



THE CATHOLIC  
PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL  
OF ONTARIO

# PRINCIPAL Connections

Fall 2011 • Volume 15 • Issue 1



# LIVING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

# Who Is NOBODY?™

**Bill Beaucage**, Principal and **Jamie Turnbull**, Grade 2 Teacher  
St. Edward Catholic School, Superior North CDSB

In late August 2010, Jamie Turnbull, Grade 2 teacher at St. Edward Catholic School approached her principal and enquired if she could implement the *Who Is NOBODY?*™ program in her classroom. Before supporting this request Principal Bill Beaucage asked some important questions. How will this program support the Grade 2 curriculum and the learning of the students? Will it benefit the students academically, spiritually, emotionally and/or socially?

If you are looking for an innovative and creative way to assist students in your school to apply and put into practise Catholic values and virtues, while at the same time getting them involved in community projects, this program may be what you are looking for. *Who Is NOBODY?*™ is a literacy based character education, values and virtues based program. The program involves helping to prepare students to be responsible, caring and contributing members of society, which, when given sufficient time and support, can be taught and learned. It contributes to the development of safe, supportive schools, promotes responsibility, respect and civility, and enhances academic achievement. Overall, the program contributes to each student's personal well-being.

The program excludes no one. It supports students in applying the curriculum to real life experiences based on service, learning and community outreach projects. Students have an opportunity to naturally exercise a variety of Catholic values and virtues including respect, perseverance, optimism, courage, empathy, honesty, responsibility, initiative and fairness.

All four strands of the literacy curriculum are integrated into the program (reading, writing, oral and visual communication, and media literacy) and opportunity exists for other curriculum content areas to be incorporated such as the arts, health and physical education. Just as important is the program's alignment to the Grade 2 *Born of the Spirit* catechetical series *We Belong to the Lord Jesus*. Several themes align well with the *Who Is NOBODY?*™ program.

The program also supports the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations*. Expectations around knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and actions that can be linked to the *Vision of the Learner* as one who is expected to be "a self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner, a collaborative contributor, a caring family member and a responsible citizen" are promoted, developed and supported through this program.

## How the Program Works

Early in September, a cardboard suitcase containing a non-descript denim doll (NOBODY), a how-to DVD, a karaoke CD, a study guide and other



supplementary resources arrive at the school. No teacher preparation and no workshops are needed to run the program. It starts with short start-up lessons that explain the five easy *Who Is NOBODY?*™ steps to students, relating each step to a *Free the Children* ([www.freethechildren.com](http://www.freethechildren.com)) initiative. This ready-made class *Who Is NOBODY?*™ experience demonstrates to students how easy and fun it is to help others.

### The Five *Who Is NOBODY?*™ Steps

1. Choose a living thing (people, animals, the environment).
2. Use your interests and abilities to help living things.
3. Safely add a 3-D creative attachment to NOBODY that represents your *Who Is NOBODY?*™ experience.
4. Write a story and draw a picture about your *Who Is NOBODY?*™ experience.
5. Bring NOBODY back to school and present to your class.

Students work on the five steps individually to explore and identify their own interests and to experience their own way of helping living things. Each student has a turn to take NOBODY and the support materials home for a week (staggered throughout the year). Students take turns working on charitable or community outreach projects that interest them. They reflect and document their experience via a story and picture, and safely add something to NOBODY that represents what he/she did. Students then present NOBODY and their experiences to their classmates, sharing their story and picture with the class. In doing this, students have an opportunity to share and celebrate how they put their unique strengths and their Catholic values and virtues into action.



Over the school year, NOBODY goes from being a nobody, a doll with no personality and character, to SOMEBODY. Students add features such as clothing and other items to the doll to reflect the work they did, slowly transforming it into SOMEBODY who has lots of character and qualities because of the actions of the students.

Students also have an opportunity to assemble their individual stories, pictures and photos into a scrapbook that brings together and captures all of the experiences of the students throughout the year. Each student brings the scrapbook home to share with his/her family. NOBODY truly becomes the class mascot throughout the year.

### Our School's Experience

At the beginning of the school year, the Grade 2 students, with the help of their teacher, Jamie Turnbull started working on the NOBODY program by writing a letter to the community of Nipigon and to the school, asking for help with their *Free the Children* project. Students organized a penny drive at the school and in the town, collecting \$197.35 for the *Free the Children, Adopt a Village* campaign. The money will be used to supply a village with much needed supplies and resources.

Jamie Turnbull, has had the pleasure of seeing her Grade 2 students mature and gain responsibility through the *Who Is NOBODY?*™ project.

*The students take the teaching and instruction from the classroom and the five-step process and make their own decisions on whether or not to help people, the environment or animals. The students really enjoy the independence and become empowered to do some great things within the community and around the world.*

Some of the projects that students became involved in included: sending school supplies to Guatemala; donating food to the local food bank; cleaning up litter in the community and reminding others to do the same; donating to the humane society and walking neighbours' dogs; growing plants and flowers to help the environment; and researching on the internet and then donating to a website organization that helps endangered animals. Not only did her Grade 2 students demonstrate responsibility and perseverance in following through with their projects, but they also created some amazing presentations, including art work and drawings and wrote excellent full paragraph reports.

Parents also played a huge role in this project, by helping their children at home and coming into the classroom to help with the presentation if they wanted. "What is nice about this project," says Bill Beaucage "is that it provides a great opportunity to engage our

parents in the education of their child. It has made a wonderful connection between the home and the classroom." The program truly engages the students in the learning process. "Children are going home, excited and eager to share the project with their parents and to begin working on their individual experiences."

The program is flexible enough that it allows students to work on community outreach projects that are meaningful and important to them and their families. Bill states, "This program has provided our students with a great opportunity to explore their own interests while at the same time doing something in our small communities to help others." Beyond the obvious benefit of helping others, the project helps students explore and express their uniqueness while at the same time developing their understanding of a number of Catholic values and virtues and how they can apply them and put them into action.

From *This Moment of Promise* the building of Catholic education communities calls for the best each one of us has to offer, including our students. It specifically states the following:

*The future of the Church and its mission of service in the world will be yours. For this you will need courage, self-discipline and all the love you are able to give. Take up the challenge of growing into a sense of who you are as Christians so that you can develop the talents you have been given and bring the best of yourself to the society in which you will be living.*

Jamie Turnbull feels that the best part of this project, was that her students truly understood the need for everyone to be a somebody, and they developed a deeper appreciation of how each of them plays a very important role in helping this come true. NOBODY is now SOMEBODY and it is all because the Grade 2 students made a plan, followed through and taught NOBODY the reason and motivation behind each of their decisions and were able to identify and articulate the Catholic values that were associated with each activity and experience they chose to carry out.

Bill Beaucage believes that the students have learned that even though they might be small and young, when they are given the opportunity to bring the best of themselves to society, they can make a huge impact and big difference in our world.

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For more information visit [www.whoisnobody.com](http://www.whoisnobody.com) or email Bill Beaucage at [stes\\_p@snedsb.on.ca](mailto:stes_p@snedsb.on.ca).