

# FIRST GRADE SUGGESTIONS: WHEN TO TEACH THE THEMES

## *THE ANIMAL HEDGE* By Paul Fleischman



| Theme:                           | When to Teach:   | Explanation of Theme:  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| <p><b>CREATION IS A GIFT</b></p> | <p><b>Fall</b></p> <p><b>Winter</b></p> <p><b>Feast of St. Isadore Patron of Farmers</b><br/>(May 15<sup>th</sup> St. Isadore was known for his great love of prayer. Isidore attended Mass daily and it is said the angels worked the fields for him while he prayed. Isidore was also known for inviting the poor to his home for food. Once there was not enough food for everyone and his wife asked him to check the pot again. When he looked again there was enough food for everyone.)</p> | <p>All of creation is a gift from God to mankind. Through the lens of the <i>Theology of the Body</i>, we see God’s creation (animals, nature, each other, etc.) not as <i>scary</i>, but as <i>a loving gift from God</i>.</p> <p>One of the simplest prayers we can say to God is “Thank you.” There is a beautiful transformation that happens when we begin to view the world as a loving gift from God. Every raindrop, bird’s song, or rainbow is realized for what it is: <i>God’s burning desire to give good gifts to us because he loves us</i>.</p> <p>God not only gives us his beautiful creations as a gift, he gives us the ability to create. When we create artwork, poetry and music we mirror God’s creative nature. Moms and dads image God in a special way by having babies. Procreation is a special way that God allows us to participate in the continuation of his creation!</p> |
| <p><b>HUMAN WORK</b></p>         | <p><b>Labor Day</b><br/>(1<sup>st</sup> Monday in September)</p> <p><b>Spring</b></p> <p><b>Feast of St. Joseph the Worker</b><br/>(May 1<sup>st</sup>)</p>  | <p>Work isn’t God’s curse on humans. Work is actually a gift from God that helps us to mirror him. We work because God works.</p> <p>God worked for 6 days to create the world. Jesus worked for most of his life before beginning his public ministry. God gave Adam the task of cultivating the garden of Eden. By working, Adam learned that he is set apart from the rest of creation.</p>   |

## VOCATION

### Labor Day

(1<sup>st</sup> Monday in September)

### The Feast of the Holy Family

(Sunday after Christmas)

### St. Valentine's Day

(February 14<sup>th</sup>)

### Mother's Day

(The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in May)

### Father's Day

(The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in June)

Our primary vocation (or call) is to holiness. We become holy by giving ourselves to God and others in love. Every student's path of *giving themselves to God and others* will be slightly different (ie. husband, wife, priest, religious sister, nurse, teacher, firefighter, businessman and woman etc.)

#### Women are called in a unique way to be a:

1. **Daughter** of God and a daughter of their earthly parents.
2. **Bride** of Christ (all women) and bride of their earthly husband (some women).
3. **Mother** of many souls by caring for them through spiritual motherhood (all women) and mother of their physical children (some women).

#### Men are called in a unique way to be a:

1. **Son** of God and a son of their earthly parents.
2. **Husband** of their earthly wife (some men). \*
3. **Father** of many souls by caring for them through spiritual fatherhood (all men) and father of their physical children (some men).

\*In the order of grace, men and women are both called to be a bride of Christ as a member of the Church, which is the mystical bride of Christ.

## VIRTUE & FREEDOM

### The beginning of the academic year

(These themes are easily referenced throughout the school year and may be beneficial for classroom management. For example, "Let's strengthen our virtue muscles today by choosing to do the right thing!")

We often think of freedom as a right to do whatever we want. However, this narrow view of freedom often leads to addiction and slavery. True freedom finds its perfection when one chooses to do what is morally right according to God's will.

Freedom does involve the power to choose, but freedom is perfected by choosing the good. Choosing to do evil leads to less freedom. Choosing to do the good leads to more freedom. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1733)

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1803, a virtue is a "habitual and firm disposition to do the good." A person becomes virtuous by practicing virtues just as a person becomes physically stronger by lifting weights.