

## Using *Sturdy Roots* in the Curriculum

Judith Best, SSND, July, 2011.

The outline below is suggested as a way to introduce students, faculty, staff, Associates, and newer members to the heritage and spirit of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. [www.sturdyroots.org](http://www.sturdyroots.org) Originally S. Kathy Jager, SSND (AM) developed an outline for integrating Sturdy Roots into the curriculum. I am grateful for her insight and have expanded on her suggestions.

The major topic found on the left of the webpage is in black. The chapter is given in *italics* and found on the right of the webpage. The initials in ( ) denotes Atlantic Midwest Province, Central Pacific Province, etc. Explore primary sources of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, an educational community of Catholic Sisters. You may also enter a key word within the *Sturdy Roots* site that allows you to explore all the topics where a particular person, etc. is mentioned. i.e Margaret Ellen Traxler, Mother Caroline, Beatification, Vatican II, etc. Particular segments of *Sturdy Roots* that may be helpful in a Formation Program are listed at the end of this index.

### **Art, Music, and Sewing**

#### **Mary:** *German Marian Statues*

- Discover the variety of perspectives on Mary through her images
- Recognize the Germanic interpretation as compared to other cultures

#### **Mary:** *Marian Mosaic*

- View a video of various Marian statues honored throughout the SSND community
- View video on *Images of Elm Grove* depicting the vine and branches theme

#### **Being Church:** Learn *Beatification Hymn* found in *Beatification*

- This German hymn is a round based on the words of Mother Theresa
- Singing this German tribute to the Trinity honors a theme dear to Mother Theresa
- Both music and audio are available at bottom of *Beatification* page.

#### **Needlework:** *German Teachers*

- Discover the importance of stitchery in the German culture
- Explore the role of needlework in the SSND educational philosophy

#### **Needlework:** *Needlework Mission*

- Consider the role of needlework in various cultures.

#### **Needlework:** *Students' Needlework*

- View examples of fine needlework done by American elementary students
- These are displayed at St. Joseph's Shrine, St. Louis.

#### **Needlework:** *Needlework in America*

- Read Mother Caroline's appraisal of quilting in America

**Needlework:** *Holy Rule of 1924*

- Explore relationship between sewing and SSND educational philosophy

**Needlework:** *Needlework Today*

- Contact Unit archives and use the *Sturdy Roots* Picnic Basket
- Discover handmade tablecloth and napkins with Facilitator Directions
- Visit the SSND Liturgical Arts Department in St. Louis, MO

**Social Studies: American History, English, and Religion**

**Expansion:** *Native Peoples*

- Ministry to First Nations, Ojibway in Aroland, Canada (AM)
- Ministry to Native Americans, United States, Lakota People, etc.(CP)
- Poem on learning from the Ojibway Nation by S. Phyllis Bradtke, (AM)

**Expansion:** *Immigrants*

- Account of S. Justine Nutz (AM) whose parents were immigrants.
- Account of S. Kathleen Spencer (CP) working with immigrants.
- Account of S. Maria Bento (SP) working with immigrants to Brazil,
- Photo of passenger list including Mother Theresa, Mother Caroline, etc.

**Case Study in Courage:** Mother Caroline Friess, SSND

- Explore a cross-cultural family in *Family of Origins*
- View copy of Mother Caroline's U.S. citizenship papers. (link in text of Home Page)
- Discover America as Mother Caroline experienced it in 1850 through the essay, *Adapting the Vision* by Professor Anne Butler: discussion questions at end.
- Relive meeting Mother Caroline in person through a *Conversation with Gerry*.
- Consider an example of photo-makeover in 1922 found in *Lost Identity*.
- Read Mother Caroline's experience of being in a *Steamboat Explosion* on the Mississippi River. (The "Pennsylvania," also carried Mark Twain's brother.)

**Education:** *of American Children*

- Listen to audio of *My Antonia* by Willa Cather on necessity of education.
- Become acquainted with children in 1847 in Baltimore through *Theresa's Letter*.
- Teaching girls in Philadelphia was challenging in 1850; read *Caroline's Letter*.
- Discover Facilitator Directions and adapt as lesson plan. (bottom of page)

**Living in Wartime:** *Memories of War*

- Read Mother Caroline's experience of the Civil War in 1862; see #4.
- Mother Theresa commenting on the Civil War in 1863; see #5.

**Living in Wartime:** *End of War*

- Consider how Washington, MO celebrated the end of WW II
- Listen to Kate Smith singing "God Bless America" (button to right)

**Living in Wartime: Care Packages**

- Explore how American SSNDs helped German Sisters after WW II.
- Note how American POWs helped German SSNDs after WW II.

**Living in Wartime: 50 Years Later**

- Discover how American Sisters remembered the war after 50 years.
- Notice how German SSNDs in Baltimore were remembered.

**Creative Fidelity: Change of Habit**

- View *Change of Habit* video (green button on right)
- *Sewing the New Habit* video (green button on right)
- View *Formation* video link at bottom of home page.

**Voices of Change: Margaret Ellen Traxler (CP)**

- Explore the promotion of human rights through her life.
- View *Margaret Ellen's Life* video (green button right)

**Voices of Change: Mary Ellen Dougherty (AM)**

- Reflect on her ministry experience in anti-trafficking.
- Discover how the church works within the U.S. for justice

**Voices of Change:** Listen to *Martin Luther King, Jr., Rachel Carson, Apollo 8 Mission*

**Biology, Anatomy, Physiology, Evolution, and Results of Atomic Bomb**

**The Nun Study: CNN**

- View coverage of contribution of American SSNDs to Alzheimer's research

**The Nun Study: Tale of Two Sisters**

- Compare the mental health of two German Sisters who came to the U.S.

**The Nun Study: American Archivist**

- Explore the role that SSND archives played in medical research

**Voices of Change: Dorothy Olinger (CP)**

- Read one person's deepening understanding that she "is Earth."
- Explore the "Cosmic Walk"
- Hear Rachel Carson, Apollo 8 voices of change.

**Expansion: Asia**

- Read or listen to a description of the atomic bomb falling on Japan
- Consider the effects of this devastation on human beings and creation
- Pray the responses of Japanese people who experienced the bomb

**English and Creative Writing/Story-telling**

**Tell Us a Story:** *Mother Paschal Carton* (AM)

- Read a short interview and discover Nancy Pelosi's relation to SSND

**Tell Us a Story:** *S. Charitas Krieter* (CP)

- Listen to an SSND whose handwriting analysis helped make money during the Depression (green button)
- See sample of handwriting analysis.
- Process for telling personal stories of SSNDs others may have known.

**Social Studies: World History**

**Beginnings:** View history of School Sisters of Notre Dame from 1833 – 2009 (20 min)

- S. Mary Luke Baldwin (CP) narrates SSND history in Bavaria to 2009
- Introduction to founding persons and recent leaders of the congregation.

**Seeds of Hope:** *International Photo Gallery*

- View newer members of the School Sisters of Notre Dame
- These faces represent the internationality of the congregation.

**Expansion:** *England, Latin America, Native Peoples, Asia, Africa, Oceania, Rome*

- Explore the missionary spirit that led Sisters to many cultures.
- View a *Missionary Collage* of Sisters in various countries.

**Education:** View *Vatican II* video (green button on right)

**Education:** *God's Career Women*

- View this documentary on how School Sisters of Notre Dame were educated before Vatican II.

**Living in Wartime:** *Memories of War and Practical Advice (1800's and Civil War)*

- Read Mother Theresa's advice for living in wartime
- Learn how women experienced living in wartime

**Living in Wartime:** *Background of World War II*

- Consider what it was like to live in Hitler's Germany
- Listen to an audio of a German Sister's experience: S. Victoria, (purple button)

**Living in Wartime:** *German Sisters' Stories*

- Explore what led German Sisters to leave Germany before World War II.

**Living in Wartime:** *S. Mary Imma Mack*

- How did an SSND Candidate find her way to Dachau?

**Living in Wartime:** *Motherhouse Bombing (Munich, 1944)*

- Read the letter of Mother Almeda describing the Motherhouse bombing.

- Notice the faith context her detailed description of the bombing.

**Living in Wartime:** audio clips of *Hitler, Neville Chamberlin, Kyrstallnacht*

- Relive some of the horror of World War II
- Recognize the political pressure for “non-cooperation” with Nazism

**Shalom and UN:** *Blessed Antonia Krachtowil, SSND*

- Learn of a Polish SSND who was imprisoned by the Nazis
- She was declared Blessed by Pope John Paul II in 1999.

**Living in Wartime:** *End of World War II*

- Listen to the Death of Hitler (purple button)
- Listen to British Liberate Concentration Camp
- Listen to Liberation of Paris
- Listen to English Celebration
- Listen to an American Celebration

**Mary:** *Mother Almeda Schricker*

- Explore an outline of her life (link is found in first paragraph)
- She was General Superior of the School Sisters of Notre Dame from 1928 – 1955.

**Communism:** *Extended Family*

- Become acquainted with how Sisters lived under oppression
- Be inspired by their courage and fidelity (*Final Vows*)

**Communism:** *Berlin*

- Consider the challenges of living in a divided city.
- View *Berlin Collage* to understand the Berlin Airlift and the U.S. commitment

**Communism:** *Mosaic*

- Relive the fall of the Berlin Wall and the hope of the people.
- S. Patricia Flynn (AM) offered living history through her letters to SSNDs.

**Social Studies: Social Justice**

**Shalom and UN:** *Shalom Clubs*

- Develop a Shalom Club in elementary or secondary schools
- Sample letters to parents, faculty, etc. introducing the Shalom Club
- Learn more about the strong stance for Social Justice within SSND.
- View *Shalom in Action* to see students and staff “being” Shalom

**Shalom and UN:** *Global Dialogue*

- Explore the initial request of S. Mary Beth Reissen, (CP) to join the UN
- Realize some of the cultural challenges to arrive at a final decision.

**Shalom and UN:** *SSND at UN*

- Read of the work of S. Ann Scholz, (CP) at the UN
- View SSND international meeting discussing social justice (General Chapters)

**Shalom and UN:** *Determined Community Effort*

- Consider the 20 year SSND dialogue resulting in acceptance as an NGO
- Relive S. Ethel Howley's (AM) experience as first SSND NGO representative.

**Shalom and UN:** *Educators for Peace*

- Learn how working with those who are poor attracted Catherine (Missy) Gugerty (AM) to SSND
- Recognize how working for justice happens in the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

**Shalom and UN:** *Mother Theresa Award*

- Create an award honoring those who work for justice following Blessed Theresa
- Find helpful steps in identifying recipients

**Voices of Change:** Mentioned above

**Women's Studies**

**Being Church:** *Cultural Context*

- Explore the historical background of Blessed Theresa's difficulties with the hierarchical church.
- Discover the role of women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bavarian church

**Being Church:** *Sent into Time*

- See through the eyes of a Bavarian SSND how Blessed Theresa followed her conscience even though it upset those in authority.
- Reflect on the innovative belief that a woman could lead a religious congregation with no male director over her.

**Being Church:** *A Woman's Place*

- Learn more about the relationship between Mary Ward, who had been imprisoned for her views, and Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger.
- Be inspired by the courage of these two brave women.

**Being Church:** *Gathering Storm*

- Consider the various personalities involved in this conflict
- See how Blessed Theresa's adherence to conscience brought her great suffering.

**Being Church:** *Decrees*

- Understand the ways in which Blessed Theresa was limited in carrying out her responsibilities as General Superior of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.
- Participate in a one-act play regarding her meeting with the archbishop.

**Being Church:** *Appealing to the Pope*

- Learn from her letters to Pope Pius IX her priority of educating women.
- Recognize her desperation in writing directly to Pope Pius IX

**Being Church:** *Crises*

- Explore her courage in asking other bishops to support her work.
- Read a letter to her clerical advocate in Rome sharing her heart.

**Being Church:** *Theresa's Dark Night*

- Become acquainted with the Source of her strength.
- Follow her struggle into birthing a new model of religious life

**Being Church:** *Missionary Spirit*

- Find out what was happening among the sisters during this difficult time

**Being Church:** *Reconciliation*

- Notice her strong desire for reconciliation with all parties concerned.
- Consider her role in supporting the status of women in the church.

**Being Church:** *Beatification*

- The hierarchical church acknowledged her goodness in a public ceremony.
- View the *Beatification Video* (green button)

**Being Church:** *Hall of Fame*

- Explore the idea of inducting Blessed Theresa into the Bavarian Hall of Fame
- View *Bavarian Hall of Fame* video (green button)

**Case Study in Courage:** Mentioned above

**Tell Us a Story:** Mentioned above

**Expansion:** Mentioned above

**Creative Fidelity:** General Superiors

- Explore the challenging decisions made during wartime by Mother Almeda
- Reflect on Mother Georgianne visiting Sisters living under Communism
- Read the accounts of Sisters' adapting to the Fall of the Berlin Wall by S. Patricia Flynn, (AM)
- View General Chapters that showed the creative response to SSNDs in "reading the signs of the times;" 1985, 1992, 1997, 2002, and the Election of S. Patricia Flynn (AM) in 1992.

**Spanish**

**Being Church:** *Theresa's Dark Night*

- Poems of St. John of the Cross are read in Spanish
- **Mary:** *Marie Dolorette Farias, (CP)* Read in Spanish/English her process of empowerment for Hispanic catechetical leaders.

- **Mary:** *Sandra Spencer*, Read her experience in a refugee camp in Honduras and the Litany of Liberation in Spanish.

## Religious Life and the School Sisters of Notre Dame

*Sturdy Roots* as a whole offers many archival examples of one religious community evolving through various political and religious changes. In a Formation Program for Sisters and Associates, one might find the following topics helpful:

1. **Family Tree:** Each chapter gives a brief explanation of the role played by SSND founding persons.
2. **Beginnings:** The 20 minute video gives a description of SSND origins and growth from 1833 – 2003.
3. **Education:** There are two videos showing the education, various habits of SSNDs, and ministries: “*God’s Career Women*,” a documentary from 1951, and “*Photos of Sisters in Formation*,” and “*Photos of Sisters in Ministry*.”
4. **Creative Fidelity:** Each chapter relates to the development of the congregation, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. There is a chapter on the development of *You Are Sent*, along with the highlights of the *General Superiors* that would foster an understanding of our commitment to the church and reading the “signs of the times.” Matthew 16: 2 – 3.
5. **Woman of the Word:** In each chapter there is topic related to Mother Theresa’s love of scripture, as well as that of Bishop Wittman and Fr. Job. There is also information on the *Translation* of her letters. Listen to an audio clip of S. Henriette Hoene’s experience in finding the letters of Mother Theresa and getting all 5,337 translated.
6. **Mary:** Each chapter offers insight into the vital role Mary plays in the spirituality and ministry of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.
7. **Case Study in Courage:** The family life of Mother Caroline was a unique cross-cultural experience which can be discussed in *Family of Origins*. Her experience on the American scene is historically described by Professor Anne Butler in her essay, *Adapting the Vision*, which includes excellent discussion questions at the end of her essay.
8. **Seeds of Hope:** *International Photo Gallery* provides a pictorial essay of the congregation today. *Theresa and New Members* outlines what Mother Theresa looked for in new members. *Death of a Professed* offers Mother Theresa’s assessment of what makes one a real School Sister of Notre Dame. Her *Letter to Agnes Finke* offers her words of encouragement to a new member who is disillusioned with the congregation.
9. **Expansion:** Each chapter shows how ordinary SSNDs responded to the call, leaving their homes to bring the Good News to other cultures.
10. **Creative Fidelity:** Consider viewing each of the General Chapter video clips that tell the SSND story through the lens of internationality, dialogue, and communion with Christ and one another.
11. **Education:** View *Vatican II* video and explore this context as the development of religious life in the past fifty years.