

## UNIT 20: COMPASSION

### Definition

The habit of fostering a feeling of sympathy for those who suffer

### Discussion

ASK: What are some examples of compassion?

Perhaps students will think about kind acts in relation to Compassion. For example, my mother brought me a glass of water when I was sick in bed. Or, my sister came and read me a story when I could not see so well. Now, guide the students toward “feeling”. How does it make you feel when your baby sibling is very sick? Are you sad? Does that feeling make you DO something?

### Practice

How do we practice compassion at home and at co-op?

We practice compassion by trying to think about how someone else FEELS by thinking about how we would feel in the same situation. Then, we DO something to help that person feel better. Practice saying the following: “FEEL what they feel; DO to make better!” This is compassion and how to act on it.

### The CCC

“It is not in our power not to feel or to forget an offense; but the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit turns injury into compassion and purifies the memory in transforming the hurt into intercession.” --- CCC 2843

“His [Christ’s] compassion toward all who suffer goes so far that he identifies himself with them: ‘I was sick and you visited me.’ His preferential love for the sick has not ceased through the centuries to draw the very special attention of Christians toward all those who suffer in body and soul. It is the source of tireless efforts to comfort them.” --- CCC 1503

### Some Quotes

“Well for you, if you can manage to clear all distractions out of the way, and concentrate on a single point – the exercise of holy sorrow. Well for you, if you can say good-bye to all that leaves a stain behind it, and burdens the conscience. Strive hard to reach that goal; habit must be formed, if habit is to be overcome. People will not let you go your own way? Yes, they will, if you leave them to go theirs...Once a man is master of this craft of sorrow, how full of weariness and bitterness the whole world seems to him! Look where he will, a good Christian man finds much to make him weep for sorrow; whether he looks into his own heart, or looks round at other people, he soon realizes that there’s no such thing in this

world as a life free from trouble. And the more carefully he looks into his own heart, the more deeply will he feel it; after all, what are the real grounds for our regret, for this inward sorrow? Our sins, those vicious habits of ours, that hardly ever let us think about heavenly things, so completely are we wrapped up in them." --- Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, Book I