



The  
Teach**Able**  
Project

## Lesson Plan



Grade 12 ENG4U:  
Jean Vanier

**Spirit of Belonging – Jean Vanier’s  
Philosophy Revisited  
An English Lesson for Grade 11 & 12**



## Lesson Summary

This lesson addresses curriculum expectations from *The Ontario Curriculum – English, Grades 11 and 12, 2007(revised)* for the course ENG 4U . Using Jean Vanier’s philosophy of being as a spring board for discussion, students will explore attitudinal barriers and their own sense of inclusion and belonging, and, then critically explore their environment and community.

The activities in these lessons will promote meta-cognition, critical peer evaluation, and the development of a personal philosophy around inclusion. Students will demonstrate skills in gathering information, evaluating information sources, critical listening, analyzing information and identifying and summarizing key points in learning. In the process of writing their biography, students will have an opportunity to compare Jean Vanier’s personal and moral vision with their own. Students will be challenged to critically examine attitudinal barriers in their class/school/community.

## Connections to Accessibility Awareness – The Big Ideas

The following accessibility messages are addressed in the activities in this lesson:

- Empathy for others and respect for the dignity of all persons are essential characteristics of an inclusive classroom, school and society.
- The biggest barriers to accessibility are attitude and lack of awareness.
- Students have an important voice and a valuable role to play in advocating for change in their classrooms, their schools and their community.

## Important Considerations for Program Planning

In keeping with the inclusive nature of accessibility and best teaching practices, lessons and instruction must provide a continuum of supports for all students, including those with accessibility considerations and/or special education needs. The front matter of all revised curriculum policy documents highlights elements to consider in planning classroom lessons and instruction, including Universal Design, differentiated instruction, equity and inclusive education, the perspective of First Nation, Métis and Inuit people, meeting the needs of English language learners and of students with special education needs. See the **Accessibility+** hub for more information about these and related topics.

## Community Connections

Connections with parents, members of the broader school community, agencies and institutions, social services, community organizations, corporations, and local businesses provide important opportunities for supporting accessibility awareness for students. Community partners can be an important resource in students’ learning as volunteers, mentors, guest speakers, participants in the school’s accessibility events or models of accessibility awareness in the life of the community. Modelling and mentoring can enrich not



only the educational experience of students but also the life of the community. Schools should ensure that partnerships are nurtured within the context of strong educational objectives. If the topic of a lesson is a disability and a student in the classroom has that disability, it is important to discuss that lesson with the student, if appropriate, and his or her parents so that planning can be respectful and strengths-based in perspective.

## Curriculum Document(s)/Grade

*The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: English, 2007 (revised), Course Code ENG 4U*

## Curriculum Expectations (as stated in the Ontario curriculum documents)

### **Writing**

By the end of this course, students will:

1. DEVELOPING AND ORGANIZING CONTENT: generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience
2. USING KNOWLEDGE OF FORM AND STYLE: draft and revise their writing, using a variety of literary, informational, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience

### **Oral Communication**

By the end of this course, students will:

1. LISTENING TO UNDERSTAND: listen in order to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes
2. SPEAKING TO COMMUNICATE: use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with audiences for a variety of purposes

### **Reading and Literature Studies**

By the end of this course, students will:

1. READING FOR MEANING: read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, informational and graphic texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning

## Instruction and Context

### **Learning Goals**

Students and the teacher will work together to create Learning Goals in student friendly language that are connected to the curriculum expectations. Co-created Learning Goals should be posted in the classroom for reference. Please see the Glossary in the **Accessibility+** hub for more information.



## Success Criteria

Success Criteria for each lesson will be developed by the teacher and the class based on the curriculum expectations, the students’ ability to demonstrate knowledge of content, use critical thinking processes, to make connections and personal knowledge or experience according to the nature of the activity. Co-created Success Criteria should be posted in the classroom for reference.

Please see the Glossary in the **Accessibility+** hub for more information.

## Differentiated Instruction and Assessment

Please refer to *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12* for more information about differentiated instruction and assessment practices.

## Readiness

Students should have prior experience with:

- Co-creating Success Criteria and Learning Goals
- Reading and/or viewing biographies
- Summarizing information from various sources
- Using technology for the purpose of researching, recording sources and evaluating the credibility of sources of information
- Group and cooperative learning strategies, such as place mat activities and gallery walks (See [http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/pdf/Mod36\\_coop\\_placemat.pdf](http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/pdf/Mod36_coop_placemat.pdf) for more information on placemat activities and <http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/gallerywalk/index.html> for information on using gallery walks.)
- Peer evaluation and feedback from a critical friend

## Terminology

Agent of change, attitudinal barriers, bibliography, biography, critical friend, developmental disability, Down’s syndrome, empathy, gallery walk, inclusion, philosophy

This terminology should be discussed and understood to help students meet the expectations of these lessons. These and other words that come up in discussion should be posted in the classroom for reference.



## Materials and Equipment

Biography - *Jean Vanier A Young Person who Followed his Heart; A Man who is Changing our World!* (Appendix A)

Place mat (enough copies for small groups and individual students)(Appendix B)

Exit card (Appendix C)

Cue cards for listening/note-taking activity

Sample bibliographies from various sources (invite students to bring in biographies if they have examples)

Access to Internet and/or library for research

Large blank paper for draft of page for social media site

Variety of materials for arts activities

One of the following videos about persons with developmental disabilities or the life and work of Jean Vanier (some examples listed below)

From the National Film Board at no cost to Ontario schools:

- *John and Michael* [http://www.nfb.ca/film/john\\_and\\_michael](http://www.nfb.ca/film/john_and_michael)
- *Victor-Martin, Diane and John* <http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/collection/film/?id=33478>
- Videos about Jean Vanier, including a biography, available at no cost from *Learn Alberta* website: <http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/ssjv/index.html>. Learn Alberta has 5 of the 6 segments of the “Belonging: The Search for Acceptance” film and our study guide on its online resource on Jean Vanier. On the same site you will find the On Becoming Human kit, based on Jean Vanier’s Massey lectures.

The following videos are available for a small fee:

- *Belonging “The Search for Acceptance”* <http://www.windborneproductions.com/belonging.html> (study guide available for schools)
- *Prophets of Peace* [http://www.deiren.com/film/prophets\\_of\\_peace/index.html](http://www.deiren.com/film/prophets_of_peace/index.html) (short clip available on the website)
- *I AM* <http://www.larche.ca/en/education> - video can be viewed on line or purchased with study guide (one-page user guide included in **Accessibility+**)

Note: Please preview these videos and select the one that best suits your class.

Please see the **Accessibility+** hub for additional information and resources related to this unit.



## Learning About Attitudinal Barriers and Advocacy for Change

This lesson will focus on the following Accessibility Awareness messages:

- Empathy for others and respect for the dignity of all persons are essential characteristics of an inclusive classroom, school and society.
- The biggest barriers to accessibility are attitude and lack of awareness.
- Students have an important voice and a valuable role to play in advocating for change in their classrooms, their schools and their community.

### Minds On

Suggested guiding questions: What does the phrase “attitudinal barrier” mean to you? Can you give some examples of attitudinal barriers you have observed or experienced? Do you think it is important to challenge attitudinal barriers? Why or why not? How are empathy and respect related to attitudinal change? What does the phrase “agent of change” mean? Who can you think of who was (or is) an agent of change? What characteristics do agents of change have in common? Do you think it takes courage to be an agent of change? Why or why not? Record students’ ideas for future reference.

To create interest in the topic, view one or several of the videos (listed in the Materials and Equipment section above ) about Jean Vanier or about the people he works with so that students will have a better understanding of the lives of people with Down’s Syndrome and other types of developmental delays and the context of his philosophy. Ask students what they learned about Jean Vanier and/or his work from viewing the video (s). What questions do they have as a result of watching the video? What did they learn from viewing the video? What are the characteristics of a good informational video? Did the video they viewed demonstrate those characteristics? What do you think could make the video more effective?

### Action

#### **Whole Class ➔ Shared Listening Activity**

Read the biography *Jean Vanier A Young Person who Followed his Heart* (See Appendix A) aloud to the class. To activate listening, ask students to record 5-8 main points while listening to the biography. Distribute cue cards to students to use to record key points as they listen.

#### **Whole Class ➔ Discussion and Think-Pair-Share**

In pairs, ask students to talk about their impression of Jean Vanier based on the reading and the selected video(s). Ask students to think about what his impact has been and what it will be in the future. As a class, discuss the type of man Jean Vanier is and how his philosophy has affected him and others. Ask students to share their ideas with the class and record them to review later.

**Small Group ↳ Writing**

Ask students to work in small groups using the place mats to share the information recorded on their cue cards. The group must consolidate ideas and agree on which items to record on their place mat, and summarize them under the headings provided: identify his childhood influences/life experience/and who he has influenced (see appendix B) and then post their place mat for the next part of this activity.

**Independent Practice ↳ Viewing and Sharing**

Have students take a Gallery Walk to view the posted group place mats. Each student should have a personal copy of the place mat to create an individual version based on the input from the entire class. Ask students to identify 2-3 additional items they would like to learn about Vanier and record them on the back of their cue card.

**Independent/Pairs/Group ↳ Research**

Provide samples of bibliographies for students. Using the Internet or library, give students time to research the additional questions about Jean Vanier that they identified. Remind them to record their sources on the bibliography summary sheet and evaluate the effectiveness/credibility of the site used as good/fair/poor.

**Independent ↳ Writing/Technology**

Ask students to think about how a biography and a social media page are similar. What are the important elements of attractive and engaging social media? Ask students to contribute ideas for a rubric for a social media page including essential information and the details needed for assessment purposes. Help students identify various indicators of good social media pages. Identify the critical components to include (photo, graphics, personal details, contributions, etc.).

Give students time to use their individual place mat and research findings to create a draft version of a social media page for Jean Vanier using art materials or the computer. Ask students to share their work with a critical friend for feedback.

**Sharing**

Give students the possibility to orally present their finished work to the class or post it for others to read and see.

**Action Planning**

Ask students to use their exit cards to identify three strategies to address attitudinal barriers in their school or community environment that could realistically be accomplished by a student within a few weeks. Ask them to circle one of the strategies which they will personally be working on and set a date for students to report their progress.



## Assessment

**Assessment for Learning:** Are students able to attend and listen to information shared orally by the teacher? Can students use the tools provided to collect information (cue card, place mat)? Are students able to share their information in a meaningful way and learn from what others are sharing? Are students able to identify additional information they are interested in and locate it through research? Can they evaluate the credibility of different sources? Can they identify the characteristics of an effective informational video?

**Assessment as Learning:** Are students able to actively listen to information provided orally and in video format and record 5-8 main points to share? Are students able to identify the characteristics of an effective social media page? Are they able to create a social media page containing essential biographical information and the critical criteria as developed by the class? Were students able to identify the characteristics of Jean Vanier that make him an agent of change? Are students able to identify attitudinal barriers and strategies to address them? Are students able to commit to an action plan to address attitudinal barriers?

## Consolidation

Using probing questions if necessary, try to elicit the key ideas related to the Accessibility Awareness statements for this unit:

- Empathy for others and respect for the dignity of all persons are essential characteristics of an inclusive classroom, school and society.
- The biggest barriers to accessibility are attitude and lack of awareness.
- Students have an important voice and a valuable role to play in advocating for change in their classrooms, their schools and their community.

Possible questions: Do you think Jean Vanier has been an agent for change? Why or why not? How does Jean Vanier’s work demonstrate the importance of respect for the dignity of all persons? What efforts has he made to challenge attitudinal barriers with respect to persons with developmental disabilities? Through learning about Jean Vanier, has your attitude towards people with developmental disabilities changed in any way? Are there attitudinal barriers that impact people with developmental disabilities in our classroom/school/community? In what ways do you think you, as students, could be agents of change in our school and our community?



## Teacher Reflection

Did I incorporate student friendly teaching strategies that support best practices that incorporate accessible methods and materials to reach as many students as possible?

Are the resources I selected appropriate for the grade level and varied to meet the needs of all my students?

If the resources I selected presented aspects of accessibility awareness, was the perspective strength based?

Did I use differentiated instruction and assessment to meet the varying learning styles of my students?

Were all my students engaged at all steps of the lesson? How do I know?

Were my assessment procedures fair and equitable? Have I demonstrated best practices and met the individual needs of my students? Have I accommodated in fair and equitable ways for students with special learning needs?

How do I ensure that the concept of accessibility is not only discussed but embedded in all conversation topics taught in the classroom?

How could this lesson be improved in the future?

How can I improve my own teaching practice to better address accessibility awareness issues?

How do I help promote accessibility awareness across my school and school board and share the results with parents and colleagues?



## Appendix A

### Jean Vanier

#### **A Young Person who Followed his Heart; A Man who is Changing our World!**

Jean Vanier has made a difference in the lives of countless people around the world, those with disabilities, their families, and the many young people who have chosen to help in L'Arche communities.

Jean was born in Geneva, Switzerland, where his father was serving as a Canadian diplomat.\* In the 1930s, the family moved to England where Jean attended school until he was eleven.

Because of his father's job, Jean lived in many different countries. The family, which would include five children, moved often but, like their parents, they kept close ties with Canada and grew up speaking both French and English.

At the outbreak of World War II, Jean's father was posted to Paris where Jean attended a French school. In 1940, when the armies of Nazi Germany were poised to attack Paris, the Vanier family fled the city and headed south to the port of Bordeaux. They managed to escape on an over-crowded refugee boat bound for England. This was Jean's first glimpse of the appalling situation faced by many refugees.

The Vaniers returned home to Quebec where Jean attended school. War-time Europe had made a strong impression on him and he felt it was his duty to help out. He was just 13 when he followed his heart and secretly prepared an application to England's Royal Naval College, then asked his father's permission to go. His father's answer was simple; "I trust you," he said. It was a remarkable response considering that his son would have to cross the Atlantic during the full heat of the war when ships were being torpedoed, then start a new life far from home. Jean has often spoken of the importance to him of his father's trust at that time.

Jean became a naval cadet and an officer in the British Navy, and, later, the Canadian Navy. He was well known for his sense of fun and also for his deep concern for those serving under him. He knew about the suffering life can hold. For instance, at 17, on leave in Paris after the war, he accompanied his mother to the railway station to meet starving Holocaust survivors and was shocked at the cruel things human beings can do to each other. In his early 20s, he decided to leave the navy and return to Paris to begin university studies philosophy. He received his doctorate, then taught philosophy at St. Michael's College in Toronto.



Still searching for a career that would fulfill him both intellectually and spiritually, he visited his spiritual mentor, Father Thomas Philippe. At the time, Father Thomas was a chaplain at an institution for people with developmental disabilities near Paris. Jean was disturbed to see the dreadful conditions in which these people were living – locked away from the rest of society, and leading dismal, unproductive lives. “There must be a better way for them to live”, Father Thomas remarked. Jean was up to the challenge. Once again, he chose to follow his heart and took a risk. In 1964, he bought a small house in the French village of Trosly-Breuil and invited two men from an institution to share it with him. He called the house “L’Arche,” after Noah’s Ark.

Immediately, young people began to come from Canada and from other parts of the world to help and share life in this new kind of community. Jean knew that in giving of themselves, both the young people who came to help (the “assistants”) and those with disabilities would be enriched. In L’Arche, each person is recognized and helps to bring his or her gifts. Many assistants say that their experience in a L’Arche community has helped them grow personally and find meaning and direction in life.

Today, there are 136 L’Arche communities in 37 countries on six continents. Jean also co-founded an international support movement for families of people with disabilities. It is called Faith and Light and now includes over 1700 groups around the world.

Jean still lives in the first L’Arche community, in France. He travels abroad less today but continues to write and to give many talks and retreats, especially to young people. He often highlights the plight of those who are marginalized, including the homeless and refugees, and he encourages young people to become “artisans of peace” who work to create a world where everyone belongs and can contribute. He also continues to encourage existing and new communities where people who have intellectual disabilities and the assistants who come to help, share life together. Maclean’s magazine has called him “a Canadian who inspires the world.”

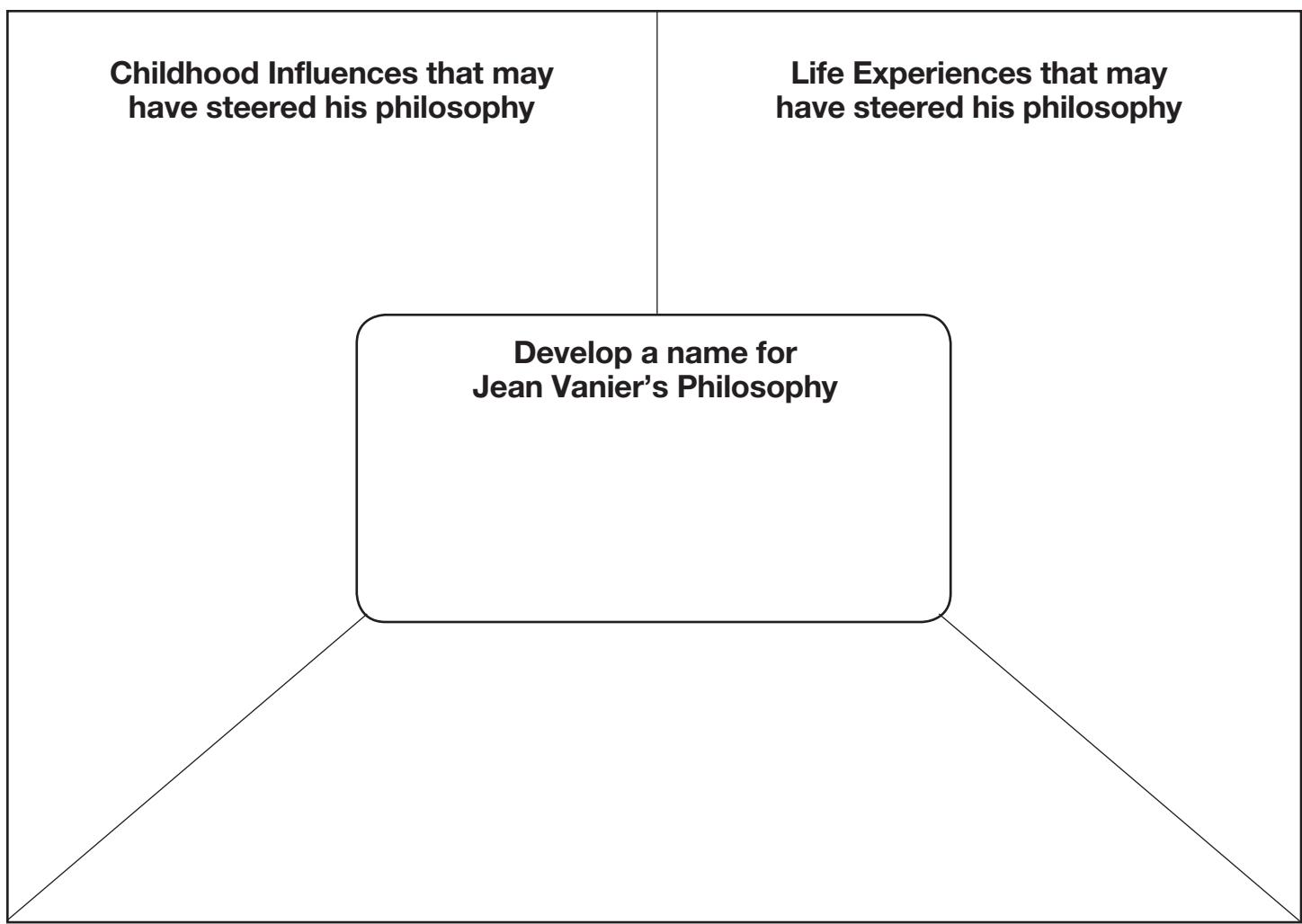
The source for this material on Jean Vanier is the “Study Guide” for the film, “Belonging: The Search for Acceptance” (Discussion Version). The film and Guide, both approved by Curriculum Services Canada, are available as a kit from L’Arche Canada. This excerpt is used with permission.

The newest website on Jean Vanier is the L’Arche Canada website: [www.larche.ca](http://www.larche.ca).



## Appendix B

Jean Vanier: A Young Person who Followed his Heart; A Man who is Changing our World





## Appendix C

### EXIT CARD

3	Identify three strategies to address attitudinal barriers. • • •
2	What two questions do you have regarding organizations or institutions that support barriers? • •
1	What is one way you will apply Vanier’s philosophy to positively influence our school culture/community? •

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