

One Love, One Life, One Need

DOCTRINAL ELEMENT

Life in Christ

TOPIC

The Human Community and Solidarity

GOAL

The goal for this session is to introduce the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, primarily focusing on the human community and our call to solidarity. The session will discuss the origin and types of suffering, as well as secular vs. Christian views on human community and solidarity. Teens will learn about the two feet of social justice, Charity and Justice, as well as their responsibility to pursue justice and peace for all.

SECONDARY RELIGION GUIDELINES

(II.II.C.3.a, b)

SCRIPTURE

Jesus as the Word- Jn 1:3-14

Forgiveness- Mt 18:20

Community- Acts 2:42-47; Acts 4:32-37;

Gal 3:28-29; Heb 10:24-25; Ps 133

Prayer- Eph 6:18; Js 5:13-20

One Body- Eph 4:16; 1 Cor 12 4-7; Mt 25:31-46

Justice- Micah 6:8; Lk 3:10-14

Service- 1 Pt 4:10-11; Mt. 20:26-28

Solidarity- 1 Cor 12:24-26; Jn 13:34-35

CATECHISM

Human Vocation- 1877-1878, 1886, 1890

Living in Society- 1879-1882, 1886, 1891-1893

Subsidiarity- 1883-1885, 1894

Conversion of Society- 1886-1889, 1895-1896

Solidarity- 1939-1948

Social Doctrine of the Church- 2419

GOLDEN THREADS

The Dignity of the Human Person: Since God created each person in his image and likeness, each person has the right to a dignified life where the basic needs of life are met. As a human community we are responsible to uphold the dignity of each person in both political and economic arenas.

The Church: We, the Church, receive the truth about the human person and what it means to live in community and solidarity through the teachings of the Gospel. Therefore, we are responsible as Church to work for the good of each person, both here on Earth and in Heaven, and for the transformation of society through living out the authentic teachings of the Gospels.

ANNUAL THEME RELEVANCE

Built on Christ. As a human community working toward solidarity, we must make our decisions based on Christ's teachings of justice and peace and the wisdom found in the Gospels. Only by building our society on Christ will we truly be able to uphold the dignity and respect that each person deserves.

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PROCLAMATION

All of humanity shares in a common beginning and end which is God himself. God in the Trinity is a communion of persons and likewise, we are bound together in a fraternal relationship and are called to love and support one another. (CCC 1878)

Our very nature is social and requires of us to live in community and partake in society. We are all mutually dependent on one another. We are all bound in unity through the Truth of Jesus Christ which is greater than any one of us. (CCC 1879-80)

Solidarity is a Christian virtue. It does not only pertain to being in solidarity through material goods but also the sharing of spiritual goods. Sometimes it is referred to as Christian friendship or Christian brotherhood. It exists on various levels, between the poor and the rich, employers and employees, within the poor themselves, and among different countries and cultures as well. Solidarity upholds respect for the human person and their dignity. (CCC 1939-48)

The common good is when all people are allowed to reach their greatest potential without the impediment of others or the government. It has three parts to it which include: respect for the person and their inalienable rights, social well-being and development of the group as a whole, and peace which comes from stability of a justice and ordered society. (CCC 1905-1912)

The Seven Main Principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST)

(USCCB: Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions)

Life and Dignity of the Human Person - As Catholics we believe that all human life is sacred and that each person is made in the image and likeness of God. Everyone has an inherent dignity that deserves respect above anything from the material world. The Church believes that the principle of human dignity should be the fundamental basis for all things moral in our society. This principle of life and human dignity is the foundation for all the other principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

Call to Family, Community, and Participation - People are not only sacred beings, but also social beings. Marriage and the family are central to all other social institutions. Marriage and family life must be supported and encouraged if society is to live and work as a community where all participate to create systems for the common good of all.

Rights and Responsibilities - Human dignity must be protected through human rights and responsibilities. A society will only form into a healthy community if human dignity is upheld. All people have the fundamental right to life and to the basic needs for human decency.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable - We are called to always remember the poor and the vulnerable. Tradition reminds us that in the Last Judgment the needs of the poor and vulnerable will be placed before all others. This is not really an option but a moral obligation as Christians to care for those that have less than we have ourselves both physically and spiritually.

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Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers - People were not created for the economy but rather the economy for the people. Work is one way to participate in God's creation. The dignity of work is only protected when basic rights of workers are respected.

Solidarity - We are our brother's and sister's keepers regardless of where they are in the world. We are all connected and are all one global family. No matter what our differences are we must strive for peace and justice. Pope Paul VI taught, "If you want peace, work for justice."

Care for God's Creation - We are called to care for and protect both people and the planet. Caring for the environment is a requirement of our faith that has moral and ethical implications.

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

YouTube

- Filipino Children that eat food from the garbage everyday
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l9KVcCrwFY&feature=related>
- Video on Clean Water for World Water Day and Charity Water Website
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEnrE4iMBU&feature=related>
- Colors of Catholic Social Teaching
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rI6QPXqjFPo&feature=fvw>
- Short Video challenging youth to speak up
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9IGpafO6Yo>

Websites

- San Damiano Foundation- This site has many DVD's they have created on social justice issues. You would have to purchase them, but they are well done and could be used again.
 - <http://www.sandamianofoundation.org/index.html>
- Principles of Catholic Social Teaching from the USCCB
 - <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/projects/socialteaching/excerpt.shtml>
- Catholic Campaign for Human Development- poverty website
 - <http://www.usccb.org/cchd/povertyusa/index.htm>
- Catholic Social Teaching Scripture Guide- divided by principle with a full page of scripture for each
 - <http://www.usccb.org/cchd/2010-02-22-cst-scripture-guide.pdf>
- Short Video on Poverty in the United States from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development
 - <http://www.usccb.org/cchd/povertyusa/tour.htm>
- Catholic Campaign for Human Development has "A Catholic Call to Justice: An Activity Book for Raising Awareness of Social Justice Issues"- This is filled with a planned activity, reflection questions and scripture for each of the Seven Catholic Social Teaching Principles.
 - <http://www.usccb.org/cchd/5-239.pdf>
- Education for Justice- this site has movie reviews, discussion handouts, media options to discuss social justice and Catholic Social Teaching
 - <http://www.educationforjustice.org/media-faith-culture>

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- Charity Water Website
 - <http://www.charitywater.org/>

Movies

- “When Did I See You Hungry?”- A Film by Gerard Thomas Straub; narrated by Martin Sheen. This 37 minute documentary shows first hand photography of the poorest areas of twenty-nine cities in nine different countries around the world. This would be very good for introducing extreme poverty to teenagers.
- “Radio” - helping those in need
- “Daredevil” - justice and mercy
- “Antwone Fisher” - Church as community for all

Songs:

- “Hold Us Together” by Matt Maher
- “Give Us Clean Hands” by Chris Tomlin
- “Carry You to Jesus” by Steven Curtis Chapman
- “I’ll Be There” by Jackson 5
- “One” by U2

OTHER RESOURCES

- *Justice and Service*, Chapter 6, CDA Youth Ministry Resource Manual
There are many great resources and ideas in this chapter on topics such as Catholic Social Teaching, advocacy, suggestions for justice and service programs, immigration teachings, politics, respect life teachings and lists for local social service organizations.
- *Group’s Blockbuster Movie Illustrations* by Bryan Belknap
 - “Radio” pg. 64, “Daredevil” pg. 74, “Antwone Fisher” pg. 25

GATHER

Environment

The environment of the evening should allow for openness and reflection. Since the teens will be learning about human community and solidarity, they should feel more connected to one another and to all of humanity by the end of the session. Photos of different cultures and people from around the world would be one way to create a feeling of solidarity and highlight the injustices throughout the world. It is important to help them realize the plight of others, but not to dampen their spirits. They should leave feeling hopeful and excited that they can make a difference in the lives of others!

Icebreaker: *Back to Back*

In this game, two people begin by sitting back to back and linking their arms with one another. The goal is to stand straight up without using their hands to touch the ground. Once a team is successful, have them join another team and try to do this as a group of four. Continue to combine groups until everybody in the room does this together as one large group. The teens will be amazed at how it works!

The Point: This is a great activity for showing teens the value of teamwork. It would be nearly impossible to accomplish this by yourself.

(Source: <http://www.thesource4ym.com/videoclips/videoclip.asp?ID=4>)

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Opening Prayer

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me a channel of your peace,
that where there is hatred, I may bring love;
that where there is wrong,
I may bring the spirit of forgiveness;
that where there is discord, I may bring harmony;
that where there is error, I may bring truth;
that where there is doubt, I may bring faith;
that where there is despair, I may bring hope;
that where there is darkness, I may bring light;
that where there is sadness, I may bring joy.
Lord, grant that I may seek rather to
comfort than to be comforted;
to understand, than to be understood;
to love, than to be loved.
For it is by giving that one receives.
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.
It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen.

OR

Prayer for community

Embracing Father,
you grace each of us with equal measure in your love.
Let us learn to love our neighbors more deeply,
so that we can create
peaceful and just communities.
Inspire us to use our creative energies
to build the structures we need
to overcome the obstacles
of intolerance and indifference.
May Jesus provide us the example needed
and send the Spirit to warm our hearts for the journey.
Amen.

EXPLANATION

Have you ever gone an entire day without talking to anyone? Or have you perhaps had moments when you tried to get in contact with a few of your friends and no one would answer their phone? How did this make you feel? Did you feel lonely? Well of course you did! It is only natural to feel the need for friendship and companionship from others because it is written into our very nature as human beings. We are social creatures and we are dependent on one another in our families, in our churches, in our schools, in our society and in the world at large. The phrase, “no man is an island” may sound cliché but it is absolutely true of us as humans. We cannot exist on our own. Think of even your most introverted or isolated friend that seems to prefer to spend a lot of time by themselves. Even they need others in their life.

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Where does this inherent social necessity come from? As Catholic Christians we believe in the Trinity: God is a communion of three persons, but still one God. We also believe that we were made in his image and likeness. If we put those two beliefs together, we can see why we are social creatures that are dependent on one another. Since we are images of God, and God is a communion of persons, he created us to need one another and to serve one another in humility. To put it simply; we are social beings because God himself is a communion of persons. It is also because of this likeness that we share with God, that the command to “Love your neighbor as yourself” is such an integral part of who we are as human beings and especially as Christians. The love of neighbor truly cannot be separated from the love of God (CCC 1878). When we live in community and love our neighbor, we are also loving God.

There are a lot of words and phrases these days that talk about unity and solidarity, thanks to globalization and mass media coverage. We often hear terms such as “one human family,” “the world community,” “human and community development,” “international human solidarity” and “the need for peace and unity among all peoples,” etc. These are terms you may have heard from secular organizations, perhaps government based or non-profit based organizations. These organizations work to uphold basic human rights around the world such as clean water, food, fair wages, freedom from violence, etc. As Catholics, we have two terms which address these same issues; they are “human community” and “solidarity.” These terms are part of a greater principle called “Catholic Social Teaching”.

The Catechism defines human community as a group of persons bound together by something greater than themselves. As Christians we believe this reality to be God himself, the creator of all peoples, which bind us all together as a human community. In light of the catechism, solidarity can mean “friendship” or “social charity” (CCC 1939). We can show solidarity through material goods as well as spiritual goods.

For a good example of the difference between secular views and Christian views on the human community and solidarity we can look at the goals set out for *International Human Solidarity Day*. International Human Solidarity Day was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2005 as an initiative in the fight against poverty. The goals include:

- A day to celebrate our unity in diversity
- A day to remind governments to respect their commitments to international agreements
- A day to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity
- A day to encourage debate on the ways to promote solidarity for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals including poverty eradication
- A day of action to encourage new initiatives for poverty eradication

Can you see the difference in the loose way the secular world defines unity and solidarity as simply being something that takes care of the material goals of people? Did the goals mention anything about sharing in a common dignity as humans or the fact that we are all spiritually bound through God in a true Christian brotherhood?

When we speak about the human community from a Christian perspective we are reminded of what St. Paul writes to the Corinthians about being one body with many different parts. (*Read 1 Cor. 12:12-26*) There are many important things we can get out of what St. Paul is saying here. First, as humans, all of us share in God’s image and likeness, we make up one

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body. And because we make up one body, one human community we are bound together in the solidarity of a Christian brotherhood. Secondly, we are all dependent on one another and we all serve in unique and irreplaceable roles in this life that we share together. Thirdly, and what I believe sets us apart as Christians, is the belief that even the weakest members of society or those that seem to contribute the least to society are nevertheless of GREAT VALUE to our one body that we share.

We read again what St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians,

“...The parts of the body which seem to be weaker are *indispensable*, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable *we invest with the greater honor*, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, (LISTEN UP HERE!) *that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together* (1 Corinthians 12:22-26).”

THIS is the unique call and responsibility we have as Christians to the principles of “human community” and “solidarity.” We cannot allow there to be such great disparity in resources to those parts of our body in Africa that do not even have enough food to eat or fresh water to drink. We cannot allow the poor and underprivileged to go uneducated by never teaching them to read or write. We are responsible for others because they are a part of the Body of Christ and we are a part of that Body as well. The New Commandment that we are given by Jesus in St. John’s Gospel is “love one another.” (*Read Jn. 13:34-35*) It is the love for our weaker members which sets us apart as Christians and disciples of Christ. If we want to truly support the Body of Christ, we must do our very best to love one another as God has first loved us.

Now that we have an idea about what human community and solidarity mean in terms of our Catholic faith, we must look at a very common and relevant question. Why is there suffering in the world? Granted, we could give an entire talk on this subject, but we will only give a few basic points so we can further talk about the social justice issues behind suffering. So quick question: Was suffering part of God’s original plan for humanity? (*Pause*) No! God did not create man and say to himself, “Oh, I think that suffering would be something I want my creatures to have to face.” As you may recall in the book of Genesis when Adam and Eve first sinned, this is when suffering entered the world. Eve now had labor pains in birth and Adam suffered sore backs and sunburn from tilling and planting the crops. So once sin entered the world, pain and suffering also entered. Since we all have free will, we have the ability to choose right from wrong. When we choose what is wrong we hurt people. We all contribute to the suffering in the world, the suffering experienced by our one Body of Christ, because all of us are sinful and imperfect.

The next question is: What types of suffering are there? Hint: think about the injustices you see in the world. (*Give teens time to really answer this question out loud.*) Good. We see that people suffer from unemployment, lack of education, lack of healthcare, homelessness, hunger, thirst, violence, crime, disease etc. These are all physical sufferings that in some way affect the basic needs of the body. What about social sufferings? (*i.e., racism, stereotyping, loneliness, feeling worthless, feeling unsafe, lack of citizenship, etc.*) The list of sufferings is endless, really.

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Is there another type of suffering we might have missed?

What about those who do not know Jesus? Those who do not know the Gospel and the Truth that God is Love? These people suffer spiritually. Social justice is just as much about caring for the physical needs of others as it is about caring for the spiritual needs of others.

Remember what St. Paul says loud and clear, ***“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”*** This holds true for physical suffering and spiritual suffering. Likewise, when members of the body suffer from sin, both mortal and venial, the Body of Christ is weakened and the body suffers.

When there is sin in the world, sin that exists due to poor choices and lack of charity among the members of the body of Christ, we are a sick and weakened body. As Catholics we have a particular gift in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Through the sacramental act and the grace of the Holy Spirit we are able to cleanse ourselves of sin and make our body of Christ healthy again. We can also encourage our brothers and sisters to live holy lives, lives without sin, and seek forgiveness through this Sacrament. By doing this, we are building up the human community and replacing one form of solidarity with another: instead of experiencing solidarity in sinful behaviors and lifestyles, we are creating solidarity in love and peace. We are also reminded in the Gospel of St. Matthew that we will be held responsible for the least among us. (*Read Matthew 25:34-40*) When we help the least of our brothers and sisters, we are actually helping Christ. This is what it means to be in solidarity with others. We are present to them when they are most in need whether it be physical needs of food, hunger, or shelter; social needs such as friendship or respect; or spiritual needs such as forgiveness, and to be loved and valued for who you are.

As mentioned earlier, human community and solidarity are two principles that fall under a greater umbrella called Catholic Social Teaching. As Catholics, the foundation for all our teachings on social justice is based on these teachings. These principles advise us in our different responsibilities to protect and uphold the dignity of our brothers and sisters. Other principles in addition to human community and solidarity include: the care of God’s creation, the dignity of work and the right of workers, the option for the poor and vulnerable, and the rights and responsibilities that belong to each human being. Many of these principles will be discussed in further sessions.

When we think about practically fulfilling our responsibilities listed in Catholic Social Teaching, it is helpful to picture the image of two feet. You are probably wondering WHAT am I talking about?! In order to help us keep in mind both broad goals and focused goals when trying to aid in social justice efforts, the Church gives us the image of “the two feet of social justice.” We believe that we must participate with two strong feet, one of Charity and one of Justice.

Okay, so what does that mean exactly? Isn’t helping out the poor and homeless all the same? It’s helping someone in need right?

As Christians, we don’t believe that we are called to just put a band-aid on a situation, such as simply giving out food or money, without working to change the actual problem that is causing someone to live in poverty. The first is an example of Charity (giving food to the hungry or money to those in need) the second is an example of Justice (working to change what is causing the hunger or poverty). Just to be clear: an immediate need would be, “I’m

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hungry and I have nothing to eat.” A social change that needs to be made would be “I need a job that pays me more than minimum wage so I can pay my rent and feed my family.”

The foot of Charity believes that we are not just giving a hand out to those that suffer but fulfilling our obligation as stronger or more privileged members of the body to help the other members by giving to them what they rightfully need to live a life of dignity. We believe in charity because Christ has loved us as small, weak, and sinful as we are and he died for us so we could have everlasting life with him.

The foot of Justice believes that we must work to enact social change long-term through community projects and public policies that uphold the dignity of every human being. As able members of society, we should work to support and change laws and policies that grant every human person the basic rights of life. Does this whole idea about two feet ring any bells to a scripture passage that says “faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead?” Let’s read what it says in James (*Read James 2:14-17*) It may sound silly at first, to think that we would see someone suffering and simply say, “God Bless you” but not give them any provisions for their needs. But unfortunately we do this often when we see people on the streets, when we choose not to tithe and spend our money the way we want instead of giving God and our neighbor what is due to them. Part of our responsibility to living the Christian call of human community and solidarity is to do as it says in the book of James, not to let our faith be void of good works to accompany it. Let me tell you a short story...

There is a man named Brian that falls into a deep, dark, and cold hole. He can’t get out. Brian shouts up to a young man walking by; “Help me out of this hole. It is dark and cold and I can’t get out.” The young man throws him down his jacket and says, “Hope this keeps you warm.” A woman passes by and Brian shouts up again; “Help me out of this hole. It is dark and cold and I can’t get out.” The woman throws him down a flashlight and says, “I hope this helps you see more clearly.” Finally, a third man walks by and hears Brian’s shouting, “Help me out of this hole. It is dark and cold and I can’t get out.” He stops and says, “Hi my name is Joseph. I can help you out of that hole.” Joseph then jumps into the hole. Brian turns to the man and asks, “Why did you jump into the hole? I thought you were going to help me get out.” Brian responds, “I am going to help you. I have been in this hole before and I know how to get out of it. Follow me.”

So what can we get from this story? (*Give teens time to respond.*) We see that the first two people, who helped Brian, did so in good faith and even gave him some temporary relief to his suffering. However, neither was able to join him in solidarity and help him with his long term problem. The third person, Joseph, was able to join Brian in solidarity and help him solve his long term problem. It is important that our faith not only be put into action but that when we put it into action it does not simply remain as charity all the time but that it also takes on the role of justice.

So how can we work to build up God’s kingdom and support our fellow brothers that suffer? Pope Paul VI said, “If you want to see peace, work for justice.” What do you think this means? (*Pause and give them time to answer.*) This question gives us perspective as to why there is not peace in the world and what we can do to bring peace. Take a minute and think about the injustices that you see around your school, your neighborhood, your larger community, your country and finally the world. What are some examples? (*Give teens time to think and give you some feedback of what injustices they may have seen. This should really be a review of things you already listed in the list of sufferings.*) Now that we have named

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some injustices, let's look back at the list of the seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching and see if these injustices may, in fact, be a result of individuals and institutions ignoring or completely contradicting the Catholic teachings of social justice. (*Take a minute to connect what the teens listed as social injustices to the failure to uphold one of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.*) Some examples include:

1. *High numbers of poor and starving people → This can be traced back to the lack of work and the right of workers to make enough to sustain their family's basic needs; it also points to the ignoring or failing to care for the poor and vulnerable in a way that upholds their dignity.*
2. *Lots of city pollution that causes deaths or lack of clean water → This can be traced back to a lack of care for God's creation and unequal distribution of resources which is ultimately a basic right that belongs to all human beings.*

Frequently we label the weak, poor, and vulnerable members of society as the cause for so many problems like immigration, economic crisis, and crime, to name a few. We see them as the reason there is no peace or why there is war. I suggest that it is not the weak, poor and vulnerable who are the problems themselves but the failure of the human community, which is us, to fight in solidarity and uphold our responsibility to help make sure everyone is living a dignified life. So how CAN we truly follow through with what Pope Paul VI said, "If you want peace, work for justice"?

First and foremost may we be reminded that above all, the most important thing we can do as a part of the human community and in solidarity with others is to PRAY! We must regularly pray for peace and pray for justice. The scriptures tell us to "pray always for the needs of others." As it says in the book of James,

"Is any one among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects. Elijah was a man of like nature with ourselves and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit. My brethren, if any one among you wanders from the truth and some one brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins (James 5:13-20)."

We must not forget that it is sin which is the root of all injustice and lack of peace so if we want to begin to work for a more just and peaceful human community we must ask God for the graces to do so.

Once we have the most important element which is prayer, we must turn that faith of prayer into actions. Let's reflect on what it says in St. Luke's Gospel. (*Read Lk 3:10-14*) This passage gives us many good ideas of how to live out justice. What are some ideas that were said? (*Give the youth time to answer.*) That is right, we are called to give of what we have and only keep what we need. Think about all the STUFF that you have that you don't really need. You can try and make donations monthly to charities that distribute clothing, books,

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and items that you no longer have a use for. It is often said that if you do not use something for an entire year, it no longer truly belongs to you and you should give it to someone who can use it. Think about it! Everything we have is really a gift from God, something on loan, and in death we cannot take it with us, nor will it save us. Instead of having two of everything, try living with just one. Be content with what you have and not desire always to have more. This is hard to do in our society that focuses on materialism, but it can be done! We should also keep in mind that the goal of social justice is that we might decrease so others might increase; not that they would increase to the status of wealthy Northern Virginia, but that they have their basic human needs met and we go without our extra comforts.

Consider fasting from something. Fasting is when we intentionally give up something or go without and unite that offering to God. It is a form of penance and sacrifice. Fasting is something the Saints did regularly and it can bring about great transformation in our lives.

(Here, get your teens to interact with you. Take a few polls and get their reactions.)

- Which would be harder for you to fast from for a week: Starbucks or texting?
- What about fasting from: Facebook or listening to your IPOD?
- If you fasted from these things, what could you do with your time or your money that you might not ordinarily do? *(Ideas include: Donate the money, visit the elderly in a nursing home, or a sick friend in the hospital. Make time to volunteer at a soup kitchen or at a WorkCamp.)*

Giving of your time and talents is also a wonderful way to live out Charity and Justice. As you begin to think more about how you can support the human community and live in solidarity with those that suffer, remember all that you have been blessed with by God. Never forget to count your own blessings; oftentimes it can serve as reminder of the need to give to others who don't have what we do.

In the human community, of which we are ALL a part, we have a responsibility to ensure that each others' needs are met and to live in solidarity with all of our brothers and sisters in Christ. God helps us to fulfill this obligation to each other through grace, the Sacraments, and our lives of prayer. May we never forget to seek his guidance as we reach out to others in an effort to make sure that all people live dignified lives!

APPLICATION

Activity Option # 1: Small Group Discussions

Break teens into small groups of four or five persons. Provide them the following questions for discussion. Ask them to think critically and be honest with one another.

1. When have you felt like you were part of a community? How did this community support you? What did you contribute as a member to the community?
2. What are some examples of injustices in our society that you have seen or witnessed first hand? Have you ever been the victim of injustice? How did this make you feel?
3. What ways have you been able to show solidarity with others by thinking of the least among you? What is one way you think God is challenging you to be more involved in the two feet of social justice, Charity and Justice?

Activity Option # 2: Help a Homeless Shelter

This activity can be done many ways. First contact a local homeless shelter and ask if you can help them by making lunches, cards, or anything else that they may need. Once you have an idea of what they need gather the necessary supplies. Ask an employee of the homeless

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shelter or someone who has experienced homelessness to speak to the youth during the session. Speak to the youth about homelessness in your area and about how they can make a positive impact. Before or after you begin your project (making sandwiches, cards, etc.) have the speaker discuss homelessness and allow time for the teens to ask questions.

Optional: Ask the teens to bring in canned goods or toiletries to donate to the shelter.

Optional: Have a sleep-out to bring awareness to homelessness. It would work best as an extension of the talk and activity mentioned above. Everyone would bring sleeping bags and sleep outside for the night. People could bring guitars and sing, say the rosary, and continue discussions about social justice.

For more information about homelessness go to: <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/index.html>

Activity Option # 3: Hunger Banquet

Using the toolkit from *Oxfam* website (below), to create a hunger banquet. This activity will shed light on social justice issues around the world. Teens will get a unique perspective on the less fortunate because this evening many of them will get a feeling of what it is like to go hungry and have less than others.

- <http://actfast.oxfamamerica.org/index.php>
- <http://actfast.oxfamamerica.org/uploads/OA-HBToolkit.pdf>

SEND

Summary: What does this have to do with Jesus?

Jesus is one person in the community of the Holy Trinity. He knows first hand what community and solidarity means. He came to Earth to save humanity from our sinfulness and invite us as brothers and sisters into Eternal Communion with the Holy Trinity. Through his sacrifice, which shows ultimate solidarity with the poor, weak, and vulnerable, we are all united. We must remember that he asked us to “love one another.” Jesus must be at the center of our lives and communities.

Closing Prayer

Father, you have given all peoples one common origin.

It is your will that they be gathered together
as one family in yourself.

Fill the hearts of mankind with the fire of your love
and with the desire to ensure justice for all.

By sharing the good things you give us,
may we secure an equality for all

our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

May there be an end to division, strife and war.

May there be a dawning of a truly human society
built on love and peace.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR HISPANIC YOUTH MINISTRY

The Hispanic culture is one of great generosity. Appreciation for family is also a strong core value. There is a strong sense of community which is built upon time spent together and shared meals, whether it be family members, close friends, or church members. Hispanic youth may be accustomed to having grandparents or other extended family living with them. Often Hispanics are able to find solidarity among one another through shared experiences such as poverty, the many struggles of immigration and being a stranger in a foreign country,

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and lack of education or other opportunities. When teaching about human community and solidarity, it is good to keep in mind that some Hispanic youth might be the receivers of and those most in need of solidarity from others in terms of social justice. This might be different than mainstream youth that may appear to have a lot to give and less likely to be affected by social injustices.

Biography

Clare O'Rourke was a 2010 intern for the Office of Youth Ministry. She graduated from Marymount University with a degree in Psychology in May 2010.

Elizabeth Sánchez has worked in the Office of Youth Ministry as the Coordinator for Hispanic Youth Ministry since 2008. She and her husband are expecting their first child in November 2010.