

Teacher's Guide

ECCE VENIO

Activity Sheets



Cover Page

The purpose of the *Educare International Committee* is to deepen Dehonian identity within the educational institutions of the Priests of the Sacred Heart [Dehonians]. For its 2021 theme, the committee has selected, “Availability / *Ecce venio.*” This theme comes from one of the pillars of Dehonian Spirituality.

The expression, “*Ecce venio,*” spoken frequently by Fr. Leo John Dehon, SCJ, but used in these activity sheets only on the cover, is a Latin phrase, which literally translated means, “Behold, I come.”

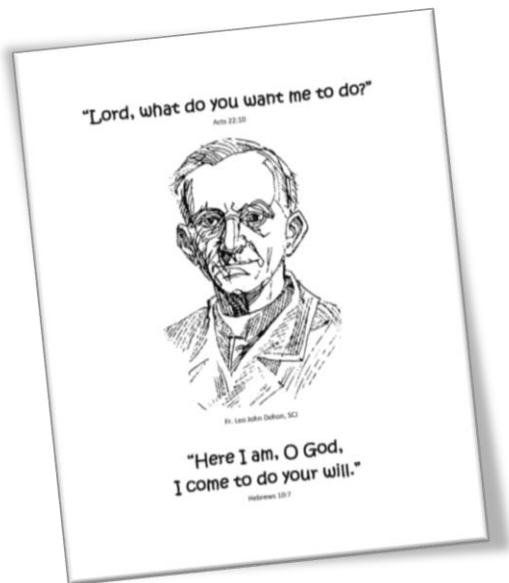
However, this phrase is shorthand for, “Here I am, O God, I come to do your will.” Please refer to page 2 for the scriptural references and further explanation. An English word that attempts to capture the attitude of “*Ecce venio*” is “availability.” Please refer to page 4 for other words that try to capture the sense of “*Ecce venio.*” This attitude of availability is a response to God’s unconditional love for all of creation. Beyond proclaiming, “We love God,” we witness to our love for God by loving as God loves and compassionately attending to the needs of others.

The working image of these activity sheets is a raised hand. You might ask your students what a raised hand means. In general, it indicates showing up and being visible. See page 3 for an activity focused on “showing up.” More specifically, in the classroom, a raised hand can indicate that the student has a question, that the student knows the answer to a question, or that the student is willing to participate in or volunteer for an activity. The attitude of “*Ecce venio*” is the willingness to participate in or volunteer to accomplish God’s will. See page 5 for an activity exploring what God wants us to do. The image of the heart in the palm of the hand

is meant to indicate that we do God’s will with lots of love. See page 6 for an activity focused on doing something with love.

Every morning, the Priests of the Sacred Heart offer to accomplish God’s will throughout the day with lots of love. See page 7 for a prayer that the students can say that will join their willingness to do God’s will with that of the Priests of the Sacred Heart.

Encourage the students to color and decorate the cover.



Page 2

The image is a sketch of Fr. Leo John Dehon, SCJ, founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. He was born in France and lived from 1843-1925. He founded the Priests of the Sacred Heart in 1878. The initials after his name, “SCJ,” come from the official Latin title of the religious community: [*Congregationis Sacerdotum a Sacro Corde Jesu*].

As a seminarian, Leo Dehon wanted a motto that would encourage 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. He chose as his motto, “Lord, what do you want me to do?”

This question comes from the Bible, in a book called, *The Acts of the Apostles*. In Chapter 22:3-16, 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.

Paul describes his experience while 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 are hurting me.” So, Paul asked, “Lord, what do you want me to do?” Jesus told him what to do and soon Paul became a follower of Jesus.

You might read **Acts 22:3-16** to your students, or tell the story in your own words. In your discussion of the story, focus on the question that was so important for Fr. Dehon: “Lord, what do you want me to do?” For Fr. Dehon, his response to this question comes from the other quote on this page.

Like the apostle Paul, Leo Dehon not only asked the question, but also was willing to act on the answer with generosity. This is the attitude that accompanies the phrase, “Here I am, O God, I come to do your will.” This phrase comes from the Bible in a book called, “Hebrews.” In Chapter 10:5-7, the author of the book describes what was in the mind and heart of Jesus as he came into the world as a human being.

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;
in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.
Then I said, ‘**See, God, I have come to do your will, O God**’
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”
Hebrews 10:5-7

In this passage, the author of the book of Hebrews used a portion of Psalm 40.

Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,
but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.
Then I said, “**Here I am**; in the scroll of the book it is written of me.
I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart.”
Psalm 40:6-8

Translations of these texts may vary, but the sentiment remains the same: “Here I am, O God, I come to do your will.”

The passages from Hebrews and from the Psalms can be simplified for the students by asking them to imagine what Jesus intended to do when he came to earth. What was his “assignment?” What was his “job description?” What pleases God most is not for us just to say nice words, as important as praying is, but to act on our faith by living life each day in the way in which we believe God wants us to live.

Reflecting on these scripture passages, Fr. Dehon writes in a meditation, “The apostle, St. Paul, points out that it is upon entering this world through the Incarnation that our Lord formulated his abandonment to the good pleasure of his Father: “Here I come, my Father, to do your will” [Hebrews 10:5]. He had said through David that this would be the law of his Heart [cf. Psalm 40:8].

“He placed this law of abandonment, obedience, and conformity to the will of his Father, deep in his Heart to consult it constantly, to follow it always, to make it the rule of his entire life. And from his Heart it kept rising to his lips, as the Gospel itself says: “Father, may your will be done” [Matthew 6:9-10]. “My Father, let it be so, since you want it” [cf. Matthew 3:15]. “My Father, not my will, but yours” [Luke 22:42]. These indications from the Gospel are enough to show that this was a rule of life for our Lord and the habitual thought of his Heart. What he always seeks is neither self-interest nor pleasure, but the will of his Father. The only question he always asks himself before acting is this: “Father, what do you want me to do?”

“*Ecce venio*. These words set the rule of our lives. In these words, we find the entire vocation of souls who are dedicated to the Sacred Heart, with their purpose, their duties, their promises. This sentiment, this disposition, these words spoken and felt, suffice in all situations, in every circumstance, for the present and for the future. “Here I am, O God, I come to do your will. I am here, ready to do or suffer, to undertake or to sacrifice whatever you ask of me.”

The Year with the Sacred Heart, March 25: “Feast of the Annunciation”

Fr. Dehon’s words can be simplified by talking about how generous Jesus was in loving us, even when it was difficult, and in giving his life for us. Following Jesus’ example, we can try to be as generous in loving others, even when that is difficult. In every situation, we can ask, “What does God want me to do right now?” And then be ready to do it with lots of love.

Encourage the students to color and decorate page 2.

Page 3



This activity sheet asks the question, “When I say, ‘Here I am,’ who shows up?” The question invites the students to consider the importance of responding wholeheartedly, in whatever they are volunteering to do.

As a group, have the students start at the arrow and move through the possibilities while discussing each one with examples, such as:

PART OF ME: saying you want to be involved, but you are preoccupied with someone or something else, like an I-phone.

PERFECT ME: saying you want to be involved but expending most of your energy doing things to make others think you are perfect, like knowing all the answers in class or never showing anger.

SLEEPING ME: saying you want to be involved, but more interested in your own comfort and not paying attention.

PRETEND ME: saying you want to be involved, but instead of using your own gifts, you keep wishing you had other qualities that seem more attractive.

NONE OF ME: saying you want to be involved, but only to please someone or have them think well of you. You have no intention of following through.

ALL OF ME: saying you want to be involved and proving it by giving the task your full attention, using all of your gifts, aware of all of your limitations, and giving your personal best.

Invite the students to draw a line from the arrow to the “me” that best describes them. Encourage the students to decorate and color page 3.

Page 4



This activity sheet tries to capture the sense of “Ecce venio” by using different words to express the desire to respond to God’s all-encompassing love for all of creation.

Before the students work the word puzzle, you might want to discuss the words which they will be finding. For example:

What does it mean to be **willing** to something?

What’s involved in being **ready**?

What are you saying when you **offer** to do something?”

What’s an example of being **prepared**?

What does it take to be **available**?

What can you expect when you **volunteer**?

What is understood when you say, “I **accept**”?

Word puzzle solution:

E	T	U	R	E	A	D	Y	X	S
B	W	A	C	G	C	J	O	P	Q
H	K	V	L	Y	C	N	Z	P	N
M	G	A	F	C	E	L	U	S	D
O	A	I	X	J	P	U	K	P	L
V	O	L	U	N	T	E	E	R	N
E	V	A	H	C	T	Q	Y	E	S
Y	R	B	O	T	M	B	V	P	O
W	I	L	L	I	N	G	X	A	T
Z	P	E	L	S	D	T	B	R	A
R	W	F	J	P	O	F	F	E	R
K	S	X	P	O	J	N	B	D	A

After the students have worked the word puzzle, help them to finish the sentences using the words that they found. For this exercise, it is important for them to use examples from their daily life, like doing homework, washing dishes, listening to a parent, cleaning up the bedroom, visiting with grandparents, helping someone who is younger, playing on a sports team, or joining in a school project.

Page 5



This activity explores how your students know what God wants them to do in their daily life. It's not that difficult to discover. As the Hebrew people were about to enter the Promised Land, Moses encourages them to "choose life" by "loving God, walking in God's ways, and observing God's commandments" [Deuteronomy 30:15-16].

Moses says, "Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us, and

get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe" [Deuteronomy 30:11-14].

A way to talk with the students about what God wants is to explain that God's will is directed or intended to bring out the best in an individual, even if that might temporarily feel difficult to accomplish. God's will is always directed toward abundant life. See John 10:10 where Jesus explains, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Encourage the students to write down what they think God wants them to do in each of the situations listed on this page. Remind them that the best answers will be actions that benefit everyone involved.

Page 6



In a meditation on the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple [Luke 2:22-38], Fr. Dehon asks, “What were the beatings of the Heart of Jesus at this moment? What were his sentiments? Love for his Father and for me; it was this double love that inspired his public self-offering. His love for his Father appears natural enough. But this love for us—who can understand it?”

Responding to this amazing and unconditional love that God has for us, Fr. Dehon suggests, “Let us plunge ourselves in love. The reign of the Heart of

Jesus is a reign of love; everything is animated, vivified, and inspired by love. Love is the principle of everything; all else is but a consequence of love. Let us permit love to enter our hearts, for love is for us the only foundation of sanctity. Let us contemplate Jesus’ works of love and a reciprocal love will be born in our heart.”

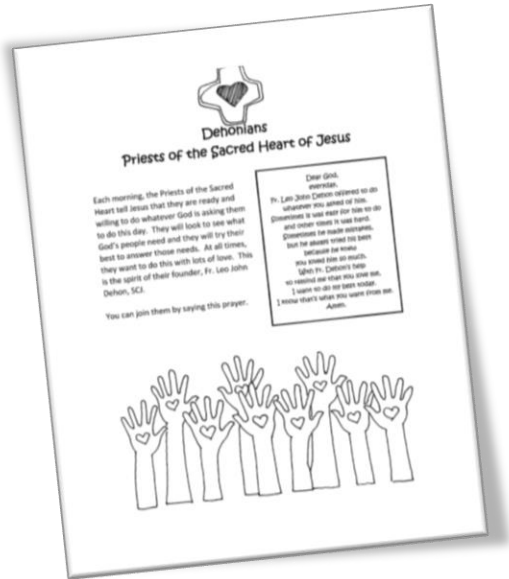
Crowns of Love for the Sacred Heart I, 2nd Mystery, 3rd Meditation

Fr. Dehon’s words can be simplified by talking about why someone acts the way he does or why someone says what she says. There can be many reasons, for example, to help, to hurt, to look good, to shame, to encourage, for revenge, and to be a loving person. Fr. Dehon always want to speak and act with love because that’s how he can show his thanks for the great love Jesus has for him. For Fr. Dehon, being a loving person is the most important thing a person can do. Together with Jesus, our love can make our world a better place.

This activity sheet asks the students to think about something that they do or can do with lots of love, and draw a picture of it. Guide the students to think about something that they do in daily life, not something that they hope to do in the future. “Something” might be expressed in an action, but it can also be expressed in words.

The raised hands, with hearts on the palms of the hands, is a visual reminder to do everything with love. Encourage the students to color the raised hands.

Page 7



On this activity sheet, the many raised hands are meant to suggest that doing God's will with love is easier to do if we have the support of many others who are also trying to do God's will with lots of love.

The Priests of the Sacred Heart [also known as Dehonians], following the spirit of Fr. Dehon, make a promise each morning [also called, "a prayer of oblation" or offering] to pay attention to what God is asking them to do and to do it with love. They pray this prayer together, knowing that they have the support of their brothers, especially if God's will

is challenging or difficult to do. Because the students have heard about Fr. Dehon and the Priests of the Sacred Heart, encourage them to do the same. One way to do this is to use the prayer on this page. Invite them to pray this together.

The prayer is a summary of all the other activity sheets, and talking about the prayer would be a good review of all that the students considered regarding the phrase, "Here I am, O God, I come to do your will."

At the top of the page, the cross with a heart at its center, is the way the Priests of the Sacred Heart identify themselves. You may see them wearing this cross, hanging around their neck, or as a pin on their clothing.

The prayer on this page is available as a prayer card, with the reverse side being a full-color reproduction of a painting of Fr. Dehon with children gathered around him.

Encourage the students to decorate and color this page. When all the activity sheets have been completed, they can be stapled together to form a booklet.