

#### COAR – The Community of Oscar A. Romero

#### Three Lesson Plans K-2, 3-5, 6-8<sup>th</sup> grades: St. Romero, COAR, Mission

- COAR is a school (for 1,000 students, pre-K-12<sup>th</sup>) and a foster-care facility (for 50-100 children) in El Salvador (in Central America).
- COAR began (was founded) in 1980 during El Salvador's civil war (1977-1992)
- COAR is the oldest organization named after St. Romero (*Teachers: to be more precise: we are the first to bear his name, with the approval of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, that is still in existence.*)

#### How to use/copyrights:

#### Power Point Presentation:

- Advance the slides manually. There are 37 slides:
  - 1-3 intro
  - 4-9 St. Romero
  - 10-12 Cleveland Mission Team with refugees that became COAR
  - 13-15 COAR early days
  - 16-17 COAR today overview and lessons summary

- <u>18-21 LESSON 1 K-2<sup>nd</sup> GRADES</u>: Main Theme: Responding to suffering with compassion.
- <u>22-27 LESSON 2 3-5<sup>TH</sup> GRADES</u>: Main Theme: Family, friends, and kindness are just as important as food and medicine.
- <u>28-36 LESSON 3 6-8<sup>TH</sup> GRADES</u>: Main Theme: Community and families are where we can help each other to be safe and do the right thing, just like St. Romero.
- 36 thanks you and wrap-up
- Everything in this companion document (which is the PowerPoint "notes" version, printed as a .pdf), everything about each lesson, is contained either in the text on the slide or in the notes on each slide.
- The lessons can be treated cumulatively. You can stop with the lower grade at the end of the first (K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade) lesson for questions and activities. For higher grades, skip the list of questions and activities until you get to your grade level.
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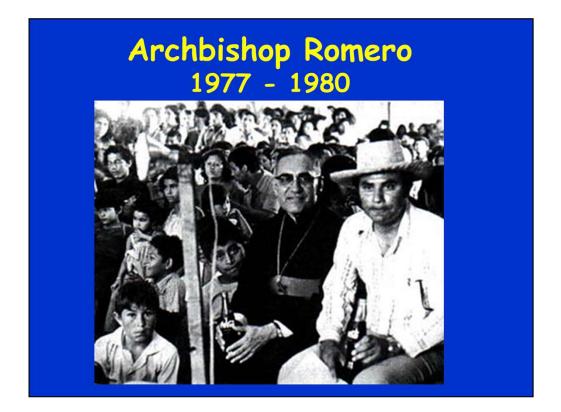


All grades: [read the slide – it is only introductory information]

• El Salvador is a small country in Central America. It is about the size of Massachusetts.



- El Salvador has hot weather usually.
- It is famous for having many volcanos and for growing coffee.
- It's economy has had many problems. Many people can't find jobs and people are poor.



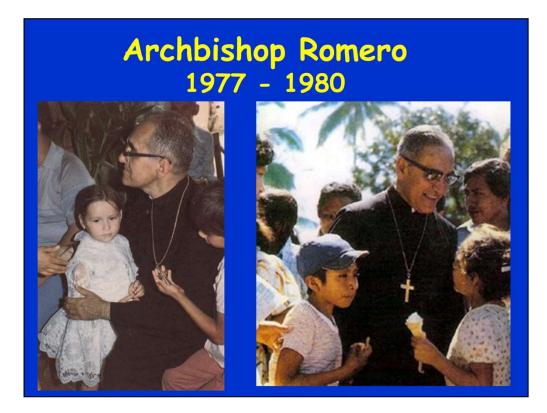
COAR is named after St. Oscar A. Romero (1915-1980)

1917 - Born into a middle-class family in rural El Salvador, August 15, 1917

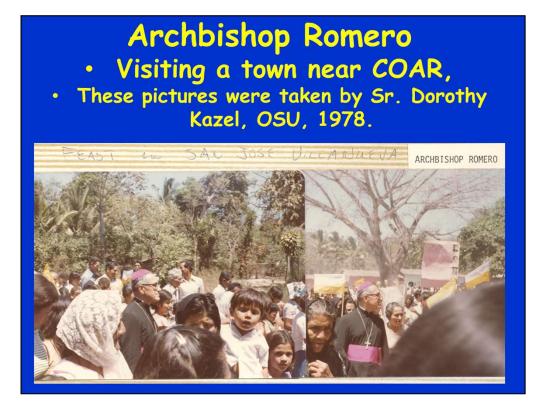
1942 - Entered the seminary when he was 14 years old; ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1942 (at 25 years old)

1977 – Pope Paul VI appointed him Archbishop of San Salvador (the large capital city) in 1977

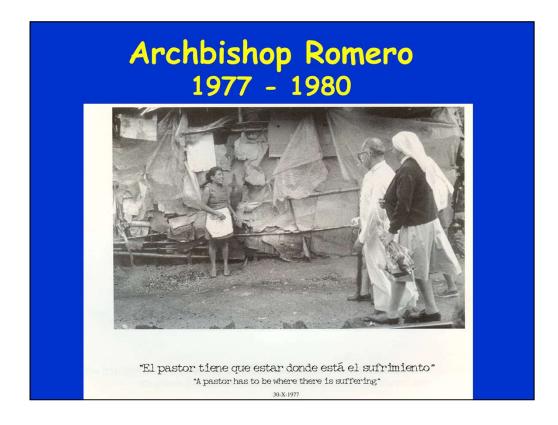
1980 – He was murdered while saying mass [talked about later but added here to complete the time-line for teachers]



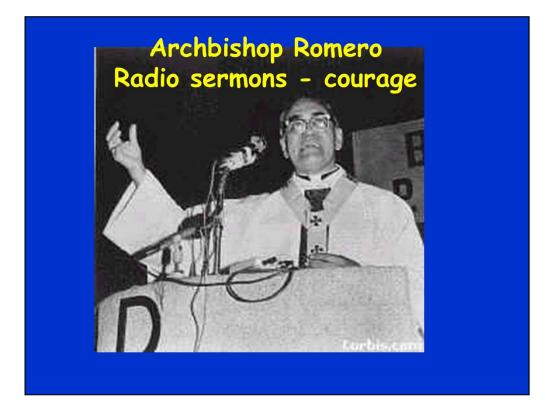
- During the three years that he was Archbishop, Saint Romero 'denounced' the war and the bad and violent things that people in power were doing to the poor.
- <u>What do you think the word 'denounce' means? (response: to say what they are doing was wrong... To say these things were against God's plan for his people, etc.)</u>



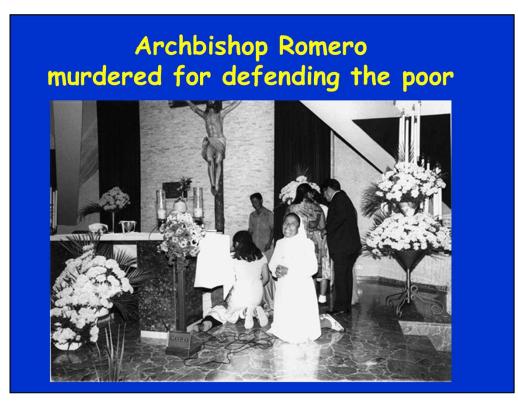
- He visited many small towns and refugee camps to listen to people's troubles. He comforted them by sympathizing with the deaths they had seen: of their parents, of their children, and of their other friends and families.
- He always denounced the violence and sympathized with the poor and suffering through the Gospels and the teachings of the Church. In other words, he drew his inspiration and authority to denounce the violence and decided that it was the right thing to do because of the example of Jesus (as found in the Gospels) and the teachings of the Church.
- *For younger students:* He always told everyone that the violence was very wrong, and his heart hurt greatly because the poor suffered so much- he knew the words of Jesus in the Bible and the words of the Church say we must love and help others- not ignore them, use them, or hurt them. Jesus showed St. Romero the right thing to do- Jesus gave an example of how to treat others, especially the poor and suffering.



- · He visited many small towns and refugee camps to listen to people's troubles.
- He comforted them by sympathizing with the deaths they had seen: of their parents, of their children, and of their other friends and families.
- He also opened camps for refugees escaping violence and for children who lost parents, and he asked members of the Church to help all these people hurt by the war.



- He denounced these bad things in his homilies at mass, which people all over the country heard on the radio. Both the poor and those who hurt and killed the poor heard St. Romero stand up for those who suffered most.
- St. Romero also tried to find out about the murders and crimes, and write them down so they would not be forgotten.
- He took these actions knowing that he would probably be killed for it. But he felt that if poor people were suffering from the violence, then he, protected by his high status as Archbishop, should at least defend them. He did this even though he knew that it would make many members of the army and political groups mad enough at him to kill him.



- <u>March 24, 1980 He was murdered by the army, while saying mass in a</u> <u>small chapel, on a Monday evening: March 24, 1980.</u> The army knew that journalists and photographers would be present at this mass.
- They wanted the murder to be publicized to scare anyone else from speaking out against the war, or from helping the victims of the war.



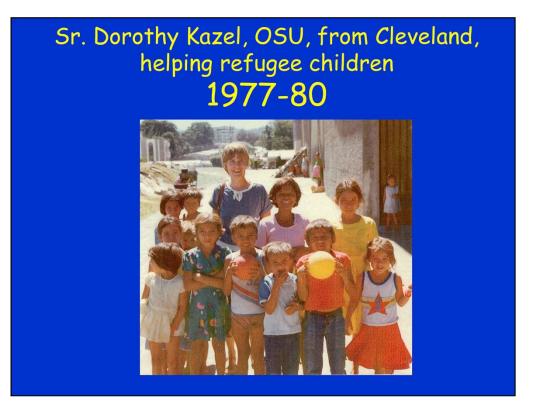
1964-1977 – COAR began with volunteers from Cleveland, OH

- 1964 The Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio, began a mission in El Salvador in 1964. The bishops in El Salvador invited them to help in small parishes in the countryside that had no priests or nuns or other helpers.
- A group (usually about 10-15) of volunteers, priests, nuns, and lay men and women, worked in small villages until 1977.



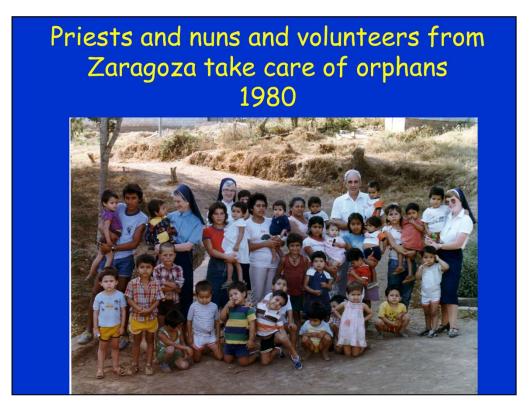
1977 – COAR's beginnings emerge in the war:

- When Oscar Romero became Archbishop he asked the missionaries from Cleveland to help him with people suffering from the war.
- He especially asked them to help with refugees camps. Romero's idea was that because they were Americans they were protected from the violence that was forcing people into the refugee camps. He hoped they could protect the people in the refugee camps.



1977-1980 – COAR's beginnings emerge in the war:

- After Romero was killed (March 24<sup>th</sup>, while saying mass) the refugee camps filled-up, especially with children whose parents had been murdered.
- Fr. Ken Myers, Sr. Dorothy Kazel, OSU (Ursuline pictured, above), and Ms. Jean Donovan decided to make a special refuge for these children at their parish in a small town called Zaragoza. <u>They called this refuge COAR – The</u> <u>Community of Oscar A. Romero.</u>



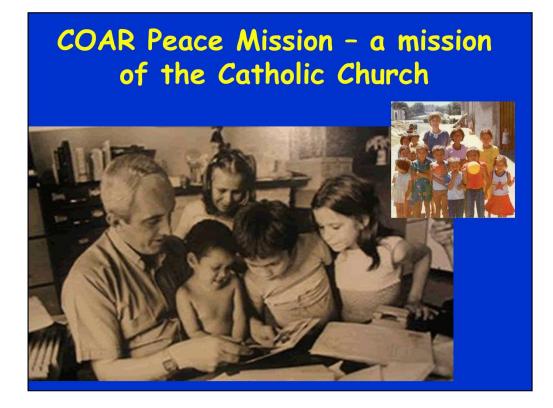
1980 - They were the first group to use Archbishop's name. They did it as an example to everyone, to themselves, to the children, and to anyone who wanted to help them that they were following Archbishop Romero's example:

- To show compassion for the suffering
- To form a community and a new family for children who had lost their families
- To teach children in school and by example that standing up for the truth and justice are the only ways to guarantee a lasting peace.
- In the words of St. [Pope] Paul VI, who will be canonized along with St. Romero: "If you want peace, work for justice."



1980-1992, 1983 - This pictures shows these things:

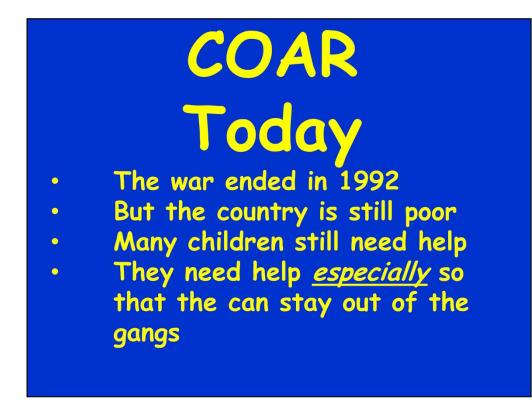
- · The children have a new family of friends
- They have new houses that are healthy and safe
- Their hair is short because they were sick, but now they are getting better
- One little girl (with the crutches) lost her leg to a bomb in the war, but now she is safe.



1980 - 1992

- On December 2, 1980 Sr. Dorothy Kazel and Jean Donovan were murdered by the army who wanted to stop their work with refugees. But Fr. Ken and the people of Zaragoza would not stop their work with children. They were inspired by Archbishop Romero's example.
- People all over the world, especially in the United States and Canada, wanted to help the children of COAR. So they set-up an office in Cleveland, Ohio, where they would be safe from the war and able to collect money to help children – and – to collect the stories of the children to show the world that the example of Romero was alive and well and making a safe place for children.
- <u>This office is a mission of the Catholic Church called: the COAR Peace</u> <u>Mission.</u> Through the Catholic Church thousands of adults and children have learned about the COAR children. The Catholic Church gives Catholics (and everyone) a safe and fun way to learn about the children and to help them.
- COAR Peace Mission Mission statement:

COAR Peace Mission strives to be the <u>tangible and real expression of the</u> <u>Gospel to promote justice, community and peace in El Salvador</u> through the support of effective programs in health, education and welfare which assist children and others, not only to develop their full human potential but also to contribute to the betterment of the world in which they live.



All grades - [read slide]

## [Teachers: To reinforce your own understanding of the underlying, chronic problems:]

- Many government institutions never recovered from the war:
  - especially the police force which remained unable to stop criminal gangs
  - The courts are not strong enough to prosecute criminals
- The economy did not recover, so there are still very few jobs and people are poor
- Organized gangs from the US moved into El Salvador to move drugs from South and Central America to their buyers in the US.
- Because of the gangs El Salvador has the highest murder rate in the world.
- Children are especially poor: there are over 12,000 homeless children
- Children and teachers are in danger from the gangs, who demand their money, when they walk or drive to school
- Many adults emigrated to the US to get jobs and get away from the violence

- Gangs want to force teenagers to join them. They make them commit crimes so that they can't go back to their families or communities and have to stay in the gangs.
- Many teenagers feel they have no choice but to try to get out of El Salvador to avoid or get out of the gangs. They hope to reach family members who live in the US



COAR's work in these circumstances [this is a summary of what the following slides and lessons will show]:

The COAR Peace Mission helps the children at the COAR Children's Village in Zaragoza, El Salvador. COAR Peace Mission follows the example of St. Romero:

#### To show compassion for suffering children:

- · Give them a safe home, food, clothes, medical care
- Give them psychological help, special services

#### <u>To form a community and a new family for children who had lost</u> <u>their families</u>

- Children live in homes of 10-12 children. Brothers and sisters live together like a family [until they are older].
- Together they all form a big family, with new brothers and sisters.
- They celebrate birthdays, First Communion, Confirmation, and other holidays together, like a family
- They help each other with homework, celebrate everyone's special talents (like art, dance, music, gardening)
- They stand up to bullies

#### <u>To teach children in school and by example that standing up for</u> <u>the truth and justice are the only ways to guarantee a lasting</u> <u>peace and an end to the gangs.</u>

- They go to school and study hard, learning to read, write and do mathematics so that they can learn for themselves, throughout their entire lives, what is important.
- They resist the gangs by coming to safe school and living in safe houses. They can tell an adult if a friend is in danger from the gangs.
- The teachers, housemothers, maintenance workers, and everyone who cares for the children are safe at work.
- All of children will become adults who have children, who have jobs, who create businesses, and who vote for good laws and good government officials. They will know how to be good parents, good employees and employers, and good citizens so that they can build a strong country that solves their problems with gangs and poverty.

In the words of St. [Pope] Paul VI, who will be canonized along with St. Romero: "If you want peace, work for justice."



### Lessons outline:

## K-2nd grades

- Main theme: Responding to suffering with compassion.
- Gospel\* guidance: MT 19: 13-14, (suffer the little children . . .) MT 25: 34-45 (when you did these things for the least, you did them for me . . .)
- Pictures:
  - The need:
    - homeless children sleeping on the street
  - · COAR's response:
    - Leonel when he came to COAR at 3 years old, he weighed 13 pounds and lost hair because of malnutrition
    - Leonel four years later, seven years old, with good food and housemates, all ready in their uniforms to go to school

\*Gospel, full text:

**MT 19: 13-14 (Let the children come to me . . . )** 13

Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked them,

14

but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

## MT 25: 34-45 (When you did these things for the least . . . )

34

Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

35

h For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me,

36

naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.'

37

Then the righteous\* will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?

38

When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

39

When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'

40

i And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

41

\* j Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

42

k For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,

43

a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.'

44

\* Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?'

45

He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.'



## K-2nd grades

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- Gospel guidance: MT 19: 13-14, (suffer the little children . . .) MT 25: 34-45 (when you did these things for the least, you did them for me . . .)
- Pictures:
  - The need:
    - · homeless children sleeping on the street
- · Romero quotes:

"We must not seek the child Jesus in the pretty figures of our Christmas cribs. We must seek him among the undernourished children who have gone to bed tonight with nothing to eat, among the poor newsboys who will sleep covered with newspapers in doorways." -- DECEMBER 24, 1979



#### Lessons outline:

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- Pictures:
  - COAR's response:
    - Leonel when he came to COAR at 3 years old, he weighed 13 pounds and lost hair because of malnutrition

#### Romero quotes:

"Many would like the poor to keep on saying that it is God's will for them to live that way. But it is not God's will for some to have everything and others to have nothing. That cannot be of God. God's will is that all his children be happy." --SEPTEMBER 10, 1978

# Leonel now has food, friends, school, and a safe house at COAR.



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- Gospel guidance: MT 19: 13-14, (suffer the little children . . .) MT 25: 34-45 (when you did these things for the least, you did them for me . . .)
- Pictures:
  - Leonel four years later, seven years old, with good food and housemates, all ready in their uniforms to go to school
- Mission lesson for COAR:
  - The Church in El Salvador <u>SEEKS OUT CHILDREN WHO ARE</u> <u>SUFFERING</u> so that it can help them. It works with the government to make sure that COAR is a good, safe home for these children.

## K-2nd grades only:

- Suggested questions for students:
  - What things do kids need most?
  - How would you feel if you did not have these things? (or enough food or any toys, or medicine if you were sick or in pain, or had nowhere to live?)

- Who should help children when they need help? (Hope that this drives them toward the Gospel messages.)
- Suggested activities:
  - Sacrifice playing with a favorite toy or favorite video game for one day.
  - Draw a picture of what you would miss if you did not have it/them [e.g.: food, a home, parents, medicine, or any toys or games.] Draw a picture about how you would <u>FEEL</u> about that.



- Main Theme: Family, friends, and kindness are just as important as food and medicine.
- Gospel\* guidance: Luke 10:29-37 (The Parable of the Good Samaritan), MT 5:1-12 (The Sermon on the Mount / the Beatitudes)
- Pictures:
  - The need:
    - Home of the Amaya family they are very poor, no bathroom, no front door that locks, only one room
    - The mother is very poor. She is often too sick to care for the children. She can't hold a job. Her baby is very sick.
  - COAR's response:
    - The three Amaya sisters are safe and healthy at COAR. They are happy to go to school.
    - They get food and new clothes from a store room.
    - They live together as a family with other girls and a housemother.
- \* Gospel texts:

## Luke 10:29-37 (The good Samaritan)

29

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30

Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead.

31

\* A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.

32

Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.

33

But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight.

34

He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him.

35

The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.'

36

Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?"

37

He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

## MT 5:1-12 (The Sermon on the Mount / the Beatitudes)

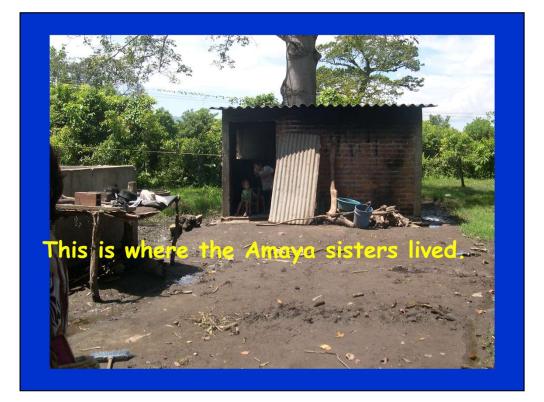
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\* When he saw the crowds,\* he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him.

2

He began to teach them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit,\* for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.a 4 \* Blessed are they who mourn,b for they will be comforted. 5 \* Blessed are the meek,c for they will inherit the land. 6 Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,\* for they will be satisfied. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.d 8 \* Blessed are the clean of heart.e for they will see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 10 Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,\* for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.f 11 Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me.g 12 \* Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.h Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.



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- Pictures:
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    - The mother is very poor. She is often too sick to care for the children. She can't hold a job. Her baby is very sick.

Romero quotes:

"Many would like the poor to keep on saying that it is God's will for them to live that way. But it is not God's will for some to have everything and others to have nothing. That cannot be of God. God's will is that all his children be happy." --SEPTEMBER 10, 1978



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# They live together as a family with other girls and a housemother.



#### 3-5th grades

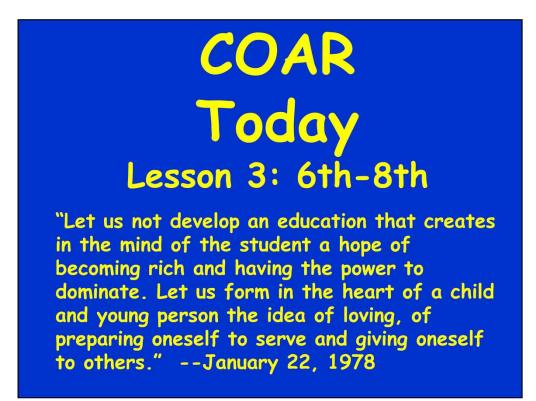
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- Pictures:
  - · COAR's response:
    - They live together as a family with other girls and a housemother.
- Romero quotes:

[Friendship is our model of a life with Christ:]

"He [God] speaks with humans as friends speak among themselves. Anyone who has a friend understands this beautiful comparison. There are no secrets, there is trust, there is unburdening; secrets are shared without fear of being informed on." --AUGUST 13, 1978

#### 3-5th grades only:

- Suggested questions for students:
  - What does it mean to build community? (Guide them to thinking in terms of being a good friend, a good family member, someone who cares for others and cares if they are feeling: lonely, bullied, pressured.)
  - · How can we be better friends to each other?
  - How can we be better student-citizens at our school? (Not sure where to go with this, but it seem relevant. I would think teachers could bring any specific school or community issue to light with this question.)
- Suggested activities:
  - Loneliness: Find someone who is lonely and needs a friend. Or, learn to be a better friend. Build community in your family and in your school and among your friends by asking someone how they feel, do they have any problems, are they troubled by peer pressure to do something that they aren't comfortable with?
  - Bullying: Stand up to bullying. Imagine what someone being bullied is experiencing. Then write a statement of what you would do stand-up for that person. (I am sure you already have anti-bullying policies or ides – maybe they can be incorporated with St. Romero's example.)



- Main Theme: Community and families are where we can help each other to be safe and do the right thing, just like St. Romero.
- Gospel\* guidance: Luke 21: 12-19 (they will persecute you because of me [Christ] . . .), MT 5:1-12 (The Sermon on the Mount / the Beatitudes)
- Romero quotes:

"Let us not develop an education that creates in the mind of the student a hope of becoming rich and having the power to dominate. Let us form in the heart of a child and young person the idea of loving, of preparing oneself to serve and giving oneself to others." --January 22, 1978

*"If God accepts the sacrifice of my life, may my death be for the freedom of my people. A bishop will die, but the Church of God, which is the people, will never perish. I do not believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me, I will rise again in the people of El Salvador." -- 1980* 

"He [God] speaks with humans as friends speak among themselves. Anyone who has a friend understands this beautiful comparison. There are no secrets, there is trust, there is unburdening; secrets are shared without fear of being informed on." --AUGUST 13, 1978

- Pictures:
  - The need:
    - The danger for teenagers is crime and gangs
  - · COAR's response:
    - Entrance gate into COAR from the main highway, the gate, and security guards keep them safe.
    - COAR children studying in a classroom: Based on St. Romero's example, no one makes fun of anyone because they come from a poor family
    - A picture of the Independence Day celebration, Sept. 15, 1821: Using Jesus' and St. Romero's example, they participate in activities and learn how to be good sisters and brothers, friends, and citizens.
    - COAR students in our computer lab: One day they will have jobs and help their families and others who are poor.
    - The job of our mission is also to connect Christians in North America who want to help to the COAR children both for their physical needs and the spiritual needs: Writing to sponsors: people who live in North America and who help the children.
    - · Pictures of spiritually enriching events:
      - visiting St. Romero's tomb to pray and appreciate his life and sacrifice
      - Celebrating 1<sup>st</sup> Communion
    - Picture of COAR's chapel and the children at weekly mass: Going to mass is the center of the Community of Oscar A. Romero
- · Gospel texts:

#### Luke 21: 12-19 (They will persecute you . . .)

12

"Before all this happens,\* however, they will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name.

13

It will lead to your giving testimony.

14

Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand,

15

i for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking\* that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute.

16

j You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death.k

17

You will be hated by all because of my name,

18

but not a hair on your head will be destroyed.I

19

By your perseverance you will secure your lives.m

#### MT 5:1-12 (The Sermon on the Mount / the Beatitudes)

1

\* When he saw the crowds,\* he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him.

2

He began to teach them, saying:

3

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,\*

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.a

4

\* Blessed are they who mourn,b

for they will be comforted.

5

\* Blessed are the meek,c

for they will inherit the land.

6

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,\*

for they will be satisfied.

7

Blessed are the merciful,

for they will be shown mercy.d

8

\* Blessed are the clean of heart,e

for they will see God.

9

Blessed are the peacemakers,

for they will be called children of God.

10

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,\*

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.f

11

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me.g

12

\* Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.h Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.



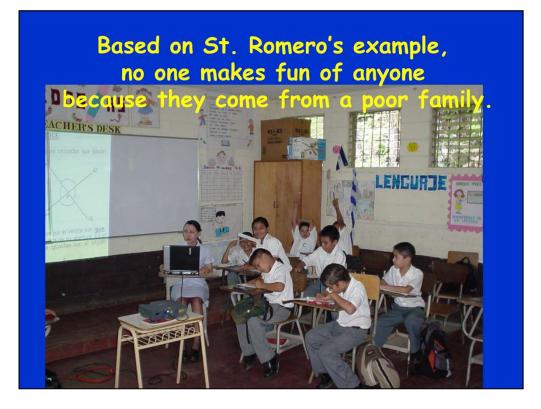
- Main Theme: Community and families are where we can help each other to be safe and do the right thing.
- Gospel guidance: Luke 21: 12-19 (they will persecute you because of me [Christ] . . .), MT 5:1-12 (The Sermon on the Mount / the Beatitudes)
- Romero quotes:

- Pictures:
  - The need:
    - The danger for teenagers is crime and gangs



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- Romero quotes:

- Pictures:
  - COAR's response:
    - Entrance gate into COAR from the main highway, the gate, and security guards keep them safe.



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- Romero quotes:

"Let us not develop an education that creates in the mind of the student a hope of becoming rich and having the power to dominate. Let us form in the heart of a child and young person the idea of loving, of preparing oneself to serve and giving oneself to others." --January 22, 1978

- Pictures:
  - COAR's response:
    - COAR children studying in a classroom: Based on St. Romero's example, no one makes fun of anyone because they come from a poor family



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- Pictures:
  - COAR's response:

• A picture of the Independence Day celebration, Sept. 15, 1821: Using Jesus' and St. Romero's example, they participate in activities and learn how to be good sisters and brothers, friends, and citizens.



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- Pictures:
  - · COAR's response:
    - COAR students in our computer lab: One day they will have jobs and help their families and others who are poor.



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"Through Christ and with him through his Spirit humans can attain to the Father and share in the nature of God. He speaks with humans as friends speak among themselves. Anyone who has a friend understands this beautiful comparison. There are no secrets, there is trust, there is unburdening; secrets are shared without fear of being informed on." --AUGUST 13, 1978

- Pictures:
  - COAR's response:
    - <u>The job of our mission is</u> also to connect Christians in North America who want to help to the COAR children <u>both for their</u> <u>physical needs and their spiritual needs</u>: Writing to sponsors: people who live in North America and who help the children.



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- Pictures:
  - COAR's response:

- Pictures of spiritually enriching events:
  - visiting St. Romero's tomb to pray and appreciate his life and sacrifice
  - Celebrating 1<sup>st</sup> Communion



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- Pictures:
  - COAR's response:

• Picture of COAR's chapel and the children at weekly mass: Going to mass is the center of the Community of Oscar A. Romero

Thank you for learning about St. Romero and the children at COAR -The Community of Oscar A. Romero, El Salvador www.coarpeacemission.org