Learn by Doing



Choice True Compassion



“Compassion” means having empathy for someone in need. The Writings tell us that compassion is “an influx of charity” from the Lord, and that when a person who loves the Lord feels compassion, he knows that the Lord is alerting him to help (see *Arcana Coelestia* 6737). The natural compassion a person feels becomes spiritual when it is put into practice in accordance with genuine charity (see *True Christianity* 428). This activity explores compassion and ways to practice compassion at home and in the community.

1. Start by distributing *A Picture of Compassion* (p. 2) and drawing materials. Ask the students to draw what comes to mind when they think of the word “compassion”.
2. Invite students to share their pictures with the class and explain how they pictured “compassion”.
3. The Writings tell us that the Lord is the source of compassion. He gives everyone this feeling. People who have faith in the Lord receive compassionate feelings as an alert to help others.
4. It is natural to want to help everyone who is in need, but *True Christianity* 428 warns us to think before we act. We need to ask whether the person who is in need is “good or bad”. If we help without reflecting on whether a person intends good or evil we might actually be promoting evil by helping a person who wants to hurt others. We could be “handing an enemy a sword with which he may kill someone”. We do not know what others are thinking, but we can get some idea of what a person is like by noticing what they do.
5. So who should we treat with compassion? This is like asking, “Who is the neighbor we are to love?” We are to love what is good in others from the Lord.
6. Give each student a copy of *Setting Goals for Acting with Compassion* (p. 3). Have them complete the page, setting achievable goals.

Materials Needed for Each Student

A Picture of Compassion p. 2, *Setting Goals for Acting with Compassion* p. 3, pencil or pen, magic markers or colored pencils

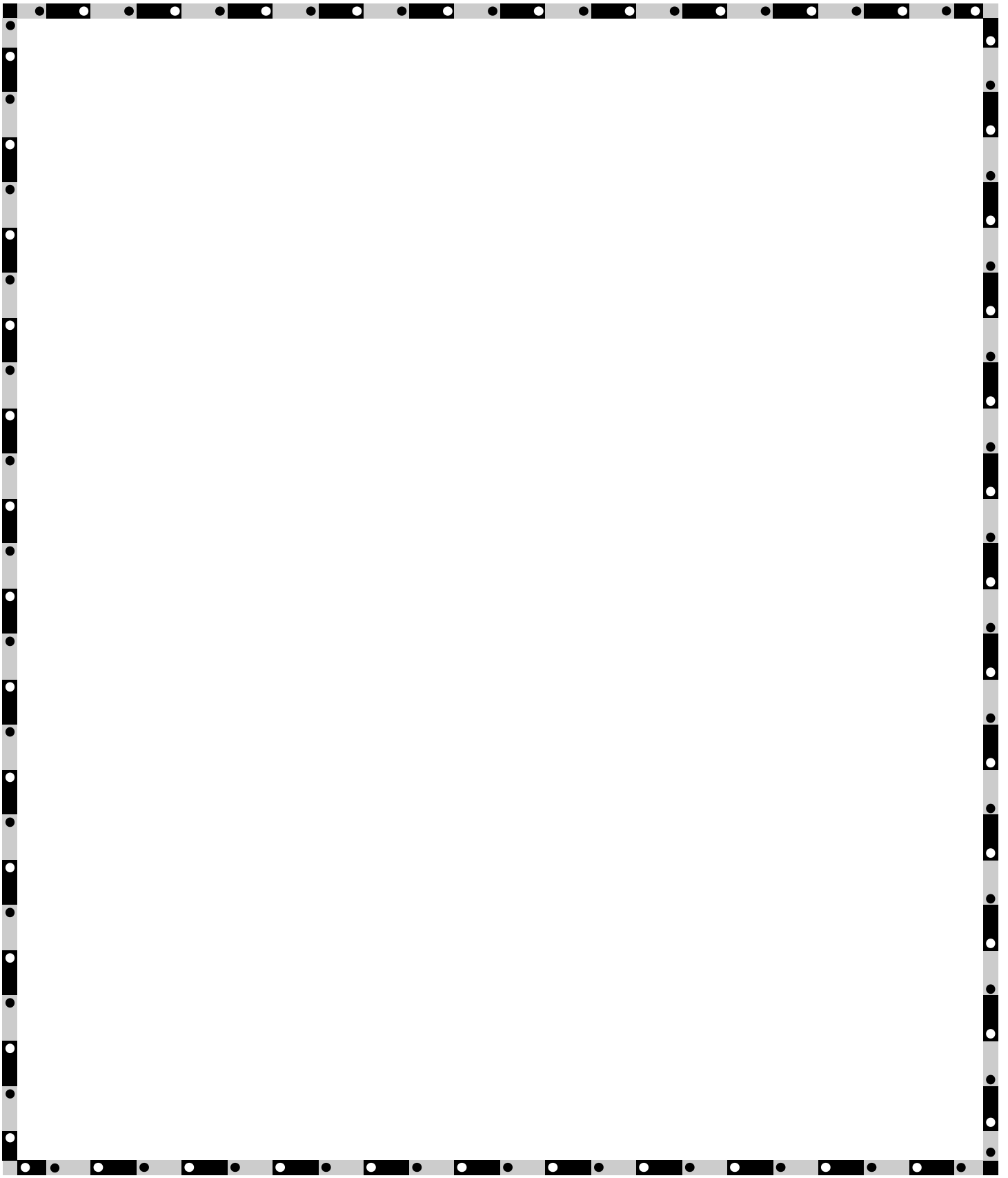
New Church Concept Compassion

Those who are by nature compassionate, and do not make their natural compassion spiritual by putting it into practice in accordance with genuine charity, believe that charity consists in giving to every poor person...without first inquiring whether the poor or needy person is good or bad; for they say that this is not necessary.... But after death these are set apart from those who have done the works of charity from prudence; for those who have done them from that blind idea of charity, then do good to bad and good alike, and with the aid of what is done for them the wicked do evil and thereby injure the good. *True Christianity* 428

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A Picture of Compassion

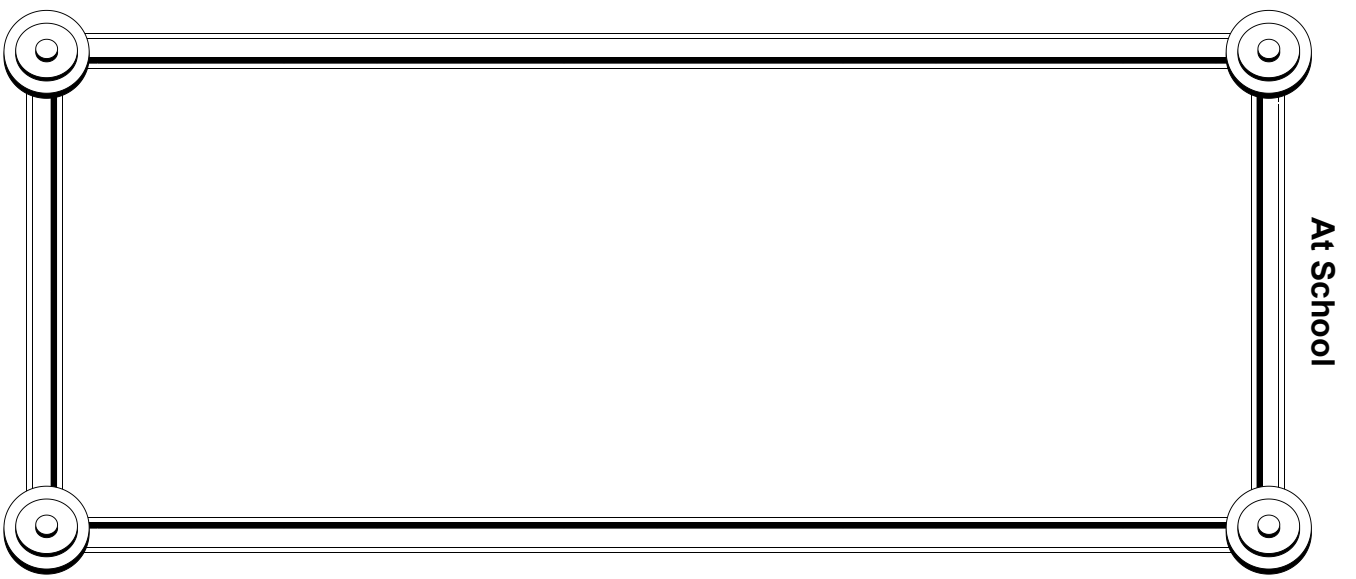
What comes to mind when you think of the word *compassion*? Draw a picture that you feel best shows compassion.



Setting Goals for Acting with Compassion

Set goals for yourself for acting with compassion and kindness to other people. Write one goal in each rectangle. Think about how you can accomplish each goal—be specific. Make plans to act on each goal this week.

At Home



At School

In My Community

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