



LESSON PLAN FOR DEHON POSTER, “Lord, What Am I to Do?”

[Text in brackets and italics is background information for the teacher.]

1. Take a look at the poster. Whose picture do you see?
 - The photo is of Leo Dehon at age 16. Leo Dehon would become Fr. Leo John Dehon, the founder of a religious community of men, called the Priests of the Sacred Heart. This religious community has helped to make this school possible.

2. Take a look at the poster. Can you recognize the three languages that are used on the poster?
 - English, Lakota, and Spanish

Why do you think this poster has English, Lakota, and Spanish on it?

- At the bottom of the poster, you will see the list of SCJ Schools in Collaboration. Even though the students from all the schools understand English, the Lakota language honors the students at St. Joseph Indian School and the Spanish language honors the students at Our Lady of Guadalupe School.
3. Take a look at the poster. Read the question at the top of the poster.
 - The question comes from the Bible, in a book called, *The Acts of the Apostles*. In Chapter 22, the apostle Paul is describing an experience that completely changed his life. Before this experience, he was against people who were Christians. He even tried to hurt them. After this experience, he would teach people to be Christians and would risk his own life to do so.

As Paul describes his experience, he was on his way to arrest Christians and put them in jail. As he was riding his horse, he was blinded by a bright light and fell off his horse. Before he was able to get up, he heard a voice asking him, “Why are you hurting me?” He didn’t recognize the voice, so he asked, “Who are

you?” Then he heard, “I am Jesus—and you’re hurting me.” So Paul asked, “Lord, what am I to do?” Jesus told him what to do and soon he became a follower of Jesus.

4. Leo Dehon chose this question from the Bible as a motto while he was studying to be a priest.

- Leo Dehon read stories about saints. He noticed that some of them had a motto.

[In his journal, Fr. Dehon wrote, “I noticed that the saints, like the members of the feudal nobility, generally had a motto that served to inspire them to spiritual combat. St. Ignatius had ‘For the greater glory of God’ and St. Aloysius Gonzaga had ‘What is this next to eternity?’ St. Theresa had ‘One soul, one eternity’ and St. Francis Xavier had ‘Conquer yourself.’ For myself, I adopted, ‘Lord, what do you want me to do?’ I could find nothing more suitable for solidifying and maintaining union with God.”]

- Do you know what a motto is? A motto is a short saying that reminds people how they want to live their life.

- Do you know any mottos?

Some examples:

- Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts: “Be prepared.”
 - Cup Scouts: “Do your best.”
 - Brownies: “Lend a hand.”
 - US Marines: “Always Faithful”
 - Shakespeare: “To your own self be true.”
 - Benedictine Order: “Pray and work.”
 - US currency: “In God we trust.”
 - South Dakota: “Under God, the people rule.”
 - Mississippi: “By valor and arms.”
 - Wisconsin: “Forward”
 - Texas: “Friendship”
 - St. Joseph Indian School: “We serve and teach, we receive and learn.”
- Why do you think a motto is important or helpful?
 - What does “Be prepared,” mean for a Girl Scout?
 - What does it mean for a Marine to say, “Always Faithful”?

- As a student, Leo Dehon wanted a motto that would help him do whatever God wanted him to do. He didn't want to be dreaming about what he would do in the future if he was missing what God wanted him to do right now.
5. Take a look at the poster. Read the answer to the question.
- *[Please note that the text in Lakota is not a direct translation, but rather a translation of the concept: "God, I want to be a good student, so have compassion for me and help me with a clear mind. Amen."]*
 - This is the answer Leo Dehon gave to the question that he chose as his motto. He believed that God wanted him to pay attention to the present moment. If he did that, he would be prepared for whatever happened in the future.

[Particularly during his third year of study, a time that he considered the best period of his seminary life, Dehon responded with consistency to his chosen motto. "At every moment to do the will of God as best as I could know it" echoed throughout his diary. As he approached ordination he resolved, "not to concern myself about the future (but) to grow in sanctity now through fidelity to my rule. In the future, God will do with me what he wants. For the present God clearly asks me to be a perfect student."

Yet, he was not without his dreams. Reflecting back on his seminary days, he wrote, "I often thought of dedicating myself to teaching, preaching, and social works. These were the leading ideas that presaged the ministry to which I was to devote myself later on." He was careful, however, not to let his dreams obscure the grace of the present moment. "I should distrust the devil who, under the appearance of something good, distracts my prayer with thoughts of my future ministry or the vocation to a more perfect state. I should strive toward perfection in my current state."

Keeping his attention firmly focused on his life in the seminary, he acknowledges, "The long range goal of our current work is the apostolate. God will determine the manner. The immediate goal is the sanctity of each day." In summary, he writes, "Holiness consists in carrying out the simple actions of our state in life in union with God."]

- How do you think this motto helped Leo Dehon? Considering that he started a religious community called the Priests of the Sacred Heart, which today works in 40 countries around the world, why was "being the best student he could be" important?

6. What do you think his motto and his answer might teach you?
7. What motto would you choose for yourself? How would this help you?
8. Prayer: Let's pray with Fr. Leo John Dehon to be the best students that we can be.

Dear Jesus,
we know that you love us
and want the best for us.
Help us to be the best students we can be.
This is how we can love you right now.
Bless our teachers and our school.
Bless our parents and all who help us.
Thank you.
Amen.