

# Teacher's Guide With Open Heart and Mind Activity Sheets



## Cover Page

The Priests of the Sacred Heart have created a logo with words that try to capture the spirituality of the Dehonian Family, which includes the Priests of the Sacred Heart and lay people or Associate Members. The following background information may be helpful when exploring with your students the various elements of this logo.

When you sign your name, you are identifying yourself as someone who is unique from everyone else—not better, just unique. This design has two “signatures.” The first is a cross. There are many ways to draw a cross, from simple to elaborate, but this cross was created specifically for the use of the Priests of the Sacred Heart and everyone who is associated with them.



In this logo, you can find the cross within the letter “O” of the word “OPEN.” You may also see someone wearing the cross, either as a lapel pin or as a wooden/metal cross on a cord/chain hung around the neck. This cross, with the heart shape cut out of the middle of it, expresses the spirituality of Fr. Dehon, the founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. He looked at the cross and saw the Heart of Jesus. As Jesus told his disciples, “No one has greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” [John 15:13].

The heart on this cross is an open space, which the Dehonian Family is called to fill with their compassionate love. Attentive to every experience of suffering in the world—especially from violence and injustice—they profess to fill up what is lacking in the wounded Body of Christ with charity, justice, and mercy [cf. Colossians 1:24].



Fr. Dehon wrote, “The friendship of Jesus is faithful, sincere, persevering. A true friend is not satisfied with love expressed in words: he proclaims his affection through action. Such has been and such is the love of our Lord for us.” Those who wear this cross identify themselves as friends of the Heart of Jesus and who express their friendship through their compassionate actions toward every person, but particularly toward those who have great need. **To help your students explore the meaning of the Dehonian cross, please see page 4 of these activity sheets.**

The second “signature” is the written word, “Dehonians,” meaning all who are inspired by the spirituality first lived by Fr. Leo John Dehon, who established the Priests of the Sacred Heart in France in 1878. Soon after founding this religious community of priests and brothers, he also established an associate program so that women and men from all walks of life could share in the spirituality and be supportive of the ministries of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. So, the Dehonian Family is larger than the Priests of the Sacred Heart.

*Dehonians*  
**EST. 1878**

The phrase, “With open heart and mind,” is a simple way to express the spirituality, or the approach to life, that Fr. Dehon lived and passed on to those who follow him. Fr. Dehon highly valued education, but particularly Christian education, which he described as “an education of the heart as well as a cultivation of the mind.” Through Christian education, he wanted to teach people, not just for school, but for life, and to help them become “the living image of Jesus Christ.” **To help your students express what they would like their hearts and minds to learn, please see page 3 of these activity sheets.**

All followers of Fr. Dehon, or “Dehonians,” are called to approach life “with open heart and mind.” That means, to the best of their ability, to love as expansively and unconditionally as Jesus loves us and to use all of their intelligence to find ways to address injustice, prejudice, inequality, and violence in the world. This will involve some personal sacrifice and much love, as the Dehonian cross with the cutout heart suggests. To the degree that Dehonians try to live and treat people in this way, they collaborate with Jesus in bringing about the reign of God on earth. **To help your students understand what it means to be open-hearted and open-minded, please see page 2 of these activity sheets.**

What does “with open heart and mind” mean practically? In Fr. Dehon’s day, at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution and the age of the machine, men, women, and children were forced to work in factories for long hours each day, with no safety or health precautions, and with a

salary that was insufficient to pay bills and buy food. The workers often protested to fight against the injustice, but the factory owners were more powerful.

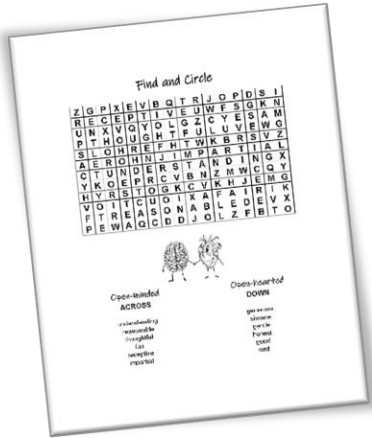
Fr. Dehon had first to learn about these issues from the workers themselves. Motivated by the love of God for all people, and moved in his heart by the workers' unjust suffering, he studied the causes of these inequities. Then, with other like-minded people, Fr. Dehon spoke out against this human cruelty, taught the workers their rights, encouraged labor unions, and demanded a living wage. Fr. Dehon was convinced that it was not enough to preach about God's love, he wanted to help people experience God's love in their daily lives.

In our day, among other issues, we are dealing with the effects of long-term racial inequality. It is so much a part of our society, that most people are not conscious of how it negatively affects the lives of those in the minority, especially people of color. Through the years, people have protested against racism, but usually those in power have managed to reject the need for any meaningful change. Today, it seems that more people are listening to the protests, although some people refuse to listen and feel they need to defend the way they have always lived their lives. This situation challenges Dehonians to come with an "open heart and mind" to listen to those people who have long experienced systemic racism and to work with everyone who wants to build a just society. This willingness to listen and create change requires personal sacrifice and much love, but these are actions which express our friendship with Jesus, our unity with all human beings, and our desire to help build the reign of God in our midst. **To help your students talk about inclusivity, please see page 5 of these activity sheets.**

This cover sheet need not be reproduced for all your students, but an enlarged image displayed in the classroom will help point out the elements of the logo.

If you choose reproduce all the activity sheets, including this cover sheet, you may want to have each student create a "booklet" after they have worked through each activity, binding the sheets together with staples, or punching holes in the sheets and holding them together with yarn. In this case, invite the students to personalize the cover sheet by writing their name on the border and/or a phrase such as, "I want to learn with an open heart and mind."

## Page 2



This word puzzle features qualities descriptive of being open-minded and open-hearted. The graphic of the brain [mind] and heart holding hands is a light-hearted visual of Fr. Dehon’s goal to provide “an education of the heart as well as a cultivation of the mind.”

Before the students work the word puzzle, it might be beneficial to discuss the meaning and/or give examples of the listed qualities of being open-minded and open-hearted. The open-minded qualities will be found going across the puzzle grid and the open-hearted qualities going down the puzzle grid. Invite your students to circle the words when they find them. Alternately, they can highlight the words with a marker, preferably choosing a different color for “open-minded” and open-hearted.”

Word puzzle solution:

Z	G	P	X	E	V	B	Q	T	R	J	O	P	D	S	I
R	E	C	E	P	T	I	V	E	U	W	F	S	G	K	N
U	N	X	V	Q	Y	O	L	G	Z	C	Y	E	S	A	M
P	T	H	O	U	G	H	T	F	U	L	U	V	E	W	G
S	L	O	H	R	E	F	H	T	W	K	B	R	S	V	Z
A	E	R	O	H	N	J	I	M	P	A	R	T	I	A	L
C	T	U	N	D	E	R	S	T	A	N	D	I	N	G	X
Y	K	O	E	P	R	C	V	B	N	Z	M	W	C	Q	Y
H	Y	R	S	T	O	G	K	C	V	K	H	J	E	M	G
V	O	I	T	C	U	O	I	X	A	F	A	I	R	I	K
F	T	R	E	A	S	O	N	A	B	L	E	D	E	V	X
P	E	W	A	Q	C	D	D	J	O	L	Z	F	B	T	O

After working the puzzle, you might ask each student to circle [or highlight] one descriptive word from the open-minded list and one descriptive word from the open-hearted list that best describes her/him at this time, or what s/he would hope to be like in the future. Then, they could share what they have chosen and why.

If time allows, you could encourage your students to personalize the page with color and any designs or symbols they would like to add.



## Page 3

### Not Just For School, But For Life We Learn

Sometimes it's easy for students to focus on grades and awards, but more difficult for them to see that they are learning life-lessons. Also, because there is a standard grade school curriculum, it might be difficult for students to sense that they can set personal educational goals.

You might ask the students what, "Not just for school, but for life we learn," means to them. From there, you might encourage them to set their own goals, and list what they want their mind to learn and what they want their heart to learn. Both are equally important for a well-rounded individual and for becoming a "living image of Jesus Christ." A follow-up sharing of responses will help the students see possibilities that perhaps they themselves did not think of.

If time allows, you could encourage your students to personalize the page with color and any designs or symbols they would like to add.



## Page 4

### Dehonian Cross

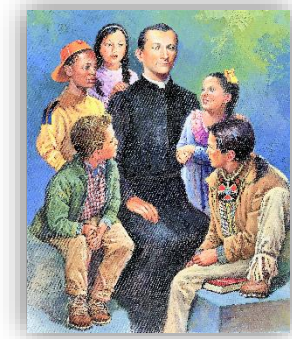
This cross, with the heart shape cut out of the middle of it, expresses the spirituality of Fr. Dehon, the founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. He looked at the cross and saw the Heart of Jesus. As Jesus told his disciples, "No one has greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" [John 15:13]. You might ask your students how they understand these words of Jesus.

The heart on this cross is cut out to create an open space, which the Dehonian Family is called to fill with their compassionate love. St. Paul spoke of himself as an example to follow when he wrote, "I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh, I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his Body, that is, the Church [Colossians 1:24]. You might explain St. Paul's thought simply by saying that when anyone suffers, everyone suffers. It is our duty as followers of Jesus, not only to provide immediate comfort, but also to help stop the cause of any suffering in the world.

As the Body of Christ, Christians join with Jesus' wounded, but resurrected body, and pledge to be attentive to every experience of suffering in the world. Christians want to work to remove violence and injustice from the world, and to fill up the world with charity, justice, and mercy.

You might ask the students to share examples of suffering in the world of which they are aware. After some discussion, invite them to write down their answers within the outline of the cross. Then, ask them how they think they can, in their own way, try to take away the suffering or prevent suffering, and fill up the world with love. After some discussion, invite them to write down their answers within the outline of the heart.

If time allows, you could encourage your students personalize the page by coloring the cross and the heart within the cross, and by adding around the border additional designs or symbols if they choose.



Page 5

Prayer Card

Image of Fr. Dehon with Children

Pass out the prayer card to each of the students. Ask them to identify the priest in this image. Some may recognize the figure as Fr. Leo John Dehon, founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. Some may not know or have forgotten, so this might be a good opportunity to review the connection

between Fr. Dehon and the Priests of the Sacred Heart, who established Sacred Heart Southern Missions, minister at several Catholic churches in northern Mississippi, and sponsor both Holy Family School in Holly Springs and Sacred Heart School. You might ask your students to name the Dehonian priests and brothers they know.

[In case someone asks why a group of priests and brothers are called “**Priests** of the Sacred Heart,” you can explain that Fr. Dehon had a special meaning for the word, “priest,” as he used it in the descriptive title of his religious community. For Fr. Dehon, a “priest” of the Sacred Heart is someone who makes a daily offering of himself to God by promising to do God’s will as best as he can know it. This is the meaning of “priest” that is found in I Peter 2:4-5: “Come to him, a living stone...and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”]

Ask your students what they see in this picture. If the answer is, “a group of young people gathered around Fr. Dehon,” this would be a good indication that the student doesn’t see ethnic or racial differences. Most viewers, especially adults, however, will see a Native American boy, a Hispanic girl, an Asian girl, a Black boy, and a White boy. In fact, the original painting was commissioned to show children from the schools that the Priests of the Sacred Heart sponsor in the United States and Canada [St. Joseph Indian School in Chamberlain, South Dakota; Our Lady of Guadalupe School in Houston, Texas; Sacred Heart School in Southaven, Mississippi; Holy Family School in Holly Springs, Mississippi; and Séminaire du Sacré-Coeur in Pointe-au-Chêne, Québec].

Your students are probably somewhat familiar with students from these other schools, but you might want to ask what they know, would like to know, or can appreciate about other heritages that are not their own [“with open mind”]; and how they feel about, care about, and support people who seem different from them [“with open heart”]. Some possible discussion starters:

- ✓ What countries make up the area of the world we call Asia?
- ✓ What countries of the world have a predominantly Hispanic population?
- ✓ What Native American tribes can you name from North, Central, and South America?
- ✓ To what African countries can most African Americans trace their heritage?
- ✓ To what European countries can most White North Americans trace their heritage?
- ✓ Name one thing you like about your own culture.
- ✓ Name one thing you like about someone else’s culture.
- ✓ How can you get to know someone whose background is different from yours?
- ✓ Why do differences among people often divide the world?

*[usually fear or suspicion of the unknown]*

- ✓ How can differences among people enrich the world?  
*[celebrating God-created variety and recognizing our common humanity, so that there is no need to fear the “other” or dominate others through violence or war]*
- ✓ Who are the people you care about and why do you care about them?
- ✓ Why support people you don’t know who are in need or in trouble?

Fr. Dehon knew that young people are the future of the world. That is why he started St. John Junior High School so that he could provide a Christian education, which he described as “an education of the heart as well as a cultivation of the mind,” and help each student become “the living image of Jesus Christ.” He believed young people could eventually make the world a better, more loving, more compassionate place.

The prayer on the reverse side of this card is an offering that the students can pray and live out every day. This makes each of them a “priest,” part of a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. It would be important for you to make this connection before inviting them to pray this prayer together. The prayer card is theirs to keep as a reminder to move through life with an open heart and mind.