Mother Teresa

Pre-reading

Questions:
- What do you know about Mother Teresa?
- What would you like to know about her?

Definitions:
- Nobel Peace Prize – a prize given for outstanding achievement in the promotion of world peace
- Promote – to support the growth or development of something

Reading

Mother Teresa was born in 1910 in what is now Macedonia. She was given the name Agnes by her Catholic parents, and was the youngest of three children. Early in her life, about age 12, Teresa felt a strong call to help the poor. She knew her vocation was missionary work.

At the age of 18 she left for Ireland to join the Sisters of Loreto. This community of nuns had missions in India. After a few months of training in Dublin, she was sent to India. On May 24, 1931, she took her first vows as a nun. She chose the name Sister Mary Teresa. She took her final vows in May, 1937. It was then that she was given the religious title of Mother Teresa.

From 1931 to 1948 Mother Teresa taught at St. Mary's High School in Calcutta. The suffering and poverty she saw in Calcutta greatly affected her. In 1948 she received permission from her superiors to leave the high school.

Mother Teresa devoted herself to working among the poorest of the poor in the slums of Calcutta. She was known as the saint of the gutters. With no money, she started an open-air school for slum children. Soon she was joined by volunteer helpers. Financial help started coming from church organizations. This made it possible for her work to grow.

In 1950 Mother Teresa started the Missionaries of Charity to care for the sick and poor. She said the Mission was to care for “the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, and the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, and uncared for throughout society.”

Mother Teresa opened the “Home for the Dying,” a free hospice for the very poor. Her work grew and grew. By the 1960’s there were hospices, orphanages, and leper houses all over India. Her work soon spread throughout the world. By 1990 there were 25 centers in other countries.

She received the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize for her tireless work for the poorest of the poor. She refused the ceremonial banquet given to award winners. She instead asked that the $6,000 banquet fund be given to the poor in Calcutta. When Mother Teresa received her prize, she was asked, “What can we do to promote world peace?” Her answer was, “Go home and love your family.”

Mother Teresa died in September 1997 at the age of 87. In 1999, Time magazine included her in their “100 Heroes and Icons of the 20th Century.”
Understanding

1. In Calcutta, Mother Teresa was known as what? _____________________________________________
   _____________________________________________

2. Why do you think this name was given to her? _____________________________________________
   _____________________________________________

3. What does the word **vocation** mean? _____________________________________________
   _____________________________________________

4. Mother Teresa belongs to what religious faith? _____________________________________________
   _____________________________________________

5. In what country did Mother Teresa do most of her work? ______________________________________
   _____________________________________________

6. What is a **hospice**? _____________________________________________
   _____________________________________________

7. How did Mother Teresa believe world peace could be promoted? ______________________________________
   _____________________________________________

Writing

**Option A:** How would you respond to the question, “What can we do to promote world peace?”

**Option B:** In your own words, summarize the story.

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Mother Teresa – Level 7.5