

# CELEBRATING THE PAST AND LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

*Inspiring Stories From Canadian Classrooms*

*At EduDeo we know the inspirational power of storytelling, and as educators, I'm sure you do too. Stories draw us in, help us form connections, teach us lessons, ignite our imagination, and inspire us to act. That's why it's my pleasure to highlight some of the teachers and students I've had the pleasure of working with this fall. May their stories serve as inspiring examples of God's faithfulness and blessing on the work of his people.*



## CELEBRATING CULTURES IN GRADE 2



Sheila Dykstra's years of teaching in Nigeria no doubt contributed to her desire to incorporate a more international perspective into a Grade 2 project in the "Our Local Community" unit. The other Grade 2 teachers, Judy Vanderwindt, Katrina Harsevoort, and Megan Vandenberg, at Calvin Christian School in Hamilton, Ontario also jumped on board.

After exploring their own heritage, students spent the last couple weeks before Christmas holidays learning about two of EduDeo's partner countries: Zambia and the Dominican Republic. A series of ten ornaments were collected in a "memory box," each representing an aspect of one of the country's cultures. Students unwrapped one ornament each day and participated in cultural activities, such as learning dances from Zambia, making paper dolls with chitenge-patterned clothing, and sing-

ing Dominican Christmas carol favourites. When Sheila reflected on the activities, she said: **"The memory boxes were a helpful way to connect students to other cultures and help them see God at work beyond their own context. It also helped them to celebrate how we are all part of God's family - in our similarities and differences."**



## GRADES 7 & 8

## STAND UP FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION

When I walked into the gymnasium at Timothy Christian School in Hamilton, Ontario, I was not prepared for the level of excitement that emanated from 31 Grade 8 students. I had already been invited to Melanie deJonge's and Colten Wolfe's class to share about The Education Formula: Multiply Her Effect. When students learned the reasons why 132 million girls are not able to attend school, they were confident they could do something. Students excitedly proposed their ideas for two fundraisers to me, and together we assessed their plans and discussed how to develop their ideas. One of their teachers, Melanie, reflected, **"As we continue to look at the inequalities we find around the world in our Geography classes,**





the students are so often coming back to some of the stats and stories that Laurie shared with us. Our classes are really excited to partner with EduDeo to find ways that we can support girls' education in Zambia and multiplying the girls' effect in their existing communities."

Other classes have also taken up this challenge, like Grade 7 students in Carla Alblas' class at Providence Christian School in Dundas, Ontario. All it took was watching the campaign video to inspire these students to act. After learning more about girls' education in a Zoom presentation, they also developed a plan to raise awareness and financial support. These students know they can make a difference. That's what education can do: empower students to be agents of change. We look forward to hearing how all of projects develop over the coming months.

## POVERTY & LITERATURE

IN GRADE 11

Using a presentation on poverty is not the conventional way to begin studying the novel *Cry The Beloved Country*, but Lennart de Visser is not a conventional teacher. He teaches a Grade 11 English class at Providence Reformed Collegiate in Komoka, Ontario. To set the tone for the unit and help students relate to the themes in the novel, he reached out to EduDeo for a presentation on *The Holistic View of Poverty*. The students participated in an interactive presentation where their perceptions of poverty were challenged and they explored how to approach this complex topic from a biblical perspective.



"The holistic view of poverty opened my students' eyes to the role broken relationships play in creating and perpetuating poverty. They walked away with gratitude for the lives they have while also recognizing that they are needy people. The presentation beautifully frames our unit, inviting students to see their role in the kingdom story, to open their mouth for the destitute and defend the rights of the poor and needy," said Lennart.



"The holistic view of poverty opened my students' eyes to the role broken relationships play in creating and perpetuating poverty. They walked away with gratitude for the lives they have while also recognizing that they are needy people. The presentation beautifully frames our unit, inviting students to see their role in the kingdom story, to open their mouth for the destitute and defend the rights of the poor and needy," said Lennart.



As a teacher dedicated to lifelong learning, Tim Wildeboer is always looking to try new things. He has taught Grade 12 Kinesiology at Guido de Bres Christian High School in Hamilton, Ontario for nearly a decade, and this year he sought out a more authentic learning experience to teach students how society and our geographic context influences our views on sports and healthy living. A PBL project was designed through collaboration between Tim, EduDeo, and educators from Cornerstone Presbyterian High School in Belize (Jessica, a Grade 11 teacher, and Yadira, principal). Guido students analyzed their perspectives and compared them to students at Cornerstone through video conferences and Google surveys. **"It created a much fuller picture of how youth respond to the same challenges (gender stereotypes, access to facilities, opportunities to participate on teams) and whether that translates to better health and wellness. This really impacted our class and motivated students to maintain and promote a healthy lifestyle,"** said Tim. Guido students reflected that direct interactions with students and staff at Cornerstone were some of the most memorable moments of this project. What an opportunity to strengthen the body of Christ!

These stories represent countless other examples of teachers and students who rally together, encouraging each other to live out their kingdom calling. **By developing a humble posture based on Jesus' example, appreciating the global body of Christ, and learning how God is active throughout the world, students can be empowered and equipped to be agents of change.** This is Holy Spirit-driven transformation through Christ-centred education. May these stories inspire you as you move forward into 2021.

In Christ,

Laurie Koning  
School Relationship Manager  
EduDeo Ministries  
lkoning@edudeo.com | 289-880-4977