

# Romero – Primary lesson activities

## Curriculum links: RE

- Students describe the personal and social consequences of just and unjust actions (*level 2*).
- Students investigate the contribution of individuals and groups within and beyond the Christian tradition in promoting just ways of acting (*level 3*).

## 1. Getting to know Oscar Romero

- Students read or listen to a brief biography of Oscar Romero. You will find an illustrated biography and a PowerPoint in the 'Be More Challenge' section of our schools pages.
- Research – Ideally, students brainstorm a list of research questions they could use to find out more about Oscar Romero. Alternatively, use some of the suggested questions below. These questions could be divided and assigned to different students:
  - When and where was Oscar Romero born and when did he die? Can you find a picture?
  - What is Oscar Romero's most important contribution to society and why is it important?
  - How is Oscar Romero's influence felt today?
  - What are three important facts about Oscar Romero?
  - In sequential order, write or illustrate three important events from the life of Oscar Romero.
  - If you were Oscar Romero, what is one important fact that you would want everyone to remember about you and why?
  - What obstacles did Oscar Romero have to overcome in his life?
  - What personality traits helped Oscar Romero achieve all that he did and which quality or trait proved most troubling and difficult?
  - Did Oscar Romero make any major mistakes or bad decisions? If so, what were they and how would you have chosen and acted differently if you were in his shoes?
  - What are the two or three most important lessons you or any other young person might learn from the way Oscar Romero lived?
  - What do you think it means to be a hero? Do you think Oscar Romero was a "hero"? Why or why not? How is a hero different from a celebrity?
  - Why do you think Oscar Romero did not speak out against the military and government when he first became a priest?
  - Why do you think Romero changed and became outspoken against the government and military?
  - Finish the sentence: "Like Oscar Romero, I stand up for justice when..."
- Students choose how they will present their research: brochure, PPT, PhotoStory, drama, etc.

## 2. Romero role play

- Play 'Hot Seat' - one student from the class pretends to be Oscar Romero. You may like to provide the student with a prop that will help them assume the role. The student sits on a chair at the front. The class questions 'Oscar' about his life and work, or asks what Romero thinks about a modern injustice and what he would do about it if he were here today.

- It is important that students realise that heroes like Romero were not born that way. They had their own fears and challenges that made their journey difficult, but through their faith and passion for justice they achieved great things. Students can then realise that they too have the potential to achieve great things.

Students predict why Romero did not challenge the government or military when he first became a priest and a bishop. Students finish the sentence "Sometimes I choose to remain silent because..." Students write a letter to God expressing their concerns about the things that hold them back from being a 'justice champion' and make a commitment about how they will try to overcome these obstacles.

### 3. Leadership

- Oscar Romero was a great leader. Brainstorm what the qualities of a great leader are.
- Students identify people they know who have some of these qualities.
- Students think of at least two of the qualities they themselves possess and share these with a partner. Their partner may suggest another quality they have that they did not identify.
- Students think about two other qualities they would like to develop further.
- They share these with their partner and together develop some ideas about how they could achieve this.

### 4. Oscar Romero and social justice today

- Newspaper activity - Working in groups with a selection of newspapers (local, state and national), ask the students to select some articles that highlight a justice issue.
- Discuss what they think Romero's reaction would be to the article/issue. Why? What is your personal reaction? What are you personally called to do?
- Challenge students to create a poster or write a newspaper report that promotes the stand Romero might take on a major social issue today, presenting ideas attractively and creatively.

### 5. Prayer that leads to action

- Prayer was an essential part of Oscar Romero's life. Together with the class, read the Oscar Romero prayer through once (you can use the PowerPoint resource in the 'Be More Challenge' section of our schools pages, but each student will need to be able to see a copy of the complete prayer – see below).

Before reading the prayer a second time explain to the students that you would like them to wait in silence for a full minute after the prayer has finished and then share with a partner what word or phrase they feel is important or challenges them. Read the prayer slowly.

Remind the students they will sit in silence for one minute and that you will let them know when the one minute is finished. Students share with their partner or the class a word or phrase. If time permits, the class can unpack each line or verse.

You could ask students to illustrate each section of the prayer to create a class mural.

# The Oscar Romero Prayer

*The following prayer was composed by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, for a homily by Cardinal John Dearden in 1979 at a celebration of departed priests. The words of the prayer are often attributed to Oscar Romero, perhaps because they beautifully summarise his philosophy, but they were never spoken by him.*

**It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.**

**The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,  
it is even beyond our vision.**

**We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction  
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.  
Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying  
that the kingdom always lies beyond us.**

**No statement says all that could be said.  
No prayer fully expresses our faith.  
No confession brings perfection.  
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.  
No program accomplishes the church's mission.  
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.**

**This is what we are about:**

**We plant the seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted,  
knowing that they hold future promise.**

**We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.**

**We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that.  
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.**

**It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,  
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.**

**We may never see the end results, but that is the difference  
between the master builder and the worker.**

**We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.**

**We are prophets of a future not our own.**

**Amen**

