. The average person spends \$116.21 on traditional Valentine's Day purchases.
- ❖ The Greeting Card Association estimates that world-wide approximately one billion valentine cards are sent each year, making the day the second largest card-sending holiday of the year behind Christmas
- ❖ Consumers will spend...

\$3.5 billion on jewellery

\$1.6 billion on clothing

\$3.4 billion on dining out

\$1.7 billion on flowers

\$1.5 billion on candy

\$1.1 billion on greeting cards



msbrownsclassroom.blogspot.com

*****TEACHERS! USE THE FOLLOWING WRITING PROMPTS THIS VALENTINE'S DAY! MAKE CONNECTIONS!*****

- ❖ *What are some other ways people can spend their money this Valentine's day to make a difference in the world?*
- ❖ *How can we use our money to help others this Valentine's day?*
- ❖ *Instead of spending money this Valentine's*



day, what can one do to show someone they love them and care about them?