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INTEGRATING ETHICS & RELIGIOUS CULTURE AND LITERACY

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This document has been developed as a teacher resource to support the implementation of the Ethics and Religious Culture Curriculum. One of our primary goals was to provide teachers with a planning resource that is directly linked to a number of picture books. For each of the picture books you will find the bibliographic reference, as well as, the curriculum competencies and key features. One of the important aspects within the curriculum is always the ethical question. We have provided you with at least one ethical question for each of the books.

Each review contains some suggestions for student tasks, as well as, points for evaluation. We encourage you to first read the book and then select from the suggestions those activities that suit you and your students. We have recommended the grade level for each of the books, but should you feel they are appropriate for another level, that is at your discretion.

When sharing each of the books, the expectation is that you would read them aloud to your students. There are a number of guiding questions to help you focus group discussions. Within each of the reviews you will see that much of the work that you and your students will be doing can be easily integrated into the language arts curriculum.



LITERACY and ETHICS and RELIGIOUS CULTURE

Title of book: Divali Rose Vashanti Rahaman Illustrated by Jamel Akib Boyds Mill Press, Inc., Honesdale, PA Copyright 2008		Cycle: 2
Theme: “Weekly or annual religious ceremonies or those related to key moments in the life of the believer.” (MELS Page 343)		
Synopsis: “One teacher say Divali come like a new year,” said Riki. “You have to make peace with everyone and start new for the New Year.” Set in Trinidad, this moving and richly illustrated story reflects the meaning of Divali through the eyes of a young boy and his Grandfather, who each in his own way learn lessons of courage, forgiveness and redemption. ●Valuable Author’s Note at the end of story giving background on Divali as well as information on the people of Trinidad.		
Competencies 1. Demonstrates an understanding of the phenomenon of religion. 2. Reflects on ethical questions 3. Engages in dialogue	Key Features 1. Explores various ways of thinking, being or acting within a single religious tradition or in the context of several religious traditions. (MELS Page 318) 2. Compare points of views identify tensions or conflicting values 3. Organizes his/her thinking ● identifies the subject of dialogue● makes connections between prior knowledge and new knowledge (MELS Page 323)	
Ethical question: Is not admitting the truth the same as lying? What can be the consequences?		
Topics for Brainstorming/Discussion/ Tasks: ●The role of lights in students’ religious celebrations ●Either in groups or individually, have students list what they have learned about Divali. ●Can the children identify the ethical question within this story? Do they have ethical question that they themselves have encountered and are willing to share? They can respond to these two questions in their ERC journal. ●The meaning of the words racism ●the origins of the word’ prejudice’ -from prejudge’ ●the consequences of making generalizations about people and prejudging groups and individuals ●Related books: Mr. Peabody’s Apples, the theme of which is the consequences of not seeking the truth and spreading rumours		
Evaluation: ●Was the student able to give a brief description of the community celebration, objects, symbols and rights of Divali? ● Was the student able to engage in the discussion of the ethical question? ●could the student compare his point of view with those of his classmates? ●was he able to organize his thoughts?		

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Title of book: Virginia Kroll	FORGIVING A FRIEND Illustrated by Paige Billan-Frye Albert Whitman & Company, Morton Grove, Illinois Copyright 2005	Cycle: 1
Theme: “Values and norms that guide relationships such as collaboration, mutual assistance, sharing and concerns for living beings” (MELS Page 336)		
Synopsis: Seth didn’t say, “Are you okay?” He said, “Hey, you broke my truck.” In this engaging tale, Seth learns from experience that we all make mistakes and we all need forgiveness. He also discovers from a forgiving friend, what is most valuable in life.		
Competencies: 1. Reflects on ethical questions 2. Engages in dialogue	Key Features: 1. Evaluates options or possible actions • Suggests possible actions• Looks for the effects of certain actions on oneself, others or the situation (MELS Page 312) 2. Develops a point of view • Recognizes the existence of different ways of perceiving the dialogue• Expresses his/her way of perceiving the subject of dialogue (MELS Page 322)	
Ethical question: Is it important or necessary to forgive those whom we think have wronged us?		
Topics for Brainstorming/ Discussion/Tasks: Should we always ‘forgive and forget’? When we forgive someone for the wrong choice that they made, are we teaching them something? What are we teaching them? What do we say to tell someone that we forgive them, but that we did not like what they did/said to us? (Ex: I forgive you, but I did not like what you did/said to me. Please do not do that again.) Children often say to one another that they are sorry and the victim usually responds it’s okay. It is important to teach children that they can accept an apology but not accept the behavior. A focus should be on taking responsibility for actions, accepting consequences for one’s behavior and learning to understand the impact on others of a wrong choice. This is an opportunity to look at the role of regret (remorse). The vehicle to do all of this would be to do some role playing with the students. Here are some scenarios: A child is running around in the playground and bumps into another child who falls and said ‘ow!’. The running child says sorry and runs off. How could the child who was running do this differently. Do a role play with the children. The outcome should be one whereby the child staying with the injured child and offers them support rather than running off to play. “I am not going to be your friend anymore!” Role play with the children how this makes them feel and how they should respond to a comment like this.		
Evaluation: Assess the content of their role play. Are they able to express the correct reaction and response?		

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Title of book: : I DON'T WANT TO GO Addie Meyer Sanders Illustrated by Andrew Roland Lobster Press™ Montreal PQ copyright 2008		Cycle: 1
Theme: "My preferences and areas of interest" (MELS Page 335)		
Synopsis: "I don't want to go." These five words sum up Joey's response to any suggestion for a new experience. This charming story, featuring colourful illustrations, combined with entertaining and instructional text, highlights the challenges and fears presented by the prospect of new experiences.		
Competencies: 1. Reflects on ethical questions 2. Engages in dialogue	Key Features: 1. Evaluates options or possible actions •Examines the effects of these options or actions on oneself, others or the situation (MELS Page 312) 2. Interacts with others• Expresses his/her preferences, perceptions, feelings or ideas (MELS Page 322)	
Ethical question: Is it easy or hard to try new experiences? Why?		
Topics for Brainstorming/ Discussion/Tasks: Before reading the story create a comparison chart with students of what is different between kindergarten and grade one. Ask them to talk about how one of those changes made them feel. You can do a second comparison chart that discusses the differences between when they are at school and when they are on holiday. These charts are a vehicle to talk about change and how it affects us. A task for the children would be to draw a picture of something that they would like to do that they have never done before. Have them also draw a picture of something that they might be fearful of doing. Discuss with them how they can handle that fear. What can they do to overcome it? How can they think about it differently?		
Evaluation: Assess the students' understanding of the role of change and how fear can impact their risk taking.		

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<p>Title of book: JUST KIDDING Trudy Ludwig Illustrations by Adam Gustavson Tricycle Press Berkeley/Toronto Copyright 2006</p>	<p>Cycle: 3</p>
<p>Theme: “Management of tensions or conflicts • Actions and attitudes that feed tensions or conflicts (MELS Page 340)</p>	
<p>Synopsis: “What’s the matter D.J.... can’t take a joke? I was just kidding.” That’s what D.J.s friend says when he does something to hurt D. J.’s feelings. With keen insight , the author sensitively explores in this realistic story the rarely looked-at issue of emotional bullying among boys and possible strategies to combat it. Extensive, readable, excellent information for several lessons plan and discussions at the front and at the back of the book</p>	
<p>Competencies: 1. Reflects on ethical questions 2. Engages in dialogue</p>	<p>Key Features: 1.Evaluates options or possible actions• Studies the effects of these options or actions on oneself, others or the situation •Chooses options or actions to promote that foster community life (MELS 314) 2. Examines his/her perceptions,attitudes, feelings, ideas or values (MELS Page 324)</p>
<p>Ethical question: What is the impact of emotional bullying?</p>	
<p>Topics for Brainstorming/ Discussion/Tasks: What is emotional bullying? When does teasing cross the line to become emotional bullying. Discuss these questions with your whole class and then have them break into groups to brainstorm examples of emotional bullying – remind them not to use individual names. There are very good guiding questions in the back of the book. After the group discussions have the children write a script of one of the examples that they can then role play for cycle one or cycle two children.</p>	
<p>Evaluation: Assess their brainstorming sessions for content and as well for the components of cooperative learning. Assess their role playing and then their ability to seriously perform in front of junior students.</p>	

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<p>Title of book: MR. PEABODY’S APPLES</p> <p>Madonna Art by Lorna Long Callaway Editions, NY, NY Copyright 2003</p>	<p>Cycle: 2</p>
<p>Theme: “Behaviour, attitude and actions that detract from group life: Self-centeredness, verbal abuse, exclusion, gossip, etc.” (MELS Page 338)</p>	
<p>Synopsis: “Mr. Peabody smiled and said, “...Next time, don’t be so quick to judge a person. And remember the power of your words.”</p> <p>Based on a 300 year old tale; this simple yet powerful story illustrates the enormous damage that rumours and gossip can inflict on their target, and how difficult it is to repair that damage.</p>	
<p>Competencies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflects on ethical questions 2. Engages in dialogue 	<p>Key Features:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluates options or possible actions ● Examines the effects of these options or actions on oneself , others or the situation (MELS page 313) 2. Develops a point of view ● Interacts with others
<p>Ethical question: If we see someone doing something we think is wrong, what should we do? Tell the person? Tell our friends? Tell our parents? Tell the authorities? Remain silent; if it’s not our business, don’t interfere?</p>	
<p>Topics for Brainstorming/Discussion/Tasks:</p> <p>The main focus of this book is the power of words and their effect on people As a class, or in groups, list phrases that have the power to hurt. For example: “I’m not your friend anymore!” “I hate you!” “Promise you won’t tell.”</p> <p>Use phrases as examples that have the power to win and keep friends. For example: “You are so cool; I find you really fun.” “You always make me laugh.” “You are so nice to play with.” Discuss how the illustrations tell the story. Highlight for the students the body language and facial expressions that show puzzlement, regret, shock, disappointment and fear. Examine the feelings of Mr. Peabody, knowing that he has been unjustly tried and convicted in the court of public opinion. Discuss the lessons learned by Tommy. Have the students develop both written and artistic responses to the above.</p>	
<p>Evaluation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did the students grasp the effect and power of words? 2. Did the students offer a point of view or suggest actions on the ethical question? 3. Did the students listen and interact with others during dialogue? 	

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<p>Title of book: MY BEST FRIEND Mary Ann Rodman Illustrated by E.B. Lewis Viking Penguin Young Reader’s Group NY, NY Copyright 2005</p>	<p>Cycle: 1</p>
<p>Theme: “Values that guide relationships such as collaboration, mutual assistance, sharing and concern for living beings” (MELS Page 336)</p>	
<p>Synopsis: Maybe someday, when Tamika is a hundred and I’m ninety-nine, we’ll be friends. But until then, Keesha and I will have lots of fun.”</p> <p>No matter how hard Lily tries to get Tamika to be her friend, nothing works. Told in Lily’s honest voice and paired with detailed evocative water colours, the author helps the children to understand that friendship is not always as simple as we wish.</p>	
<p>Competencies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflects on ethical questions 2. Engages in dialogue 	<p>Key Features:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifies tension● Compares his/her perception of the situation with that of his/her classmates (MELS Page 312) 2. Expresses his/her point of view and listens to others views (MELS Page 322)
<p>Ethical question: Explain if it is possible or desirable to win over as a friend, someone who is consistently disrespectful towards us.</p>	
<p>Topics for Brainstorming/ Discussion/Tasks:</p> <p>Below are two questions designed to facilitate discussion: Why would you want to be with someone who does not want to be with you? Should we ever put up with someone who is disrespectful? Brainstorm with the children a list of words that describe the qualities of a friend. Have them illustrate three words that are most important to them.</p>	
<p>Evaluation: Assess the content of their illustrations as they relate to understanding the qualities of three of the words.</p>	

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Title of book: PALE MALE CITIZEN HAWK OF NEW YORK CITY	Cycle: 3
Theme: “Help them (students) explore some of the values, norms and rights that govern life in society and the references for interacting with different people.” (MELS Page 340)	
Synopsis: “The red tale hawks had brought great joy to the people of New York, and now the people of New York returned the favor. ...New Yorkers loved them for bringing a touch of the wild and a respect for nature to a teeming urban landscape.” Illustrated with beautiful watercolor paintings, this remarkable true story tells the sweet and inspirational tale of how New Yorkers joined together to save two beloved Red-tale hawks and their chicks from eviction by residents of one of the city’s wealthiest Fifth Avenue apartment buildings. Valuable information for lesson plans can be found in the Author’s Note at the end of the story.	
Competencies: 1. Reflects on ethical questions 3. Engages in dialogue	Key Features : 1. Identifies a situation from an ethical point of view • identifies tensions or conflicting values • compares the situation to similar situations (MELS Page 314) 3. Develops a point of view • Uses his/her resources to look for information about the subject of dialogue (MELS Page 324)
Ethical question: Is it important to give precedence to the preservation of wildlife in urban landscapes?	
Student Tasks: Have the students share personal experiences with animals that have returned in the spring and are in their neighbourhood. Have the students share personal experiences they have had in their neighbourhood when animals have moved in and perhaps that some people saw as unwelcome. Ask them how that situation has been handled. A task for home: Fact-finding with their parents/grandparents about how the neighbourhood has grown over the years and its effect on wildlife. Have the students do a research project on an endangered bird, addressing the following topics: ♦ Natural habitat ♦ Causes of the bird becoming endangered ♦ Solutions for encouraging its revival ♦ Ways in which this situation could have been avoided. ♦ Write a letter to the Mayor/Prime Minister regarding protecting wildlife in urban areas.	
Evaluation: Did the student’s project answer all of the above questions? Did the student competently present what had been learned to their classmates?	

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<p>Title of book: : SOMETHING FROM NOTHING Adapted from a Jewish folktale Phoebe Gilman Scholastic Canada Ltd. Toronto ON Copyright 1992</p>	<p>Cycle: 1</p>
<p>Theme: : “Shared and distinctive needs • physical, emotional and intellectual needs of human beings” (MELS PAGE 335) Secondary theme: “Consumption of resources at home and in the immediate environment” (MELS Page 336)</p>	
<p>Synopsis: “His Mother ran after him. “Joseph! Listen to me. The button is gone, finished, kaput. Even your grandfather can’t make something from nothing.” From a tattered blanket Grandpa makes a handsome jacket; with a few passes of the needle it becomes a Sabbath tie, a handkerchief, and finally a button. But when the button is lost, what then? With lyrical text and evocative pictures the author highlights the forceful power of memories in our lives and the creative magic a small child weaves in order to preserve them.</p>	
<p>Competencies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflects on ethical issues. 2. Engages in dialogue 	<p>Key Features:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifies values and norms in the ethical question • Compares his/her perception of the situation with that of his/her classmates 2. Organizes his/her thinking • Identifies the subject of dialogue • Makes connections between prior knowledge and new knowledge
<p>Ethical question: What is important, the object or the memory of the object? Can the memory of the object be maintained by being transformed into another use?</p>	
<p>Topics for Brainstorming/Discussion/Tasks: Have the students share a special memory that is important to them. Ask the students to bring in an item that is important to them and do an oral presentation. Have the students depict in writing or art an item and /or memory that is important to them. In group or individual work, students share how they can transform and renew an item so that it would become a lasting memory and souvenir.</p>	
<p>Evaluation: Did the student understand the relationship between an object and the memory of it? Did the student compare his/her thoughts with those of his/her classmates? Did the student stay focused on the subject and listen to the questions before answering during the discussion?</p>	

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<p>Title of book: SORRY! First lesson using this novel.</p> <p>Trudy Ludwig Illustrations by Maurie J. Manning Tricycle Press Berkeley/Toronto Copyright 2006</p>	<p>Cycle: 3</p>
<p>Theme: “Actions and attitudes that promote or hinder life in society” (MELS Page 341)</p>	
<p>Synopsis: “I said I was sorry!” Jack’s cool friend, Charlie, knows how to get away with just about everything. Just say “sorry” and grown-ups will always back down. But what if you don’t mean it, and the one you’ve hurt knows you don’t mean it? In this strikingly sensitive and perceptive story, Trudy Ludwig illustrates the transformative power of a true apology. Extensive, readable, excellent information for several lesson plans and discussions are available at the back of the book.</p>	
<p>Competencies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflects on ethical questions 2. Engages in dialogue 	<p>Key Features:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifies a situation from an ethical point of view • Identifies tensions or conflicting values • Compares the situation to similar situations (MELS Page 314) 2. Interacts with others • Examines his/her preferences, perceptions, feelings or ideas • Expresses his/her point of view and pays attention to others views (MELS Page 323)
<p>Ethical question: What is the role of an apology? How does it impact the receiver?</p>	
<p>Topics for Brainstorming/ Discussion/Tasks:</p> <p>This is a good book to read at the beginning of the year when you are talking to the students about class and school climate. Read the story to the children. Have the children broken into groups for role playing. At the back of the book in the Afterword there are discussions about the aspects necessary to apologize effectively. Have the children role play the dos and don’ts following the Afterword. Assign one to each group.</p>	
<p>Evaluation: The evaluation will be based on the content of their role playing.</p>	

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Title of book: THE CHRISTMAS MIRACLE OF JONATHAN TOONEY Susan Wojciechowski Illustrated by P.J. Lynch Candlewick Press Cambridge, Massachusettes Copyright 1995	Cycle: 3
Theme: “Values and norms •Norm associated with love for others (MELS Page 347)	
Synopsis: “Jonathan folded his arms across his chest. “I want no presents,” he said harshly. “That is exactly why we are giving them,” answered the widow.” One day in early winter the widow McDowell comes to call. Would Mr. Toomey carve a new crèche for her in time for Christmas? Would he allow her young son to watch while he carves it? Beautiful poignant illustrations accompany this sweet and moving story of a man who experiences a miracle as his broken heart is slowly mended by the power of love.	
Competencies: 1. Demonstrates an understanding of the phenomenon of religion 2. Engages in dialogue	Key Features: 1. Explores various ways of acting within a single religious tradition or in the context of several religious traditions • Explores various ways of acting in society (MELS Page 319) 2. Examines his/her perceptions, attitudes, feelings or values (MELS Page 324)
Ethical question: Not applicable because competency relates to religion.	
Topics for Brainstorming/ Discussion/Tasks: Before reading the story to the students discuss what the role of Christmas is as a religious tradition. Why does it exist? Why do Christians celebrate Christmas? After this discussion read the story to the children. Following the oral reading ask the children to share what they learned from the novel. Are there any virtues demonstrated in this story? Are there examples of other religions traditions that have a tradition that embodies these virtues?	
Evaluation: The evaluation of this activity will be based on the children’s ability to share their learning from the novel.	

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Title of book: THE GOLDEN RULE Ilene Cooper Illustrated by Gabi Swiatowska Abrams Books for Young Writers NY NY Copyright 2007	Cycle: 2
Theme: “Human beings as relational beings that receive from others and give to others in turn” (MELS Page 337)	
Synopsis: “What does it mean? The boy wanted to know. “And why is it called golden?” A grandfather and his young grandson find these words posted on a wall: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. In simple evocative language, this beautifully illustrated story highlights the importance and rewards of a timeless rule that is easier to say and remember than it is to follow.	
Competencies : 1.Reflects on ethical questions Although every religion refers to The Golden Rule, it is still to be examined as an ethical, rather than a religious question. 2. Engages in dialogue	Key Features: 1. Evaluates options or possible actions • Suggests possible actions• Looks for the effects of certain actions on oneself, others or the situation • chooses actions to promote that foster community life (MELS Page 312) 2. Interacts with others• Expresses his/her point of view and pays attention to others’ views (MELS Page 323)
Ethical question: Is it more important to attend to the needs of the others, or the group, before we attend to our own needs? Should we make sacrifices in order to fulfill the needs of others or the group?	
Topics for Brainstorming/Discussion/Tasks: Have the students choose two religions and examine each through the symbolic art in this book. Scan the novel onto the Smartboard. Teachers can also refer to The Golden Rule poster. Have the student reflect (written/oral) about people in their own lives and/or public life who practice the Golden Rule and how they personally do that. What does that look like? Sound like? Individually or in groups have the students work on how the school community practices The Golden Rule, perhaps through support of charitable projects.	
Evaluation: •Can student describe options or possible actions that contribute to community life? •Did student interact with others and express his/her point of view?	

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<p>Title of book: THE HARDEST WORD (A YOM KIPPUR STORY)</p> <p>Jacqueline Jules Illustrated by Katherine Janus Kahn KAR-BEN COPIES INC. Rockville, Md. copyright 2001</p>	<p>Cycle: 1</p>
<p>Theme: “Familiarize students with narrative traditions of different religions and the forms of religious expression associated with them.” (MELS Page 342)</p>	
<p>Synopsis: “It was time to say the hardest word.”</p> <p>This story is loosely based on the Hasidic legend, “The Tear of Repentance.” With imaginative and colorful illustrations and vibrant language, the author explores the meaning of repentance and restitution.</p>	
<p>Competencies</p> <p>2: Demonstrates an understanding of the phenomenon of religion</p> <p>3. Engages in dialogue</p>	<p>Key Features</p> <p>2. Explores various ways of acting within a single religious tradition or in the context of several religious traditions (MEQ Page 316)</p> <p>3. Interacts with others •Examines his/he preferences, perceptions, feelings or ideas (MELS Page 323)</p>
<p>Ethical questions: Why is it necessary to say ‘I’m sorry’ and what does it do for us and for those to whom we have apologized?</p>	
<p>Topics for Brainstorming/discussion/ Tasks:</p> <p>After reading the book in a group discussion, ask students what they have learned about Yom Kippur. Record ideas on chart paper. Discuss the similarities/differences between the Jewish New Year celebration and the students’ own traditions. Have the students complete the following sentences on a strip of paper: I am sorry when _____. I am proud when _____. Arrange the completed sentences on a bulletin board.</p>	
<p>Evaluation:</p> <p>Can student name and identify at least two events that happen at the same time as Yom Kippur? Was the student able to complete the two sentences above through words or illustrations?</p>	

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Title of book: THE HARMONICA		Cycle: 3
Tony Johnston	Charlesbridge, Watertown, MA	Copyright 2004
Theme: “Prejudices, generalizations and stereotypes ●Causes: ignorance, lack of understanding, lack of knowledge, and non-recognition of others ●Effects: discrimination, rejection, etc.” (MELS Page 339)		
Synopsis: “I felt sick, black inside, playing music for the commandant, who wore ugliness and death upon his shoulders like epaulets. I felt sick, getting bread while others starved to death.”		
Based on a true story, this compelling, beautifully written narrative reveals how the power of music and the strength of the human heart sustained a young boy through the terrors of the Holocaust.		
Competencies: 1. Reflects on ethical issues 3. Engages in dialogue	Key Features: 1. Identifies a situation from an ethical point of view● Compares points of view● identifies tensions or conflicting values”(MELS Page 314) 3. Develops a point of view● Uses his/her resources and looks for information about the subject of dialogue ● Validates his/her point of view (MELS Page 324)	
Ethical question: <p style="text-align: center;">Is it necessary to actively fight prejudice and generalizations even though we are not members of the targeted group? Are there situations in life when it is right to save ourselves at the expense of others?</p>		
Student Tasks: After reading the book, have a class discussion and then direct the children to write a reflective piece in their ERC journal. While they are writing have a piece by Schubert playing in the back ground. This is a very sensitive and thought provoking book and we recommend that the focus be on individual reflection and sensitivity building.		
Evaluation: Their journal entry should include thoughtfulness and reflection on the ethical questions.		

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Title of book: : Sherry Garland	THE LOTUS SEED Illustrated by Tatsuro Kiuchi	Harcourt, Inc. Copyright 1993	Cycle: 1
Theme: “Shared and distinctive needs• Physical, emotional and intellectual needs of human beings” (MELS Page 335)			
Synopsis: “It is the flower of life and hope” my grandmother said. In this simple, deeply compelling tale, the author recounts how the seed of the lotus flower becomes a precious souvenir and symbol for Bà, a child who is forced to flee with her family to America, from war torn Vietnam. This book contains valuable background information on the history of Vietnam in the Author’s Note at the back of the book. A beautiful poem on the lotus flower is in the front of the book.			
Competencies: 1. Reflects on ethical issues 2. Engages in dialogue		Key Features: 1. Describes a situation and puts it into context• Identifies values and norms in the ethical question (MELS Page 312) 2. Expresses his/her point of view and pays attention to others’ views (MELS Page 322)	
Ethical question: Is it important to keep and transmit family memories, lore and traditions?			
Topics for Brainstorming/ Discussion/Tasks: What is the central object of the story? What does my family treasure and why? What is life like in Vietnam today? Is my life just like the lives of children in other parts of the world? Why did Bà keep the lotus seed? Why did she cry when she thought it was gone forever?			
Evaluation: Was the student able to understand the situation in the book and the significance of the lotus flower seed? Was the student able to grasp and respond to the ethical question? Was the student able to express a coherent point of view?			

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<p>Title of book: THE SECRET OF SAYING THANKS</p> <p>Douglas Wood Illustrated by Greg Shed Simon and Shuster Books for Young Readers NY NY Copyright 2005</p>	<p>Cycle: 2</p>
<p>Theme: “Practices of prayer and meditation • Prayer practices: giving thanks” (MELS Page 344)</p>	
<p>Synopsis: “Perhaps you’d like to know a secret, one of the happiest ones of all.”</p> <p>In this inspirational text, Douglas Wood offers a spiritual homage to nature, home and family. Greg Shed’s luminous portraits of the natural world poignantly portray all the many ways we can say thanks for the wonders we sometimes take for granted in life. This can be related to prayer and giving thanks in different religious traditions.</p>	
<p>Competencies:</p> <p>1. Reflects on ethical questions</p> <p>3. Engages in dialogue</p>	<p>Key Features</p> <p>1.Evaluates options or possible actions •Suggests options or possible actions •Examines the effects of these options or actions on oneself, others or the situation •Choose s options or actions to promote that foster community life (MELS Page 313) 3.Organizes his/her thinking •Identifies the subject of the dialogue (MELS Page 323)</p>
<p>Ethical questions: Is it important to show gratitude on a daily basis? How would life be different if everyone regularly showed gratitude?</p>	
<p>Topics for Brainstorming/discussion/Tasks:</p> <p>Facilitate discussions based on the illustrations, e.g. The robin and the role of nature in our lives; the image of the grandparents and the role of family in our lives; the picture of the dog and the role of pets in our lives, etc.</p> <p>Which illustration is preferred and why?</p> <p>Create a daily gratitude journal; include colourful illustrations.</p> <p>Select one day when the children can focus on all the opportunities they have during that day to say thank you to another person.</p> <p>Generate a list together of all of those opportunities.</p> <p>Illustrate/write about a situation where a thank you was given and what was the effect.</p> <p>Have the students do a written reflection on how different life would be if no one showed gratitude.</p>	
<p>Evaluation:</p> <p>Was the student able to compare their perceptions with those of their classmates?</p> <p>Was the student able to evaluate the effect of expressing gratitude on his/herself and on others?</p> <p>Was the student able to identify ways of expressing attitude?</p>	

LITERACY and ETHICS and RELIGIOUS CULTURE

Title of book: Jon J. Muth	THE THREE QUESTIONS Scholastic Inc.	Copyright 2002	Cycle: 3
Theme: “Help them (students) explore some of the values, norms and rights that govern life in society and the references for interacting with different people. (MELS Page 340)			
Synopsis: “I want to be a good person, but I don’t always know how to do that.” Based on a short story of the same name written by Count Leo Tolstoy, this beautiful and moving narrative tells the tale of a young boy, Nikolai and his three animal friends who set out on a journey to find the answers to three questions. His journey leads him to unexpected and profound insights on what is most important in this world. The Author’s Note at the back of the book provides valuable background information for lesson plans.			
Competencies : 1. Reflects on ethical questions 3. Engages in dialogue		Key Features : 1. Identifies a situation from an ethical point of view • Compares his/her perception of the situation with his/her classmates points of view (MELS Page 314) 3. Organizes his/her thinking • Takes stock of his/her reflections (MELS Page 322)	
Ethical questions: “When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do?”			
Topics for brainstorming/discussion/Tasks: Have the students discuss the quote in the synopsis: What does it mean to be a ‘good person’? What are the right, or good things to do for the people in the students’ life/family/friends? Have the students ever been in a situation where they have had to make a choice about the right thing to do for someone in their life? What served as a guide in their decision? Have the students create written responses to any of the above Have the students create an artistic interpretation of any of the above.			
Evaluation: Was the student able to compare his point of view with that of his classmates? Was the student able to understand the ethical questions? Did the student give evidence of organized and reflective thinking?			

LITERACY and ETHICS and RELIGIOUS CULTURE

Title of book: THE WALL		Cycle: 3
Peter Sis	Frances Foster Books, NY, NY	Copyright 2007
Theme:	Search for what constitutes a just society • Recognition that all individuals are equal (MELS Page 340)	
Synopsis:	“I was born at the beginning of it all, on the Red side-the Communist side-of the Iron Curtain.” World War II has ended and the Cold War has begun. The Germans have left, but Czechoslovakia is now occupied by the Russians. As the Berlin Wall goes up, the Iron Curtain comes down: On one side, freedom; on the other, those who seek it. In remarkable, evocative drawings and diaries, Peter Sis brings memory and history together as he takes us on his extraordinary journey behind the Iron Curtain and to eventually freedom. Valuable lesson planning ideas are available in the book Introduction and Afterword.	
Competencies: 1. Reflects on ethical questions 3. Engages in dialogue	Key Features: 1. Identifies a situation from an ethical point of view • Identifies tensions or conflicting values (MELS Page 314) 3. Develops a point of view • Uses his/her information and looks for information about the subject of dialogue (MELS Page 324)	
Ethical questions:	What is a ‘just society’ and is it possible to have one?	
Topics for Brainstorming/Discussion/ Tasks:	Note: Prior to reading this novel to your students, it is recommended to provide a brief synopsis of the history of the Berlin Wall, the Cold War and life in Russia at that time. Read the novel to the students and examine the format of the book; the content, as well as, the design and illustrations as they are very informative and moving. Ask the students to interview their parents to discover if they have any family or friends who have immigrated from Eastern European countries or who have life experiences of that period to share. Brainstorm what constitutes a ‘just society’. Canadian references can be made to Pierre Elliott Trudeau’s vision of a ‘just society’. Have the students create written responses on the actions, and attitudes that promote a ‘just society’. Role play/debate life experiences from each side of the wall.	
Evaluation:	Was the student able to identify the tensions and conflicting values in the book? Was the student able to develop a point of view on the ethical questions? Was the student able to find information and /or write about the Berlin Wall, the Cold War or communist Russia at that time?	

LITERACY and ETHICS and RELIGIOUS CULTURE

Title of book: TROUBLE TALK		Cycle: 3
Trudy Ludwig Illustrated by Mikela Prevost Tricycle Press Berkeley CA 94707 Copyright 2008		
Theme: “The distinction between what is acceptable and unacceptable in society •Appropriate or inappropriate behaviour with young children, authority, friends, peers at school and in one’s free time” (MELS page 340)		
Synopsis: “I heard it from Lizzy. Bailey told her. I suddenly felt sick to my stomach.”		
In this masterfully crafted story, Trudy Ludwig uncovers the harmful effects of gossiping, lying, spreading rumors and sharing others’ information in order to win attention. But the bullies aren’t vilified and the victims aren’t vengeful and the author shows that we are all capable of change and redemption. There are one or more complete lesson plans in the Foreword, as well as in the Author’s Note. You will also find valuable questions for discussion and additional resources at back of book.		
Competencies: 1. Reflects on ethical issues 3..Engages in dialogue		Key Features: 1. Identifies a situation from an ethical point of view •Identifies tensions or conflicting values(MELS Page 314) 3. Interacts with others •Examines his/her perceptions, attitudes, feelings, ideas or values (MELS Page 324)
Ethical question: Do you believe people are capable of changing for the better?		
Topics for Brainstorming/Discussion/ Tasks: Refer to the questions/discussion topics in the Foreword and in Author’s Note, at the back of the book. Sample questions: Do you think Bailey deserves a second chance if she is truly making an effort to change? Is it difficult to ignore gossip or to not pass it on to others? Why? What are the effects of gossiping on Bailey, and on her targets? Have the students role-play scenes from the book in which gossip occurs.		
Evaluation: In discussions and role-playing, did the student demonstrate an understanding of the effects of gossip? During discussions did the student listen to others? Did the student show evidence of self-reflection on his/her attitudes, feelings and ideas about gossip and rumours?		

LITERACY and ETHICS and RELIGIOUS CULTURE

Title of book: UNDER THE RAMADAN MOON Sylvia Whitman Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Markham, ON Copyright 2008	Cycle: 2
Theme: “Draw upon the students’ discoveries about different religious practices in various communities to help them recognize important aspects of the celebrations that take place there, the places of worship where they are held, and the objects and symbols associated with the practices.” (MELS Page 343)	
Synopsis: <p style="text-align: center;">“We wait for the moon We watch for the moon We watch for the Ramadan moon.”</p> <p>So begins this lyrical account of a Muslim family’s Ramadan celebration in this colourfully illustrated story. Author Whitman’s ‘About Ramadan’ Notes at the end of the story provide in depth and easy to read information for lesson planning about this religious tradition.</p>	
Competencies: Demonstrates an understanding of the phenomenon of religion Engages in dialogue	Key Features: 2. Looks for the meaning of forms of religious expression ●Makes connections between these forms of expression and their traditions of origin. (MELS Page 318) 3. ●Interacts with others ●Expresses his/her point of view and pays attention to others views (MELS Page 323)
Ethical question: Not applicable.	
Topics for Brainstorming/Discussion/Tasks: Discuss with the students traditions and celebrations associated with Ramadan and the students’ own religion. Discuss the similarities between religious traditions, i.e. cracking of nuts, Midnight mass, lights, etc. Discuss the importance of symbols, i.e. prayer beads, Koran, hijab, cleaning up Discuss the illustrations, e.g. hot and cold colours, the mosque, the depiction of family life Have the students develop written responses to the above Have the students create an artistic interpretation of the above	
Evaluation: Was the student able to give a brief description of Ramadan; identifying some related objects and places of worship? Was the student able to interact with others, offering a point of view and focusing on the subject?	

LITERACY and ETHICS and RELIGIOUS CULTURE

January 2010

<p>Title of book: WHEN I FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF? Cornelia Maude Spelman Illustrated by Kathy Parkinson Albert Whitman & Company Morton Grove Illinois Copyright 2003</p>	<p>Cycle: 1</p>
<p>Theme: “Myself as a unique living being” (MELS Page 335)</p>	
<p>Synopsis: “Somebody likes me just as I am.” In simple and reassuring language, the author helps young children understand that they are unique and deserving of love and respect just as they are. There are valuable lesson planning ideas in the Note to Parents and Teachers at the front of the book. Other books in this series are listed at the front of book.</p>	
<p>Competencies: 1. Reflects on ethical questions 2. Engages in dialogue</p>	<p>Key Features: 1. Compares his/her perception of the situation with that of his/her classmates (MELS Page 312) 2. Identifies the subject of the dialogue • Takes stock of his/her reflection (MELS Page 322)</p>
<p>Ethical question: Why is it important to feel good about ourselves?</p>	
<p>Topics for Brainstorming/ Discussion/Tasks: Have the students individually make a list of what makes them feel good about themselves. After reading the story ask the students which example in the story had the greatest impact on them. Introduce the students to using the phrase “I can....I can draw an elephant.” Questions for discussion: How do we know when someone does not feel good about themselves? How can we help our classmates recognize the good things about others? This is an excellent opportunity to introduce to the children to some of the content of Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences and how we all have strengths and weaknesses. As well, that there are different areas of intelligence. Activities appropriate for this age group can be found on the web by Googling Howard Gardner. Provide each student with a large piece of paper and have them make a collage/illustrative web of their strengths.</p>	
<p>Evaluation: Assess the content of their collage. Where they able to recognize their strengths?</p>	

LITERACY and ETHICS and RELIGIOUS CULTURE

<p>Title of book: YATANDOU</p> <p>AnnTungman Paintings by Peter Sylvada Sleeping Bear Press Chelsea MI Copyright 2007</p>	<p>Cycle: 2</p>
<p>Theme: “Demands of belonging to a group. (MELS Page 338)</p>	
<p>Synopsis: “I sell Sunjata to an old woman for a good price. First I make her promise not to eat him. “Oh no...he is a fine goat. He will be used to help in the making of more goats...I carry home the empty rope”</p> <p>Eight year old Yatandou spends hours daily with the Maui village women pounding millet kernels. As they work, they dream of raising money to buy a wonderful machine that can liberate them from their pounding sticks. Rich in poetic imagery, this beautifully illustrated tale tells a touching story of the spirit of sacrifice and hope through the eyes of an eight year old girl.</p> <p>There is an excellent Author’s Note at the beginning with informative Website references.</p>	
<p>Competencies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflects on ethical questions 3. Engages in dialogue 	<p>Key Features:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifies a situation from an ethical point of view • Identifies tensions or conflicting values. (MELS Page 313) 3. Organizes his/her thinking • Identifies the subject of the dialogue • Takes stock of his/her reflections (MELS Page 323)
<p>Ethical question: Is it right or fair to ask a child to make a sacrifice for the common good?</p>	
<p>Topics for Brainstorming/Discussions/Tasks:</p> <p>Discuss with the students the extreme difficulty of getting a glass of water or a bowl of porridge. What can we do to help children of developing nations?</p> <p>Discuss the role of Peaceful Schools International and its vision. What is our school’s involvement (www.peacefulschoolsinternational.org)?</p> <p>Do we all share the same dreams for the future?</p> <p>“How strange it is to see that our words have a face?” What is the meaning and significance of this quote?</p> <p>Why do you think the author wrote this story?</p> <p>What will you remember from this story?</p> <p>Have the students create written/artistic response to any of the above.</p>	
<p>Evaluation:</p> <p>Did the student respond to the ethical question?</p> <p>Did the student identify the tensions (own interests and needs versus those of the group) in the story?</p> <p>Did the student reflect, either orally or in writing, on the subjects of dialogue?</p>	

LITERACY and ETHICS and RELIGIOUS CULTURE

Title of book:	ZEN TIES	Cycle: 2
	Jon J. Muth Scholastic Press NY Copyright 2008	
Theme:	“Advantages of group life: friendship, mutual assistance, source of enrichment, etc.” (MELS Page 337)	
Synopsis:	<p style="text-align: center;">“Summer fading new friend’s faces lighten the way home.”</p> <p>Summer has arrived and so has Koo, Stillwater the Panda’s haiku speaking nephew. In this beautifully illustrated, witty and charming tale, readers of all ages will be enchanted by it’s message of compassion and friendship that reaffirm out ties with one another. There is valuable background information in the Author’s Note at the back. It includes details on haiku and some information on Japanese Then Buddhism.</p>	
Competencies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflects on ethical issues 3. Engages in dialogue. 	Key Features: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifies an ethical situation ● Describes a situation and puts it into context ● Compares his/her perception of the situation with that of his/her classmates. (MELS Page 313) 3. Organizes his/her thinking ● Identifies the subject of dialogue ”(MELS Page 323)
Ethical question:	Is it possible to develop a friendship with someone who is hostile to us, and if so, how? (“I destroy my enemies when I make them my friends.” Abraham Lincoln)	
Topics for Brainstorming/Discussion/ Tasks:	<p>Have the students choose a picture with teammates and discuss their observations.</p> <p>Have the students describe and put into context the situation that is represented in the picture.</p> <p>Have the students find and explain behaviours or attitudes in the story that are acceptable (i.e. kindness, consideration, perseverance) or unacceptable (generalized perceptions of the elderly).</p> <p>Have the students compose a haiku poem, possibly with accompanying artwork.</p>	
Evaluation:	<p>Focus on how the children have organized their thinking and then determine whether or not there was adequate application of the related content, involving interaction with others.</p> <p>Was student able to respond to the ethical question posed for this book?</p> <p>Was the student able to describe and put into context the situation in this book?</p> <p>Did the student understand haiku and was he able to compose a haiku poem?</p>	