

Lesson Plans for Catholic Social Teaching

Correlated with Curriculum Guidelines for Adolescent Catechesis and Confirmation, Diocese of Buffalo, 2004.

Lesson Plan #1: *Church and Social Justice* (Catholic Social Teaching pp.91 – 106)

Opening Prayer: (Light a candle in the center) sing “*Christ, Be Our Light*” by Bernadette Farrell, “*Envía Tu Espíritu*”, Bob Hurd – from Spirit and Song, OCP Publications or another song with similar theme

Scripture Reading: Luke 11:33-36

Silent reflection – each young person will be given time to reflect and write on a piece of paper the answers to the following questions.

Where are some of the places in this world which needs Gods light...

Where are some of the places we need to shine our light of Christ to others...

When everyone is done than they will be asked to share their response by Lord the world needs your light in...each one goes around and responds.
Lord let my light shine on...each one goes around and responds.

Lord Jesus, You are our light and we are longing to be your light in this world as you have asked us to be. Help and guide us today as we learn about the Social teaching of the Church. Open our eyes, minds, hearts and ears to all that you want us to learn.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lesson:

Everyone will be given a handout with the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching and one of the world issues that they are to work on as a group. This will involved handing out this the week before class and asking the teens to do some research on this issue for at least 1/2 hour before class and bring what they found so that they can work on it together as a group. Research can be done via websites, Justice, Church, documents, interviews, media etc.

What are the issues surrounding this? Who is suffering? What are the problems?

What are some of the stories?

What does the Bible say? What does the Church say?

What are some things that you learned about this issue you didn't know before? Where there any surprises?

What are the signs of hope?

What are some of the actions we can take as Catholic youth to make this world issue better?

Small group: Gather together and answer the questions that they were given as homework. They will be given the opportunity to tell the larger group what they learned as a group and why the Social teaching of the Church is so important to the world today.

Large Group: Each small group reports to the large group their findings. Give time for questions and discussion and then the next group reports.

Closing prayer:

A PRAYER - LET PEACE BEGIN WITH ME

Peace is such an elusive thing, Lord, we seek it constantly.

Without peace, we are in a state of confusion.

Our life is filled with fear, filled with people afraid to love.

Our hearts are heavy Lord, the absence of peace destroys our spirit.

Our souls feel overburdened, our hearts are weighted down with anxiety.

We learn to fear the uncertainty of the day.

We learn to dread the darkness of the night.

*We implore you - no - we beg you, beseech you,
plead with you o dear Lord,*

We need you to show us the way.

Only you can bring us the real and lasting peace we need.

Only you can save us from those who seek to harm us.

And so - here I am Lord, begin with me.

Let me be your instrument, use me - I am your tool .

Let me have the love, the fellowship, give me the patience,

Fill me with the strength, the energy, I am trying to say -

that if you don't mind, Lord - Give me - just a little bit of you.

*Then peace will begin with me, And it can spread like a wild fire -
one to another - one and they to another,*

Until peace is more than just a word, much more than just a dream.

Peace will become the way we are - It will flow from us like a lifeline.

Only with you my beloved God, my precious Lord -- Will peace begin with me.

Mary Craig - 1998 - St. Martin de Porres Parish

1. Life and dignity of human persons: Every human person is created in the image and likeness of God; therefore, human life is sacred and must be treated with dignity.

THE NUMBER OF AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS KILLED

2. A call to family, community and participation: The human person is not only sacred but inherently social.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

3. As social beings, our relationships are governed by a web of rights and responsibilities.

Each person has a fundamental right to life and to those things that allow one to live a decent life - faith, family, food, shelter, health care, housing, education, employment.

MIGRANT FAMILIES

A Member of the Division of Catholic Education

4. The Bible and the Church call on all of us to embrace a **preferential love of the poor and vulnerable.**

A GROWING GAP BETWEEN IMPOVERISHES AND WEALTHY PEOPLE AND NATIONS

5. **The dignity of work and the rights of workers:** The economy must serve people, not the other way around!

CHILD LABOR

6. **Solidarity:** Because of the interdependence of creation, we have a moral responsibility to commit ourselves to the common good everywhere.

SMALL AND LARGE SCALE CONFLICTS

7. **Care for God's creation:** Our stewardship of the earth is a kind of participation in God's act of creating and sustaining the world.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION

Compiled and written by Luz Milagros Ramos, Office of Cultural Diversity
Phone (716) 847-2212
Email: mramos@buffalodiocese.org

Lesson Plan #2: *Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers* (Catholic Social Teaching pp.103-104)

The struggle for worker’s rights has been a long and difficult one. Before the industrial revolution, work was usually agricultural--families worked together on farms-- each person contributing to the labor, each person dependent on the others for survival. Those who were involved in the manufacture of products did so in small shops-- where they spent years apprenticing a craft. Work was personal, both in the way the work was done and in the product that was produced.

With the advent of modern industry in the eighteenth century, many people were forced to leave their farms or shops – entering the often-impersonal atmosphere of factories. Given the prevailing economic philosophy of the day--that is the *laissez faire* capitalism—human labor was seen as being yet another form of capital. Laborers were used as far as they proved productive and discarded when broken or worn out. Safety and rest were not concerns. Given the large numbers of workers available, good wages were hard to come by as well. After all, if a person was not satisfied with his wages or working conditions, plenty of others would be willing to take his place.

In the United States, workers began to unionize. They were often met with violent, brutal resistance. The newly formed unions—often secret societies—ranged from the violent mineworkers of eastern Pennsylvania who formed the Molly Maguires, to the more peaceful Knights of Labor.

The Church responded to these movements in the early 1890s with Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*. In this landmark document, the pope gave official approval to the unionization movement in particular and the cause of workers’ rights in general. Still, he noted the importance of a harmonious relationship between labor and capital. This forms the beginning of the current era of Catholic social justice and its promotion of the rights and responsibilities of working people.

A. Introduce the idea of workers’ rights. In the discussion note that “with every right comes a responsibility”.

RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
work	work if one is able
just wage	work hard and honestly
rest	engage in healthy recreation, get proper rest
safe workplace	work carefully, note any safety problems to employers
association (union)	use to present problems to employers, help other members perfect their crafts, do not use to bully employers
strike	use only as a last resort, be mind-ful of responsibility to the common good

B. Have the students read the following Scripture passages and answer the questions that follow. (Have them work either individually or in a small group.)

Read Proverbs 6:6-11

1. Whom should we imitate when we work?
2. What will happen to us if we are too lazy?

Lesson Plan #3: *Solidarity – Catholic Advocacy* (Catholic Social Teaching pp. 104-105)

SUPPLIES: pencils/pens
Ball or balloon for the first activity
Ball of yarn
Copies of Prayer of St. Francis
Newsprint with Works of Mercy (fill in the blank format as noted in the lesson plan below**)

TIPS FOR FACILITATING DISCUSSION

Let them answer the questions – waiting for answers is important
Reflective listening – repeat back what they say so that everyone hears it
As discussion goes on invite responses from the introverts (more quiet students)

*Please note that the possible discussion responses in italics are only suggestions. Feel free to come up with other discussion questions. The young people’s responses may take the discussion in a different direction than given in the lesson plan. If that direction corresponds to the theme facilitate it through that.

ACTIVITY: Ask for a volunteer. Have him/her stand at the front of the room and place a pencil across the front of his/her feet. Tell him/her that his/her feet cannot move past the pencil. Make sure you have the person stand in a position so that there is plenty of room in front of him/her to do the rest of the activity. Place a ball a distance in front of the pencil – enough so that he/she can reach the ball. Tell him/her to get the ball and remind him/her to keep his/her feet behind the pencil. Take the ball from him/her and move it a further distance away (still enough for him/her to reach) and instruct him/her to get the ball again. Continue to do this until the ball gets far enough out that he/she cannot reach it no matter what he/she does. The goal is to get the person to ask someone else in the room to get the ball for him/her. The directions never stated that they could not ask someone for help.

10 min

DISCUSSION OF ACTIVITY: Ask the young people what happened during the activity? Ask them what they think the purpose/point of the activity was?

To remind us that we need to help one another

SUMMARY: As Catholic Christians we are called to help one another. The Catholic Social Teaching of Solidarity states that we have a moral responsibility to commit ourselves to the common good of all people. It is our responsibility to help one another.

ACTIVITY: Depending on the size of your group you may want to divide them into groups of two or three people for this activity. Give each group a piece of paper and a pencil/pen. Each group is to choose one person who they will use for their totaling. The group needs to note the monetary cost for each item on that person. This includes their pants, shoes, shirt, jewelry, etc. Girls do not need to include their purses or the contents and guys do not need to include their wallets. Each group is to figure out the amounts and add them up to determine the total dollar amount on that person.

20 min.

Step One: Ask the groups to report their total dollar amounts.

Step Two: Have each group divide their amount by 30. Then ask each group to report that figure to the large group. Then explain that \$30 represents the amount of educating a child for a year in some third world countries.

DISCUSSION OF ACTIVITY: Ask the students what they think this activity has to do with the topic of Solidarity?

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Part of our responsibility of helping others means being aware of our resources!

Sharing what we have is important

How far do you think our responsibility to help others extends? Just inside our families and communities?

We are called to help everyone – locally and globally

What was the world's response when the Tsunami hit?

Everyone was trying to send aid

Fundraisers and benefits were held to raise funds

The Tsunami relief is one example of solidarity in action. That is a particular event that stands out, but people need our help all the time. Catholic Charities is one of our church's means for helping others.

BRAINSTORMING WITH THE YARN WEB

30 min.

Have the young people sit in a circle. You start by holding a ball of yarn and tossing it to someone across the circle. You need to hold the end of the yarn when you toss the ball so that a string of yarn connects you with the person you threw it to. That person then tosses the ball to someone else across the circle while holding his/her strand of yarn that will now connect the three of you. This pattern continues until everyone has a piece of the yarn. No one receives it twice. That is how you create the yarn web.

When the yarn web is formed (by tossing the ball of yarn from one person to another) the person who receives it needs to state one way that he/she thinks we can live out our commitment to insuring the common good of all people. This is a brainstorming process so no idea is incorrect and ideas should not be repeated.

Once the yarn web is formed invite the young people to hold their strand up high so that all of you can look up at the web. Then they can bring it back down. Ask them what they notice about the web. Their observations may include:

We are all connected

Every person is needed in order for the web to exist

Ask every other person to drop their strand of yarn in front of them. Note what happens to the web.

It is not complete without everyone holding his or her part

The web still exists even though it is not as strong as it was before

When someone is weak, the rest of the web can hold him or her up

Now you will have the young people wind the web back up. You will go in reverse order of the web creation and each person will wind his or her string back onto the yarn ball. This time each young person needs to answer the question: What is meant by the statement: "We are a global family?" No two answers can be the same.

****SOLIDARITY AND THE WORKS OF MERCY**

Our Catholic Church gives us specific examples of ways to live our commitment to the common good. See if the young people can fill in the blanks to state the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. You can write these on newsprint before the session and put them on the board at this time. The words in italics would be the blank lines in the statements.

10 min.

Corporal Works of Mercy

1. To *feed* the hungry.
2. To give drink to the *thirsty*.
3. To clothe the *naked*.

4. To *visit* the imprisoned.
5. To *shelter* the homeless.
6. To visit the *sick*.
7. To bury the *dead*.

Spiritual Works of Mercy

1. To admonish the *sinner*.
2. To instruct the *ignorant*.
3. To *counsel* the doubtful.
4. To *comfort* the sorrowful.
5. To bear *wrongs* patiently.
6. To *forgive* all injuries.
7. To pray for the *living* and the dead.

CLOSURE:

Get 3/5 responses to the following depending on time:

I now know . . .
I still wonder about . . .
I understand . . .

5 min.

CLOSING PRAYER: **Pray together the Prayer of St. Francis.**

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace,
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
and to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

Compiled and written by Denise Heineman York, Department of Youth and Young Adult
Ministry

Phone (716) 847-8789

Email: dyork@buffalodiocese.org

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