

Augustinian Mission Office
Recommended Assignments
Elementary School

“I am on a Mission” Footsteps

This activity encourages students to be creative and make a personal commitment by designing an “I am on a Mission” page/poster. This could be done on a blank piece of paper or a larger poster board. It would include the title “I am on a Mission” and an inspirational quote, such as one of the following:

“Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.” –St. Augustine

“We can do no great things, only small things with great love.” –Mother Teresa

“Preach the Gospel at all times; if necessary, use words.” –St. Francis of Assisi

“Teach us to give and not count the cost.” –St. Ignatius of Loyola

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people could change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” –Margaret Meade

“The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.” –Nelson Mandela

“Find out how much God has given you and from it, take what you need; the remainder is needed by others.” –St Augustine

In the middle of the page, the student should draw a footprint and write in it: “As someone on a Mission, I will _____.” The student will complete the sentence by making a personal pledge to do something that would encompass the idea of living as someone on a Mission.

Poverty Awareness Activity

This activity is designed to help students realize that there is an unequal distribution of resources in the world. Start by giving the students butterfly patterns. Tell the students that there is a contest for the most colorful and creative butterfly. Split them into groups that will sit with each other and share markers or crayons. Then give out an envelope to each table, which includes the markers or crayons that they can share at their table.

The envelopes should be pre-packaged and include different varieties and amounts of markers or crayons, such that one has a lot that can easily be shared among the group and the others have progressively less and less. The final envelope should have only one, bland color that must be passed around the group members.

Instruct the students to color the butterfly as creatively as possible using only the markers or crayons in their envelope. Choose the most colorful butterflies at the end and post them on the board.

Then discuss this activity with the students.

- 1.) Ask the ones who only had a few markers or crayons to explain how they felt during the process.
- 2.) Ask the students who had the most to explain how they felt when they saw that they had more than the other groups.
- 3.) Discuss who had the best chance of winning the contest, who had the least chance of winning, and why.
- 4.) Ask the students what their thoughts and feelings are about an art contest like this.
- 5.) Discuss the parallels with this art contest and the distribution of resources in our world.
- 6.) Ask the students to think of ways to respond to the needs of those who have less than we do.

Shopping for a Meal Activity

This activity introduces students to the difficulties of feeding a family in a state of poverty. You will need a couple copies of grocery store serials that list the prices of a wide variety of food items. Begin by dividing the class into groups. Tell them that they are creating the menu for a big meal shared among their family. They are allowed to include items for any of the following:

- One appetizer
- One salad
- One soup
- One main course
- Three side dishes
- One dessert
- Two types of beverage

In creating the menu, however, they have to stay within their budget, so they might not be able to include all parts of this meal into their menu. On small note cards, write different amounts that can operate as the budget for the different groups. For one card, include a sizeable value (\$500, for example) that could easily cover the entire menu. With the other cards, write progressively lower amounts such that the final card has a low value around \$2-5. Give these note cards out to the different groups and have them design a menu accordingly.

When they have finished, begin with the group that had the largest budget and ask them to present their menu. Then proceed in descending order, having each group present their menu in turn.

After finishing the presentations, discuss this activity with the students.

- 1.) How did the respective budgets affect the decision-making process? In what ways was it limiting or encouraging?
- 2.) How did it feel to hear the other groups introduce their menus? What emotions did the groups with higher budgets feel? What emotions did the groups with lower budgets feel?
- 3.) Ask about the difficulty of preparing a menu with the smallest of the budgets.
- 4.) Discuss the challenges in feeding yourself and your family when you live in poverty.

Augustinian Mission Site Research and Reflection Paper

This assignment encourages students to learn more about the people and places where Augustinian mission sites exist. Students should either select or be assigned one of the mission locations (Japan, Peru, or South Africa). Once they have the location of the mission site, they must research the area to discover some basic facts:

- 1.) Where is it located?
- 2.) What is some of the history of the area?
- 3.) Describe the people who live in this area.
- 4.) What are the greatest challenges facing the people that live in this area?

Along with this research, have the students contribute their own personal reflections on learning about this area.

- 1.) How does life for people in the mission site compare with their life?
- 2.) What are the greatest needs for people in these areas?
- 3.) Come up with ways for people in these areas to be helped.

This assignment can be done in a variety of ways, depending on how much time you want to dedicate to it. It could be a one page reflection; it could be a project that includes a poster; it could involve a class presentation.

Appreciating Education Activity

This activity is designed to help students appreciate the opportunities provided for them through education. Ask students to write what they want to do in the future (optional: include pictures). They should then research what type of education or training is required to realize this dream.

On a second page, students should reflect on what would be different in their lives if they did not have access to education. First, they can reflect on what they would be doing during the days if they were not in school. Then the students should think about how a lack of education might affect their dreams and their ability to do what they want to in the future. Ask the students to explore the additional challenges that would come with living in poverty while not having access to education. How does this change daily life and how does it impact dreams for the future?

These papers can be made into posters that include pictures of their dreams accompanied by pictures of schools in the Mission sites of Peru and South Africa.