

Luke 4:18 Social Justice Awareness, Action and Reflection Symposium

About the project ...

The York Catholic District School Board supports school-level Luke 4:18 groups based on a scripture passage with messages of social justice and equity. The program is coordinated by a board-wide Social Justice Group whose goal is to promote social justice activities in elementary schools through the school-level groups. The Social Justice Group hosts a symposium every two years to discuss, celebrate and extend the work of the Luke 4:18 groups. This project supported the *2010 Luke 4:18 Awareness, Action and Reflection Symposium* with the purpose of empowering attendees to become informed, reflective and impassioned leaders in building just societies in their schools and communities. Students who attended the symposium learned about the experiences of people who are marginalized in our society, while teachers began developing a resource about how to foster and support Luke 4:18 groups. Participants at the symposium also attended workshops hosted by leaders from justice and equity groups including *Free the Children* and *I Can Read ABC* (an organization that helps Ugandan children attend school). The board's Aboriginal lead, equity lead and student success consultant also hosted workshops and provided input into the Luke 4:18 resource.

Impact on student learning and school culture ...

- Students gained insight into the needs of marginalized people and developed a deeper sense of compassion for people in difficult situations.
- Students learned about the diverse nature of communities and engaged in authentic discussions about ways to take action regarding social justice issues.
- The symposium cultivated a sense of civic empowerment in students as they realized that each person can and should have a part to play in building a just society.
- Students developed their collaborative leadership skills as they created action plans and presentations to address issues that they care about.

Lessons learned for moving forward ...

- The board Social Justice Group plans to extend the Luke 4:18 program to more schools to nurture a wider community of compassion among students.
- In-school activities that mirror the Luke 4:18 model will be nurtured to promote student engagement in social justice issues.