
Lesson Plan Exercises

Introduction & Theme for the month:

This month's lesson plans are based upon the value of: DISCERNMENT

RELATED VALUES

LOVE:

Thoughtfulness.

TRUTH:

Accuracy, Curiosity, Discernment, Fearlessness, Honesty, Integrity, Intuition, Purity, Quest for knowledge, Reason, Self-analysis, Self-awareness and Truthfulness

RIGHT CONDUCT:

Social Skills: Good behaviour.

Ethical Skills: Code of Conduct, Courage, Determination, Efficiency, Initiative, Resourcefulness, Respect for all, Responsibility.

PEACE: Attention, Calm, Concentration, Equality, Focus, Gratitude, Patience, Reflection, Satisfaction, Self-control, Self-discipline, Self-respect, Understanding, Virtue, Inner silence.

NON-VIOLENCE:

Psychological: Concern for Others and Consideration.

Social: Citizenship.

Background to the theme for teachers/discussion

According to the Webster's Dictionary DISCERNMENT means discrimination, perception, penetration, insight and acumen. Discernment means the power to see what is not obvious to the average mind. It stresses accuracy, especially in reading character or motives. Discrimination stresses the power to distinguish or select what is true or genuinely excellent. Perception implies quick and often sympathetic discernment, as of shades of feelings. Penetration implies a searching mind that goes beyond what is obvious or superficial. Insight suggests depth of discernment. Acumen suggests characteristic penetration combined with keen practical judgement.

Discuss with pupils their perception of Discernment. Ideas to include in the discussion:

- Discernment is about making choices.
 - An analogy may be used about finding the gold hidden in and extracting it from the base metal. It is difficult for children and young people to find the gold by making DISCERNING choices, whilst living in a society where human values are often forgotten or not taken seriously.
 - The influence of the media, peer pressure and dysfunctional family influences can have a negative impact on how we all choose to live and behave.
 - How can we make informed choices?
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One of the main roles of the SSEHV programme is to help children and young people to make informed choices through quotes stories, poems, activities and discussion. The Silent-sitting element of SSEHV is central to the whole programme because it creates a space for children to go within.

Teachers and carers can help children to be DISCERNING by presenting them with positive role models and by giving them guidance and support. The role of the teacher, according to Sathya Sai is to “illuminate the intelligence of the child and remove ignorance that is obstructing the full development of intelligence.”

QUOTES

Likes and dislikes are in the mind not the matter (Sai Baba)

Look before you leap (Proverb)

All that glitters is not gold (Proverb)

Do not judge a book by its cover (Proverb)

Dive within and you will, find the pearl (Sai Baba)

Quality not quantity (Proverb)

POEM

The following poem is for Junior and Secondary levels to stimulate thought, discussion and class work related to the value of DISCERNMENT.

Looking for the Gold by Zita Starkie

It's hard to find the gold in rocks
Until it melts and flows
But it's not hard to see what is good
Because my conscience knows.

The treasure's in there shining
It shines for you and me
We've just got to change our glasses
Then it's there for us to see.

It's hard to see the diamond's light
Hidden underneath the earth
Precious gem so out of sight
We cannot see its worth.

But the treasure's in there shining
It shines for you and me
We've got to change our glasses
Then it's there for us to see.

It's hard to see the sunshine
When the clouds obscure the sky
It's hard to know that all is fine
When we're sitting down to cry.

But the treasure's in there shining
It shines for you and me
We've just got to change our glasses
Then it's there for us to see.

It's hard to see the good in you
When you're acting so unkind
It hard to know that what you do
Is prompted by your mind.

But the treasure's in there shining
It shines for you and me
We've just got to change our glasses
Then it's there for us to see.

Some days we put on glasses
Tinted brown or red or grey
It makes it hard to see the gold
As it glistens in the day.

Rainbows glowed
But the treasure's in there shining
It shines for you and me
We've just got to change our glasse
Then it's there for us to see.

CURRICULUM SUGGESTIONS

WHOLE SCHOOL: A day could be set aside as DISCERNMENT DAY. The school could prepare for the day by inviting suggestions from the pupils and the staff as to how the day could be marked. A suggestion box could be placed in a prominent place. A short brief during assembly, or from their form teacher, could inspire the children. Children could be encouraged to reflect upon the importance of making wise choices. The school could invite speakers. Suitable subjects could include drink and drug abuse, how individuals are important in the fight against Environmental Pollution, how to make a stand against the practice of bullying and how to spend free time in a positive and constructive manner. Pupils from different years could be asked to talk about the importance of being DISCERNING.

A Phoenix rising from the ashes could be used as an appropriate symbol to commemorate the day and badges could be presented to pupils who have displayed DISCERNMENT with their studies or in other areas such as positive behaviour.

ENGLISH:

At Junior level:

- SSEHV materials from the books and CDs can be used as the basis of discussion, activities and work. Lessons can be based on the following sections: Book 1, Lessons 1.5 “Love of learning”, 1.17 “Right conduct” and Book 2, Lesson 2.2 “Discernment”, 2.13 “Ceiling on Desires” 2.16 “Selfcontrol”, 2.21 “Using time usefully” and 2.25 “Living without violence”. The songs “I love learning” (Track 6), “Make new friends” (Track 11), “Right action song” (Track 18) and “The word is watch”, can be found on CD 1. The following can be used from CD 2: “Self control” (Track 16) and “Time is always ticking by” (Track 21).
- The first of the above poems, “Looking for the Gold”, can be used in a similar way.
- Dipak Fakey’s Human Values board -games (available from SSEHV Promotions Ltd) is also a very useful source for activities.
- Pupils could be asked to talk about the benefits of DISCERNMENT. Suggestions could be placed on a mind map/flow diagram, which can be displayed in class.
- Stories and poems could be written on the theme of DISCERNMENT. Possible titles could include, “I listened to my inner voice” and “The day I helped my parents/grandparents/friend, rather than watch TV”. These could also be displayed.

At Lower Secondary level:

- Book 3 could be used as a basis for discussion and work. In particular Lesson 3.5 “Personal Resources: Time management and cleanliness”, 3.17 “Intuition”, and 3.22 “Discernment”.
- The second poem in this newsletter, “The Holy Grail”, can also be used as a basis of stimulus and discussion.
- A play could be written as a joint class project concerning the theme of DISCERNMENT. Two contrasting families could be portrayed; one that is not DISCERNING in its life style and one that is.
- Pupils can write essays and poems related to the topic. Possible titles could include, “Don’t judge a book by its cover” and “All that glitters is not gold”.
- Projects could also be set on the life and works of Rudyard Kipling.

- Teachers could remind pupils that it is the quality of their work, which is important, as opposed to the number of written words.

At GCSE level:

- pupils could give a talk about DISCERNMENT. A debate could be arranged, Topics could include: “Should we be followers ”and “Helping others brings more lasting happiness than videos, parties and discos ”.
- Letter writing practice could involve the theme of DISCERNMENT. Pupils could be asked to write letters to invite speakers to come to the school to talk about topics such as drink and drug use, environmentally friendly products and how to spend time constructively.
- Teachers could point out that it is worth being DISCERNING by pointing out that some books on the syllabus may not, at first sight, look interesting. The teacher could encourage pupils to read with an open mind. The teacher could point out that Shakespeare, for example, may seem outdated in both language and customs, but if we look beyond the outward form we discover that he makes very profound observations about people which have relevance even today.

A number of set texts could be used to explore the theme:

- In “To Kill a Mocking bird” by Harper Lee, Atticus exercises DISCERNMENT by choosing to support the “underdog” and fight for what is right, rather than be swayed by the narrow minded prejudice of his community.
- In “Mice and Men”, by John Steinbeck, Slim is very DISCERNING in his behaviour; he makes his own decisions about Lennie and George and does not follow the crowd.
- In “ A View from a Bridge”, by Arthur Miller Catherine understands Eddie and looks for the hidden good in him.
- Shakespeare can also be used to explore the theme of DISCERNMENT. In “The Merchant of Venice” the character of Bassanio complains that “the world is still deceived with ornament” .In “Romeo and Juliette” the lovers are not blinded by family prejudices. In “Macbeth” both Macbeth and his wife abandon DISCERNMENT when they choose to follow the path of evil.

At A/S level:

- pupils could be asked to prepare a debate for presentation to the school. Suitable titles could include, “Discernment is necessary in all things ”, and “ Without discernment man is lost ”.
- The quotes at the beginning of this newsletter can also be used. Essays and poems can be based on the same or similar titles.

In the A/S Literature course, the theme of DISCERNMENT can be explored in different ways:

- pupils could analyse the poem “the Holy Grail”(found above)
 - Pupils could also research the life and works of Jane Austen whose books stress the importance of going beyond pride and prejudice in our judgements.
 - “Walk in the Light and Twenty – three Tales” by Leo Tolstoy is another useful source.
 - In Poetry, the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins can be used to analyse how far the poet places emphasis on being DESCRIMINATING in ones actions.
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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Pupils could do a project based concerning having a Ceiling on Desires. They could look at ways in which money and time could be saved, health, character and relationships could be improved by the exercise of restraint and DISCERNMENT.

Pupils could look at various faiths and religions, focussing on ways in which they try to teach DISCERNMENT. Different groups could research a particular faith and then Share their findings with others. A presentation based on these findings could be given on DISCERNMENT DAY in front of the whole school.

Pupils could also consider the reasons why many choose to live in a monasteries, convents, kibbutz, ashrams or in other communities where they feel supported in their spiritual practice. The topic of abstinence could also be explored. Pupils could consider aspects such as celibacy and not taking alcohol or drugs. The Hindu practice of Brahmacharia could also be researched.

DRAMA

At all levels, both Junior and Secondary, pupils could enact plays based on the lives of people that have demonstrated great DISCERNMENT in their work, such as. Elizabeth Fry and Mother Theresa, who saw beyond the outward appearance of the people they tried to help. Pupils could work on a play together based on the theme of Discernment. The plays could be based on the following titles: “Look before you leap”, “All that glitters is not Gold” and “Don’t judge a book by its cover”.

PSHE

The theme of DISCERNMENT could be introduced by inviting pupils to consider whether it is important to behave in a DISCERNING manner. They could look at how they spend their time, what they say, what they watch and listen to, how they choose to spend their money and how they treat others, and what they eat and drink. A flow diagram could be constructed to display their ideas. Pupils could be asked to suggest ways in which they could become more DISCERNING. Their findings could be displayed in a prominent place on DISCERNMENT DAY. The recent chart hit song “Gold” by Beverley Knight, from the album “Who am I?” could also be discussed. The line, “Sometimes the value’s cast aside by those who are unsure”, could be used as a basis for discussion.

GEOGRAPHY

At Junior level, children could study ways in which trees can help to improve the environment. Suggestions could include reducing erosion of topsoil by providing a resource for education, recreation and leisure, creating a habitat for wildlife and visually improving the landscape. They could write to Future Forests to find out how they can become a “carbon neutral” citizen by planting 15 trees a year. (Future Forests, hill House, Castle Cary, Somerset, BA77JL)

At lower Secondary levels, pupils could look at the effects of indiscriminate tree cutting on the landscape and its potential threat to life, through landslips, mudslides and flooding. At GCSE level, pupils could investigate how far man has been DISCERNING in the treatment of the planet. They could focus on the use and abuse of natural resources; looking at renewable and non-renewable resources. Suitable topics could include abuse of resources as a cause of environmental damage; the conservation and recycling for the future of the planet; the quarrying of land resources; and the management of resources as a balancing act.

At A/S and A level, pupils could focus on the sustainable use of natural resources in terms of whether people have been DISCERNING in their use of them. A suitable topic would be rainforests. Pupils could compare selected variables for the ten countries with the largest area of rainforest being destroyed. They could comment on the value of the information provided in describing the extent of deforestation in tropical countries and explain the variation between countries. They could also investigate why the “Debt” per person poses a problem for conservation of forests. Further areas of study could include assessing the impact of deforestation on soils of the rainforest. They could describe and evaluate the feasibility of traditional subsistence agriculture and forestry as sustainable within rainforests. Finally with reference to located answers, they could give a critical analysis of the strategies used to conserve the rainforests.

HISTORY

Pupils could consider whether invaders, explorers or traders were showing DISCERNING behaviour towards the original inhabitants of the areas that they invaded. They could look at the Spanish in South America, the French and British in North America and India, The British and Boars in Africa, Hitler in Europe, the Russians in the Soviet Union, the Americans in Vietnam and the Chinese in Tibet.

At GCSE level, suitable topics could include the above.

At A/S and A levels pupils could focus on Empires, colonialism and the intervention of Super Powers in the affairs of smaller nations and countries. Pupils could look in particular at the legacy of colonisation or intervention. In Africa, for example, Pupils could consider how far countries were artificially created with no consideration to ethnic or tribal boundaries. They could also look at the long-term effects of stripping traditional rulers of their power in terms of destabilising the large areas of the continent.

ART

At Junior and lower Secondary level, children could make collages to illustrate healthy foods. Paintings could be on the subject of “we are what we eat”. They could also make posters to put up on DISCERNMENT DAY that illustrate DISCERNING behaviour.

At Secondary level visits to art galleries and local shows could help pupils to develop a broader base from which they can be DISCERNING. A project could also be set that focuses on the work of the most influential artists. Teachers could also stress the importance of being DISCERNING about suitable choice of materials, surfaces and the way that they display work.

At GCSE and AS/A levels, teachers could stress the importance of being DISCERNING in their choices of media, colour, design and composition. This could be done through researching the work of great masters such as Leonardo da Vinci. A project could be set based on the following quote: “This gentleman has written of anatomy with such detail, showing by illustrations the limbs, muscles, nerves, veins, ligaments, intestines, and whatever there is to discuss in the bodies of men and women, in a way that has never been done by anyone else...He has also written of the nature of water, of diverse machines and of other matters, which he has set down in an infinite number of volumes (1517 The Secretary of the Cardinal of Aragon)”. Other suitable artist could include Durer and Leon Battista Alberti, (their work on perspective) and Carravaggio and Rembrandt, (their use of Chiaro Scuro) and Raphael and Michelangelo (for their understanding of tone).

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

Pupils could be asked to design and make inspirational objects for Perseverance day. These could include badges, a school plaque (see quotes) or some other representation of DISCERNMENT through a sculpture, collage, tapestry or other medium. (See section on Art) they could look at the work of inspirational and pioneering people such as Leonardo da Vinci, who designed “aeroplanes” and submarines. They could also be asked to show DISCERNMENT in the objects that they make in terms of the choice of subject matter and the quality of the design.

At GCSE and AS/ A levels pupils could join with the physics department to design and construct solar powered items for the school.

MATHS

At Junior level children could be given a sticker when they have shown DISCERNMENT in something. These stickers could be placed on a large graph. The graph could be analysed at the end of a suitable period of time.

At Upper and Secondary levels, pupils can be asked to devise surveys concerning DISCERNMENT. These findings can be analysed as both quantitative and qualitative evidence and displayed in a prominent place of the school for DISCERNMENT DAY or longer. A variety of types of graphs can be used to display the evidence such as bar, line, flow, scatter, and pie diagrams. The survey can be conducted in the form of questionnaires.

Definitions of DISCERNMENT can be given at the top of the form (see Commentary) so that the pupils are clear about the meaning. Pupils could be asked to tick the relevant box (boxes) and write comments in appropriate places. Suitable questions could include:

- “Are you DISCERNING about what you say (i.e. never deliberately saying something that might hurt another)” *always, sometimes, never, unsure*
- “Are you DISCERNING about what you watch (TV, Films and Videos) as opposed to just watching anything?” *Yes, no sometimes, never?*
- “Do you think that it is important to be DISCERNING in how you spend your time.”? *Yes, no, sometimes, not sure. If you have answered yes, please explain.*
- “If someone wanted you to join with them in bullying, teasing or vandalising, would you follow them?” *never, sometimes, always.*
- “How do you feel when you have been following your conscience rather than doing what you know is wrong?” *OK, not sure, very happy, excited, proud of your self. (You may tick as many boxes as you want).*
- “Why do you think that people are often not DISCERNING” *do not know any better, want to impress others, cannot be bothered, have not been shown how to be discerning, do not have good role models? (You may tick as many boxes as you want).*

At GCSE level the Trial an error method could be used as a way of explaining the importance of DISCERNMENT. The teacher could explain that when we learn from mistakes we are also learning to be DISCERNING. By discarding what we do not need we arrive at a final solution to the problem through the process of illumination. The teacher could draw parallels with daily life.

BIOLOGY

At Junior level children could look at the importance to health of a good diet. A chart could be made showing healthy foods, which could be displayed in the school on DISCERNMENT DAY, to encourage children to be more DISCERNING in what they eat.

At Secondary level pupils could study GM foods and their and possible effects on humans. Pupils could investigate ways in which they can offset their carbon dioxide emissions by planting, instead of cutting down, trees. For information they could write to Future Forests, Hill House, Castle Cary, Somerset BA77JL

At GCSE, the topic of DISCERNMENT could be explored through nutrition. Pupils could look at the relationship between diet and health. Suitable topics could include the health benefits of a Vegetarian diet, the role of certain foods, (such as carrots) in strengthening the cell walls as a protection against free radicals, anti-carcinogenic foods and ways of reducing cholesterol levels. (Suitable books include “The Doctor’s Book of Food Remedies”, by Selene Yeager ISBN1-5794-362-6, “Raw Energy” by Leslie & Susannah Kenton Century Publishing and the “Reader’s Digest’s Guide to Minerals and Supplements” ISBN0-276-42448-4)

At A/S and A levels pupils could look at high and low density lipoprotein in relation to Cholesterol levels, chromium for diabetes control, the health benefits of isoflavones, phenolic compounds, phytonutrients, allylic sulphides, isothiocyanates, and the importance of antioxidants such as beta-carotene, fibre in relation to preventing heart disease, constipation and cancer.

Pupils could use the Internet to also look at the fears expressed concerning the use of GM Crops. Suitable topics would be pollen dispersion (Prof. Jean Emberlin of the Pollen Research Unit), Horizontal Gene Transfer (Prof. Terje Travik, head of Virology, School of medicine, University of Toronto and Scientific Director at the Norwegian School of Green Ecology, Tromsø,) and its impact on soils (Mr Max A. Turner, Dr Neil Macgregor of Massey University in New Zealand).

CHEMISTRY

At Secondary level pupils could be asked to consider whether the use of chemicals in the home and at school in terms of DISCERNMENT. For example, do we use bleach when we could use a natural product for disinfecting and do we use washing powders that cannot breakdown quickly instead of natural solvents? They could look at the way that chemical build up in water is environmentally harmful. Pupils could make a display to inform pupils, teachers and parents about the importance of using environmentally friendly products such as Ecover. For information pupils can write to 165 Mainstreet, New Greenham Park, Berkshire RG19 6HN) and/or contact their local Friends of the Earth branch.

At GCSE level, pupils could explore the theme of DISCERNMENT in the same way as above but at greater depth. They could make a table of chemicals to show how far each one is naturally biodegradable. They could compare of plant based surfactants such as ethonal and citrate.

At A/S level this theme could be explored at greater depth. Pupils could also study viscosity. The teacher could relate it to everyday life; in that the more flexible we are the more we can flow through life just as more viscous the liquid the greater the flow, even around obstacles in its path.

PHYSICS

At Junior and Lower Secondary levels the theme of DISCERNMENT can be introduced along similar environmental lines outlined in the above section on CHEMISTRY. Pupils could look at how far they are discerning in their use of electricity, transport. Pupils could explore ways in which they could be more DISCERNING. The results could be displayed on a flow diagram and displayed in a prominent place on DISCERNMENT DAY. They could launch a campaign in the school to aimed at making people more DISCERNING about the way that they use natural resources such as electricity. They could team up with the Maths department to produce a survey of pupil's attitudes to conserving energy.

At GCSE level, pupils could identify and compare the financial and environmental costs of generating electricity using fossil fuels and alternative renewable sources such as wind. They could visit an alternative centre for energy to learn more about renewable sources.

At A/S and levels, pupils could study renewable energy. They could set up feasibility study in their school as to how they could run the school on alternative energy. In co-operation with the Design Technology department, pupils could create solar powered items for the school, such as night-lights, fountains and water heaters.

MUSIC

Pupils could be encouraged to look at their taste in music and to consider whether or not they are discerning, or whether they choose music because it is fashionable. Pupils could be encouraged to critically appraise each others work in such a way that positive as well as negative feedback is given. Pupils can be encouraged to support each other more, through showing a positive interest in each others work and being more forthcoming with praise.

At GCSE and AS/A level, the theme could be introduced in the form of writing critical appraisals of musical compositions by famous composers.

LANGUAGES

At lower Secondary level pupils could be asked to enact a play based on the theme of DISCERNMENT. Key words related DISCERNMENT could be displayed in a spider diagram (see dictionary definitions at the beginning of the Newsletter.) Each child could be responsible for translating and writing up one of the related meanings.

At GCSE level, pupils could write about a time when they chose to be discerning in some way. For example in their use of time, eating habits, company, music and so forth

At A/S level, pupils could write an essay or a talk on the theme of DISCERNMENT. A suitable topic might be "Most young people today follow fashion rather than their own DISCERNMENT".
