Catholic Social Teaching Toolkit
Resources for Religious Educators and Ministers

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# Table of Contents

## Section 1: Introducing Catholic Social Teaching

What is Catholic Social Teaching? Why is it important? ......................................................... 3

Catholic Social Teaching Documents ....................................................................................... 4

The Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching ....................................................................... 5

Life and Dignity of the Human Person ...................................................................................... 6

Call to Family Community and Participation .......................................................................... 7

Rights and Responsibilities ...................................................................................................... 8

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable .......................................................................................... 9

Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers ............................................................................. 10

Solidarity .................................................................................................................................... 11

Care for God’s Creation ........................................................................................................... 12

## Section 2: Two Feet of Love in Action

“Two Feet of Love in Action” Introduction ............................................................................... 13

## Section 3: Embodying Catholic Social Teaching—Examples in Faith

Life and Dignity of the Human Person—Sr. Helen Prejean .................................................... 14

Call to Family, Community and Participation—Dorothy Day ................................................ 15

Rights and Responsibilities—St. Oscar Romero ................................................................. 16

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable—Julia Greely ............................................................... 17

Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers—Delores Huerta and Cesar Chavez .................. 18

Solidarity—St. Maximillian Kolbe ......................................................................................... 19

Care for God’s Creation—Sr. Dorothy Stang, s.d.m ............................................................. 20

## Section 4: Interactive Activities

CST Timeline Activity ............................................................................................................. 21

Biblical Justice Challenge ....................................................................................................... 22

“Power Walk” activity from CRS Education ............................................................................ 23

“Stack the Deck Activity” ..................................................................................................... 24

Take a Step Activity ................................................................................................................. 25

## Section 5: Resources for Prayer and Reflection

Intercessory prayer petitions based on Catholic Social Teaching ......................................... 26

Examination of Conscience in Light of Catholic Social Teaching .......................................... 27

Prayers for Embodying Catholic Social Teaching ................................................................. 28

Additional Resources for Prayer and Topic-Specific Social Justice Education ....................... 29
Section 1: Introducing Catholic Social Teaching
“Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith.”

Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith. Its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God's special love for the poor and called God's people to a covenant of love and justice. It is a teaching founded on the life and words of Jesus Christ, who came "to bring glad tidings to the poor . . . liberty to captives . . . recovery of sight to the blind" (Lk 4:18-19), and who identified himself with "the least of these," the hungry and the stranger (cf. Mt 25:45). Catholic social teaching is built on a commitment to the poor. This commitment arises from our experiences of Christ in the Eucharist.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains, "To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren" (no. 1397).

Catholic social teaching emerges from the truth of what God has revealed to us about himself. We believe in the triune God whose very nature is communal and social. God the Father sends his only Son Jesus Christ and shares the Holy Spirit as his gift of love. God reveals himself to us as one who is not alone, but rather as one who is relational, one who is Trinity. Therefore, we who are made in God's image share this communal, social nature. We are called to reach out and to build relationships of love and justice.

Catholic social teaching is based on and inseparable from our understanding of human life and human dignity. Every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, and therefore is invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family. Every person, from the moment of conception to natural death, has inherent dignity and a right to life consistent with that dignity. Human dignity comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment.

Our commitment to the Catholic social mission must be rooted in and strengthened by our spiritual lives. In our relationship with God we experience the conversion of heart that is necessary to truly love one another as God has loved us.


(based on Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions. Reflections of the U.S. Bishops)
The phrase “Catholic social teaching” refers to the wealth of knowledge and wisdom given to us on social issues from the Scripture and Church Tradition. Although Catholic Social Teaching on is often presented as seven “themes,” these themes are merely meant to more concisely express the wisdom offered throughout history in papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. The full depth and richness of Catholic social teaching is best understood through direct reading and study of these documents. The documents contain direct references to particular social issues. Often, the documents were written at times of global uncertainty regarding certain topics of social justice and faith.

Papal and Vatican Documents

- **Rerum Novarum** (On the Condition of Labor)—Pope Leo XII, 1891
- **Quadragesimo Anno** (After Forty Years)—Pope Pius XI, 1931
- **Mater et Magistra** (Christianity and Social Progress)—St. John XXIII, 1961
- **Pacem in Terris** (Peace on Earth)—St. John XXIII, 1963
- **Gaudium et Spes** (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)—Second Vatican Council, 1965
- **Dignitatis Humane** (Declaration on Religious Freedom)—Second Vatican Council, 1965
- **Populorum Progressio** (On the Development of Peoples)—Blessed Paul VI, 1967
- **Octogesima Adveniens** (A Call to Action)—Blessed Pope Paul VI, 1971
- **Evangelii Nuntiandi** (Evangelization in the Modern World)—Blessed Paul VI, 1975
- **Laborem Exercens** (On Human Work)—St. John Paul II, 1981
- **Sollicitudo Rei Socialis** (On Social Concern)—St. John Paul II, 1987
- **The Church and Racism: Toward a more fraternal society**—Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 1989
- **Centesimus Annus** (The Hundredth Year)—St. John Paul II, 1991
- **Veritatis Splendor** (The Splendor of Truth)—St. John Paul II, 1993
- **Evangelium Vitae** (The Gospel of Life)—St. John Paul II, 1995
- **Dignitas Personae** (The Dignity of a Person)—Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1998
- **Ecclesia in America** (The Church in America)—St. John Paul II, 1999
- **Fides et Ratio** (Faith and Reason)—St. John Paul II, 1998
- **Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life. . . - Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2002**
- **Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church**—Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004
- **Deus Caritas Est** (God Is Love)—Pope Benedict XVI, 2005
- **Sacramentum Caritatis** (The Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission)—Pope Benedict XVI, 2007 (especially paragraphs 47, 49, 82-84, and 88-92)
- **Caritas in Veritate** (Charity in Truth)—Pope Benedict XVI, 2009
- **Evangelii Gaudium** (The Joy of the Gospel)—Pope Francis, 2013
- **Laudato Si** (On Care for Our Common Home)—Pope Francis, 2015
United States Catholic Bishops’ Documents

- **Labor Day Statements**
- **Respecting the Just Rights of Workers**, June 2009
- **A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death** | [en Español](#) November 2005
- **Catholics in Political Life**, June 2004
- **“For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food”**: Catholic Reflections on Food, Farmers, and Farmworkers | [en Español](#) December 2003
- **Strangers No Longer** | [en Español](#) January 2003, Joint Statement from Bishops of the United States and Mexico
- **A Place at the Table: A Catholic Recommitment to Overcome Poverty and to Respect the Dignity of All God’s Children** | [en Español](#), December 2002
- **Statement on Iraq**, November 2002
- **Statement on Israeli-Palestinian Violence**, March 2002
- **A Call to Solidarity with Africa** | [en français](#), November 2001
- **A Pastoral Message: Living with Faith and Hope After September 11**, November 2001
- **Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good** | [en Español](#) June 2001
- **Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity** | [en Español](#) November 2000
- **Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice** | [en Español](#) November 1999
- **In All Things Charity: A Pastoral Challenge for the New Millennium**, November 1999
- **A Good Friday Appeal to End the Death Penalty** | [en Español](#) April 1999
- **A Commitment to All Generations: Social Security and the Common Good**, May 1999
- **A Jubilee Call for Debt Forgiveness**, April 1999
- **Living the Gospel of Life** | [en Español](#) November 1998
- **Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions** | [en Español](#) June 1998
- **Called to Global Solidarity** | [en Español](#) November 1997
- **A Catholic Framework for Economic Life** | [en Español](#) November 1996
- **A Decade After Economic Justice for All** | [en Español](#) November 1995
- **Sowing Weapons of War**, June 1995
- **The Cries of the Poor are Still with Us**, September 1995
- **Confronting a Culture of Violence** | [en Español](#) November 1994
- **Communities of Salt and Light** | [en Español](#) November 1993
- **The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace**, November 1993
- **A Framework for Comprehensive Healthcare Reform**, 1993
- **When I Call for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women** | [en Español](#) September 1992
- **A Matter of the Heart**, November 1992
- **Renewing the Earth** | [en Español](#), 1991
- **A Century of Social Teaching**, 1990
- **New Slavery, New Freedom**, 1990
- **Called to Compassion and Responsibility**, November 1989
- **Toward Peace in the Middle East**, 1989
- **Homelessness and Housing**, March 1988
- **Statement on Central America** | [en Español](#)
- **Economic Justice for All** | [en Español](#) November 1986
- **The Challenge of Peace**, 1983
- **Statement on Capital Punishment**, November 1980
- **In the Name of Peace: Collective Statements on War and Peace**, 1919-1980
- **Brothers and Sisters to Us** | [en Español](#), 1979
- **Pastoral Statement on Persons with Disabilities**, 1978
- **Declaration on Conscientious Objection and Selective Conscientious Objection**, October 1971
The full breadth of Catholic Social Teaching is vast and comprehensive. However, to better express the wisdom contained within the body of Catholic Social Teaching documents, the USCCB published “Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions” in 1995. The goal of the document is to better support educators of faith to express Catholic Social Teaching succulently, yet authentically.

The document “Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions” outlines the seven primary themes that are found in the documents. The themes themselves are meant to be a straightforward way to convey the heart of the Social Teaching of the Church, and to be a starting place for further exploration and reflection.


The seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching:

1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person
2. Call to Family, Community and Participation
3. Rights and Responsibilities
4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
6. Solidarity
7. Care for God’s Creation

Some additional important themes that offer guidance: Subsidiarity, common good, limitations of markets, responsibilities and limitations of government, the role of volunteer organizations.
1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person

“The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. The value of human life is being threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong. Catholic teaching also calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding increasingly effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.”

Points for Conversation and Reflection:
- Where do we see in our world things being treated as if they are more important than people?
- What types of prejudices or biases do I hold that challenge each individual person’s inherent value and dignity?
- What is required for a dignified life? How am I willing to change my own lifestyle to ensure that my neighbor has access to this dignity?
- What are the “red flags” or signs that we look for to tell if someone’s dignity is being violated?

We pray:

Creator God, help us honor the dignity of all people, especially those in whom God’s face may be difficult to recognize. Inspire us to help protect human life in all its stages, at home and around the world. Amen

2. Call to Family, Community, and Participation

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. **Marriage and the family** are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Points for Conversation and Reflection:

- What inhibits people from participating in their society or family? What can we do to remove those barriers?
- What within our faith shows us that we are created by God to be in relationship?
- What are the challenges of being in community with others? What are the consolations or the graces that we find in community?
- What does it mean to be marginalized? How do we ensure that those who are marginalized within our society have the ability to participate?
- How does participation relate to advocacy? How can advocacy be used as a tool to live out Catholic Social Teaching?

**We pray:**

*Creator God, help us to join with others as disciples who seek to live the Gospel and transform our communities. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen*

Tracking “Call to Family, Community and Participation” through Scripture and Tradition:

3. Rights and Responsibilities

(See Appendix A for corresponding discussion guide to video from CRS/USCCB)

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

Points for Conversation and Reflection:
- What does “reciprocal” mean? If Catholic Social Teaching describes rights and responsibilities as reciprocal, what implication does that have for us in our day-to-day life?
- In what ways do I fall short of my responsibilities to ensure the well-being of others?
- Which basic human rights do I feel like are most often violated in my community? My city? My country? In the world?
- Are rights ever violated within our global Church community? What is our responsibility to respond?

We pray:

Loving God, help us do everything we can to build a society where all people are able to exercise their human rights and fulfill their responsibilities. Amen

(From CRS/USCCB discussion guide in Appendix A)

4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

Points for Conversation and Reflection:
- Can I imagine a society where the needs of the poor and the vulnerable are always prioritized? What would this look like? How would my experience in this society be different?
- What types of sacrifices am I willing to make so that the marginalized can be given a preferential option?
- Who do I know personally who is vulnerable or who has experienced marginalization?
- Which of my identities (race, ethnicity, education-level, language, employment, gender, sexual orientation) traditionally give me societal power? Which of my identities do not?
- How do I listen to those who I know who are vulnerable, or who have experienced marginalization or oppression?
- What is the difference between “caring for the poor and vulnerable” and “option for the poor and vulnerable”? Why do I think that this distinction is important?

We pray:

We ask for the intercession of Saint Teresa of Calcutta, that we might never fail to recognize and encounter Jesus in what she called his “most distressing disguise of the poorest of the poor.” Amen

5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. **Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation.** If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

**Points for Conversation and Reflection:**

- Why should people have the right to work? What does work provide for us, both individually and communally?
- Do my purchases support organizations that value the rights of its workers?
- How do I treat workers who I interact with daily (retail staff, support staff in offices/schools, janitorial staff, administrative support)?
- Who are the people who work to allow some in our society to live in comfort? How do they go unnoticed? What does it look like to show dignity and respect to them?
- Do I support unions? What do I know of unions or the importance of collective bargaining in my community?

**We pray:**

*Just God, help us use our power as consumers and voters to ensure that the dignity of workers is respected. May we urge business owners and policymakers to place the dignity of the human person at the center of economic decisions.* Amen

6. Solidarity

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the **pursuit of justice and peace**. Pope Paul VI taught that “if you want peace, work for justice.” The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers’ demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

Points for Conversation and Reflection:

- How do I demonstrate in my daily life my commitment to the welfare of my neighbor?
- What examples do we see of our interconnectedness? Consider the image of the Body of Christ found in 1 Corinthians 12. Are there examples you can think of that demonstrate that when one part of our community suffers, all suffer? Or when one part of our community thrives, all thrive?
- Do I ever attempt to shield myself from knowing of the complexities and struggles of the lives of my local and global neighbor? Why do I do this?
- What does it mean that we are all one human family? What would it look like to more honestly embody this in my life?
- Am I ever apathetic, insensitive or uncaring about the suffering of my neighbor? Even if that neighbor is someone I have never met, or someone who is geographically far from me?

We pray:

> Loving God, Father of all people, help sensitize us to the suffering of others so that we can overcome indifference and build up a civilization of love and solidarity. Amen

7. Care for God’s Creation

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

Points for Conversation and Reflection:

- In what ways do I use resources wastefully? How can I make sacrifices that might reduce the amount of waste that I produce?

- Am I informed on the reality of climate change? Do I know how climate change will impact the most vulnerable internationally? Locally?

- Do I see my care for creation as inherently connected to my concern for those who are most vulnerable and marginalized?

- Where do I feel most connected to creation?

- What does this mean to me: “Creation expresses the love of God.”

We pray:

Creator God, help us become better stewards of creation in our families, parishes, neighborhoods, nation and world. Help us remember the stories and faces of those victimized by climate change, that we may change our lifestyles to benefit those who are vulnerable today, and those not yet born. Amen

For corresponding discussion guides for all videos contained in this section visit http://www.usccb.org-beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/index.cfm
Section 2: The Two Feet of Love in Action

Social Justice: "concerns the social, political, and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions" (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 201). We step with this foot when we work to address the root causes of problems facing our communities by advocating for just public policies and helping to change the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice at home and around the world.

Charitable Works: are our "response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc." (Deus Caritas Est, no. 31). We step with the Charitable Works foot when we work to aid or assist others both locally and globally to meet their immediate, short-term needs. Examples include engaging in direct service or providing food, clothing, shelter, or monetary assistance to help those in need.

Points for Conversation and Reflection:
- How can we listen to the voices of the marginalized when considering how we act for justice, using either foot?
- Do you tend to automatically prioritize one foot over the other? Does your Church community? Does your local civic community? Why do you think that is?
- In order to engage in social justice, we must first explore the causes of injustice. What are some of the interconnected causes of injustice in our society that you know of? How does work for social justice address these?

“The conscience is called by this social teaching to recognize and fulfill the obligations of justice and charity in society.”
—Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 83

“Social justice... concerns the social, political, and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions.”
—Compendium, no. 201

“To [those who lack what they need to live a dignified life] are proclaimed glad tidings that God loves them... and comes to visit them through the charitable works that the disciples of Christ do in his name... As we can read in Matthew 25, we shall all be judged on this.”
—Pope Francis, Address to Pastoral Convention, 6/17/13

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Loving God,

By learning about the witness of your saints and holy people,

may we be inspired by their example of courageous faith

and serving the most vulnerable, even in the face of injustice.

Amen.
1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Sr. Helen Prejean, csj

Sister Helen Prejean is known around the world for her tireless work against the death penalty. She has been instrumental in sparking national dialogue on capital punishment and in shaping the Catholic Church’s vigorous opposition to all executions.

Sister Helen began her prison ministry in 1981 when she dedicated her life to the poor of New Orleans. While living in the St. Thomas housing project, she started to correspond with Patrick Sonnier, who had been sentenced to death for the murder of two teenagers. In 1984, Elmo Patrick Sonnier was put to death in the electric chair. Sister Helen was there to witness his execution. In the following months, she became spiritual advisor to another death row inmate, Robert Lee Willie, who was to meet the same fate as Sonnier.

After witnessing these executions, Sister Helen realized that this lethal ritual would remain unchallenged unless its secrecy was stripped away. She came together with others to hold execution vigils and to march to draw attention to the issue. She founded a support group for victims’ family members. And she sat down and wrote a book, Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States.

Since then, Sr. Helen has continued to write, to advocate for the end of the death penalty, to minister to those on death row and to work with families of murder victims.

Sr. Helen’s life’s work and ministry strongly declares that, “We are more than the worst thing we’ve ever done” and she is an example in faith of what it means to work tirelessly to affirm the life and dignity of all people.

To learn more visit: https://www.sisterhelen.org/

We pray:

Merciful Father, we ask your blessing on all we do to build a culture of life. Hear our prayers for those impacted by the death penalty.

We pray for all people, that their lives and dignity as children of a loving God may be respected and protected in all stages and circumstances.

We pray for victims of violence and their families, that they may experience our love and support and find comfort in your compassion and in the promise of eternal life.

We pray for those on death row, that their lives may be spared, that the innocent may be freed and that the guilty may come to acknowledge their faults and seek reconciliation with you.

We pray for the families of those who are facing execution, that they may be comforted by your love and compassion.

We pray for civic leaders, that they may commit themselves to respecting every human life and ending the use of the death penalty in our land.

Compassionate Father, give us wisdom and hearts filled with your love. Guide us as we work to end the use of the death penalty and to build a society that truly chooses life in all situations.

We ask this Father through your Son Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

(from USCCB)
2. Call to Family, Community And Participation

Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day was born in New York on November 8, 1897, the third child of her parents. She became interested in what it meant to help the poor during her time at college at the University of Illinois at Urbana. She left college, and for years following she worked as a journalist and an activist, and she also experienced many difficult times, including a tumultuous marriage.

Dorothy had grown to admire the Catholic Church, and when she gave birth to her daughter in 1926, she decided to have her baptized. This decision caused her to lose many of those who were closest to her in her life. She struggled to understand what it meant for her to be Catholic. Her life was changed after an experience at the national Shrine of the Immaculate Conception when her call to serve the poor and the unemployed became clear. Together, with Peter Maurin, she would come to found the Catholic Worker newspaper and begin a movement of houses of hospitality and farming communes throughout the U.S. and abroad.

Dorothy was incredibly faithful to the Eucharist, and she was committed to a life of faith in community, even during difficult and complicated times. Dorothy also had challenging family dynamics, yet she never ceased to be in relationship with those around her. She spent the majority of her life advocating for the poor and for nonviolence. She supported the anti-nuclear movement, as well as the work of Cesar Chavez during the mid-1960s.

Dorothy Day demonstrated what it means to commit oneself wholeheartedly to the challenging and life-giving reality of our human family. She embodied our communal call to participate, and worked so that others might also have this ability to participate in their families, in our community and in the world.

We pray:

By Kelly Latimore

“We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other. We know Him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone anymore. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet, too, even with a crust, where there is companionship.”

-Dorothy Day
3. Rights and Responsibilities

St. Oscar Romero

Born on August 15th, 1917, Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdamez was sent to study for the priesthood in Rome and was ordained in April 1942. He embraced a simple lifestyle; he was a popular preacher who responded with real compassion to the plight of the poor.

Ordained Auxiliary Bishop in 1970, he gained a reputation as a stubborn and reactionary prelate. Seemingly unsympathetic to the new social justice thrust of the Latin American Church, he was suspicious of the clergy and the Base Christian Communities of the archdiocese working alongside the exploited rural poor, promoting social organizations and land reform.

A brief spell back in the countryside as Bishop of Santiago de Maria opened Romero’s eyes as he reconnected to the semi-feudal misery and hardship of the campesinos and witnessed the murderous repression being suffered at the hands of the security forces. In February 1977 he was the surprising choice to be the new Archbishop of San Salvador.

Over the next three years the social and political conflict in El Salvador intensified with electoral fraud blocking change, and peaceful protest being met with massacres and death squad killings. From his Cathedral pulpit Archbishop Romero became the voice of the voiceless poor. There, in a society of cover-up and lies, he spoke the truth of what was happening in the countryside; he denounced the killings, the torture and the disappearances of community leaders; he demanded justice and recompense for the atrocities committed by the army and police and he set up legal aid projects and pastoral programs to support the victims of the violence. With the emergence of armed guerrilla groups on the far left, civil war loomed. Archbishop Romero, rejecting the violence perpetrated by the left as well as the right, strained every nerve to promote peaceful solutions to his nation’s crisis. He was vilified in the press, attacked and denounced to Rome by Catholics of the wealthy classes, harassed by the security forces and publically opposed by several episcopal colleagues.

The death threats multiplied; the atmosphere was charged. Archbishop Romero realized he was going to be killed. And he came to accept it. At 6.26pm on March 24th, 1980, with a single marksman’s bullet, he fell at the foot of a huge crucifix.

Even in the face of extreme pressure from The Church and his community, St. Oscar Romero was tirelessly faithful to the message of the Gospel. Following the death of his close friend and fellow priest, Rutilio Grande, St. Romero came to a new understanding of his responsibility to speak on behalf the rights of the poor. Example of embodying responsibility is ultimately what lead to his death, and why he is now considered a Eucharistic martyr, a martyr to the option for the poor, and a martyr to the Magisterium of the Church. St. Romero was canonized by Pope Francis on October 14, 2018.

Source: http://www.romerotrust.org.uk/who-was-romero
4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

**Julia Greely**

Julia Greeley, Denver’s Angel of Charity, was born into slavery, at Hannibal, Missouri, sometime between 1833 and 1848. While she was still a young child, a cruel slavemaster, in the course of beating her mother, caught Julia’s right eye with his whip and destroyed it.

Freed by Missouri’s Emancipation Act in 1865, Julia subsequently earned her keep by serving white families in Missouri, Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico—though mostly in the Denver area. Whatever she did not need for herself, Julia spent assisting poor families in her neighborhood. When her own resources were inadequate, she begged for food, fuel and clothing for the needy. One writer later called her a “one-person St. Vincent de Paul Society.” To avoid embarrassing the people she helped, Julia did most of her charitable work under cover of night through dark alleys.

Julia entered the Catholic Church at Sacred Heart Parish in Denver in 1880, and was an outstanding supporter of all that the parish had to offer. The Jesuits who ran the parish considered her the most enthusiastic promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus they had ever seen. Every month she visited on foot every fire station in Denver and delivered literature of the Sacred Heart League to the firemen, Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

A daily communicant, Julia had a rich devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin and continued her prayers while working and moving about. She joined the Secular Franciscan Order in 1901 and was active in it till her death in 1918.

As part of the Cause for Canonization, Julia’s mortal remain were transferred to Denver’s Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception on June 7, 2017.

**Julia Greely exemplifies what it means to live a life that prioritizes the poor and most vulnerable. Even when she did not have extra to give, she begged on behalf of the poor and worked tirelessly to meet their immediate needs.**

Source: [http://juliagreeley.org/](http://juliagreeley.org/)

**We pray:**

God of Justice,  
open our eyes  
to see you in the face of the poor.  
Open our ears  
to hear you in the cries of the exploited.  
Open our mouths  
to defend you in the public squares  
as well as in private deeds.  
Remind us that what we do  
to the least ones,  
we do to you.  
Amen.

(From USCCB)
5. The Dignity and the Rights of Workers

Delores Huerta and César Chávez

Delores Huerta

Co-founder of the United Farm Workers Association, Dolores Clara Fernandez Huerta is one of the most influential labor activists of the 20th century and a leader of the Chicano civil rights movement.

Born on April 10, 1930 in Dawson, New Mexico, Huerta was the second of three children of Alicia and Juan Fernandez, a farm worker and miner who became a state legislator in 1938.

In 1955 Huerta began her career as an activist when she co-founded the Stockton chapter of the Community Service Organization (CSO), which led voter registration drives and fought for economic improvements for Hispanics. She also founded the Agricultural Workers Association. Through a CSO associate, Huerta met activist César Chávez, with whom she shared an interest in organizing farm workers. In 1962, Huerta and Chávez founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), the predecessor of the United Farm Workers’ Union (UFW), which formed three year later. Huerta served as UFW vice president until 1999.

Throughout her work with the UFW, Huerta organized workers, negotiated contracts, advocated for safer working conditions including the elimination of harmful pesticides. She also fought for unemployment and healthcare benefits for agricultural workers. Huerta was the driving force behind the nationwide table grape boycotts in the late 1960s that led to a successful union contract by 1970. Source: https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/dolores-huerta

César Chávez

César Chávez organized the first successful union of farmworkers in U.S. history. He was not only one of the great labor leaders of this century, he was also a heroic example of Catholic moral leadership. He was born in 1927 to a Mexican American family who was forced to become migrant farmers during the Great Depression. As a child, he had to labor in the fields to support his family and was not able to advance past the seventh grade. As a young man with a wife and growing family, he was inspired by a priest with a passion for social justice to train as a community organizer.

He gathered the Mexican Americans in Delano, California, formed the United Farm Workers, and led a strike against local table grape growers. The struggle for just contracts was long and drawn out. When the workers were threatened and attacked, César rejected any violent retaliation and turned to nonviolent actions. For this strike, he fasted on a water-only diet for 25 days, which effectively drew national attention to the blatantly unjust wages and working and living conditions of the Hispanic migrant laborers in California. He was a devout Catholic who did not simply believe the teachings of Jesus Christ; he was transformed by them. They guided his efforts to secure just treatment for migrant workers.

(from “Creating on the Margins” Contest packet from USCCB)

We pray:

Creator God, thank you for providing us with the gift to share our talents. Provide our community, our nation, our world the fortitude to provide work for all which is decent and fair. Make us faithful stewards of your creation to enhance the human dignity of our global family. We ask this in the name of Jesus who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen.

(from USCCB)
6. Solidarity
St. Maximilian Kolbe

Raymund Kolbe was born on 8 January 1894 in Zdunska Wola, in the Kingdom of Poland (then part of the Russian Empire). In 1910, he was given the religious name Maximillian and was admitted as an initiate. He took his final vows as a monk in 1914. Kolbe was ordained as a priest and after completing his studies returned to the newly independent Poland in 1919. He settled in the monastery of Niepokalanów near Warsaw.

Kolbe was an active priest and particularly keen to work for the conversion of sinners and enemies of the Catholic Church. During his time in Rome, he witnessed angry protests by the Freemasons against the Vatican. Kolbe had a strong devotion to the Virgin Mary and he became an active participant in the Militia Immaculata or Army of Mary.

After a brief internment in a notorious Polish prison, he was sent to Auschwitz concentration camp and branded prisoner #16670.

Despite the awful conditions of Auschwitz, people report that Kolbe retained a deep faith, equanimity and dignity in the face of appalling treatment.

In July 1941, three prisoners appeared to have escaped from the camp; as a result, the Deputy Commander of Auschwitz ordered 10 men to be chosen to be starved to death in an underground bunker.

When one of the selected men Franciszek Gajowniczek heard he was selected, he cried out “My wife! My children!” At this point, Kolbe volunteered to take his place.

Father Kolbe pointed with his hand to the condemned Franciszek Gajowniczek and repeated: “I am a Catholic priest from Poland; I would like to take his place because he has a wife and children.”

Father Kolbe and the other men were led away to the underground bunker where they were to be starved to death. It is said that in the bunker, Kolbe would lead the men in prayer and singing hymns to Mary.

After two weeks, nearly all the prisoners, except Kolbe had died due to dehydration and starvation. Because the guards wanted the cell emptied, the remaining prisoners and Kolbe were executed with a lethal injection. Those present say he calmly accepted death, lifting up his arm. His remains were unceremoniously cremated on 15 August.

St. Maximillian Kolbe was an example of what it means to understand our human family as deeply interconnected, and he demonstrated this in his willingness to sacrifice his life for a stranger.

Source: https://www.biographyonline.net/spiritual/maximilian-kolbe.html

We pray:

Almighty and ever-living God, empower your one human family to join hands on our journey of faith. Send us your spirit of hope, so that we may all work to alleviate human suffering and foster charity and justice in our world. Amen.

(From USCCB)
**7. Care for Creation**  
*Sr. Dorothy Stang, s.d.m*

Sister Dorothy, 73, was born in Dayton, Ohio, one of nine children. She was raised on a farm in a traditional Catholic family. She entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur community in 1948 and professed final vows in 1956. For the 10 years after her profession, she taught at schools in Phoenix and Chicago. In 1966 she and four other sisters moved to Brazil to help poor farmers build independent futures for their families. Sr. Dorothy continued her ministry here until her murder in 2005.

A citizen of Brazil and the United States, Sister Dorothy worked with the Pastoral Land Commission, an organization of the Catholic Church that fights for the rights of rural workers and peasants, and defends land reforms in Brazil. Sister Dorothy understood that the rain forest, also called the earth’s lungs, played a critical role in the exchange of gases between the biosphere and the atmosphere. She saw the rain forest and the people who lived here plundered for financial gain by illegal logging operations, land speculators, and cattle ranchers.

In Brazil, hired killings of this sort were common to eliminate people who opposed clear-cutting and burning of the forest, and those who worked to educate and empower the peasants. Sr. Dorothy had been a serious target. Her death came less than a week after meeting with the country’s human rights officials about threats to local farmers from loggers and landowners.

Sr. Dorothy was killed because she had tried to put in place programs that both created self-sufficient communities and protection of the rain forest. When gunman approached her, she read the Beatitudes.

Since her death, Sister Dorothy has been widely honored for her life and work by the United States Congress and by a number of colleges and universities across the United States. She was posthumously awarded the 2008 United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights. She has also been formally recognized by the Vatican as a modern day martyr.

**Sr. Dorothy Stang is a powerful witness to what it means to dedicate one’s life to serving God’s creation, both the environment and the people whose livelihoods are inherently connected to it. Sr. Dorothy died for her commitment to the environment and the implications on environmental destruction on the most vulnerable.**

| Forgiving God, We have not lived out our responsibility to be faithful stewards of creation. For this, we seek your pardon. | most of all. For this, we ask your mercy. Our actions have endangered both the lives of our children today as well as those yet to be born. For this, we seek your forgiveness. | Living God, As we meet you in nature, inspire us to see anew our place in the web of life. In our daily lives, help us to make daily choices that reflect global solidarity. | As we reflect on the teaching of our faith, equip us to advocate for laws and policies that reflect your call to faithful stewardship. Amen. |
Section 4: Interactive Activities
I. Catholic Social Teaching Timeline Activity

Target Age: High School, College, Adult

How well do you know your Catholic social teaching documents?

Challenge yourself with this activity, which can be completed either individually or in small groups. During the activity, you will increase your familiarity with the major social teaching documents and explore the development of the Church’s social teaching since 1891.

Materials Needed:
- Catholic social teaching documents descriptions
- Timeline of events
- Answer key

How to implement this activity with a group:

1. Provide background information.
   An encyclical is a letter from the Holy Father that is a “teaching document.” Its audience is every Catholic and all people of good will. A “social encyclical” applies the consistent, traditional moral teachings of the Church to the social and economic challenges of the current day. For example, the most recent social encyclical, Caritas in Veritate, was written to address the current economic crisis and other issues facing the world today, and deals with moral aspects of economic life, poverty and development, human rights and duties, environmental responsibility, and other moral and economic issues.

2. Break into small groups of 2-3 persons each.
   Provide each group with a copy of the timeline of events (you may want to provide tape to adhere the pages of the timeline together horizontally) and batches of the cut-out rectangles with the Catholic social teaching documents descriptions. Explain that we are going to see how, over the past 120 years, these documents have helped guide Catholics’ perspectives on issues and problems facing our human family.

3. Small group activity.
   Ask each group to read the events on the timelines and to try to match the cut-out rectangles describing the documents with the events timeline. If participants need help, tell them to pay attention to:
   - Events mentioned in the timeline that are also mentioned in the social documents descriptions.
   - The names of the popes, since documents by the same popes will follow one another.
   - References to anniversaries, since some documents were written to celebrate the anniversary of a previous document.

4. Checking answers.
   When all the groups are finished, go through each of the years on the timeline one-by-one, mentioning some of the events that happened that year. For each year, ask participants to call out the correct social teaching document. The group leader can check answers using the answer key. When the correct document is named, ask the person who got it correct to explain how the document was responding to those issues facing the world.

5. Discussion. Discuss following questions:
   - What social teaching document did you find most interesting? Why?
   - Name an example of how a social teaching document responded to issues facing the human family at a particular time? How did that document help Catholics see issues facing the world in the light of their faith?
   - Which document(s) might you be most interested in reading in full? Be sure to mention that students can find links to the text of all the documents at www.usccb.org/campus!

II. Biblical Justice Challenge Activity

Target Age: High School, College, Adult

There are hundreds of passages in Scripture that exhort us to work for justice. In this fun activity, small groups compete to find scriptural references related to concern for those who are poor and vulnerable.

INSTRUCTIONS

In your small group, use your Bible to find answers to the following questions. This is a competition that involves prizes, and you will be judged on both how quickly you can accomplish the task and the quality of your end-product. Here are ways you can gain points:

Time: The 1st group done gets 70 points, the 2nd group gets 50, the 3rd group 30, and the 4th group 20 points.

Accuracy: You get 10 points for every correct answer.

Quality: You can get up to 70 points for answers that are high quality, on-target, and complete, that answer what the question asks for, and that would be convincing to a reader new to the Bible.

Hints: Each group has 2 "hint" cards that can be used if you need help. If you don't need to use them, you get 20 points for every hint card that you still have left at the end of the game.

Legibility: If you don't write legibly, your answers won't count. If everything is written clearly, you get 20 free points.

Persuasiveness: You can earn up to 50 additional points if, at the end of this activity, your group can explain persuasively to others how the Bible calls people of faith to work for justice and what that looks like.

RULES

- Work together, as a team.
- Hand in only one completed worksheet per team.
- You cannot use the same answer more than once.
- When a question asks for you to "name a place in the Bible where..." or "name a passage where it says...," your answer must provide the book, chapter, and verse(s) as well as either the direct quote or a summary of what you found there.
- If you get stuck on a question, each group has three "hint" cards that you can use to get a clue. Bring your hint card to the front of the room to receive your clue.

Biblical Justice Challenge

Team Name:

Names of Team Members:

1. Name a place in the Bible where we see that the human person is made in God's own image or that he or she is created with dignity.

2. Name 2 places in the Old Testament law books (such as Exodus, Leviticus, or Deuteronomy) where the people of God are commanded to help those who are poor or vulnerable.
   i. 
   ii. 

3. Find 2 places in which one of the prophets (Isaiah, Amos, Jeremiah, etc.) tells the people that God cares about their actions toward the hungry, oppressed, widow, stranger, or orphan.
   i. 
   ii. 

4. Name one passage from the Bible that could help us to recognize why we should care for creation.

5. In what book, chapter and verse in the Gospels does Jesus proclaim the following? “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, / because he has anointed me / to bring glad tidings to the poor. / He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives / and recovery of sight to the blind, / to let the oppressed go free, / and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”

6. Name 3 of Jesus’ parables that are about the way we should treat others. Please provide book, chapter, and verse and summarize the parable.
   i. 
   ii. 
   iii. 

7. What does Jesus teach his disciples are the most important commandments? Where does it say this?

8. Name 3 places in the Gospels where Jesus’ words or actions demonstrate his concern for the poor or vulnerable.
   i. 
   ii. 
   iii. 

9. Name 1 of the places in the New Testament letters (such as 1 Corinthians or James) where the Christian communities are chastised for not treating the poor as equals during the Eucharistic meal.

10. Name the place in James’ letter in which he discusses the connection between “faith” and "works." What is the relationship between the two?
III. Power Walk (from CRS Education)

Target Age: High School, College, Adult

**Length:** 30 minutes

**Objectives:** Through this activity participants will:
- Become sensitized to power relations and to the marginalization experienced by some members of society.
- Identify different forms of power at work in the community.
- Understand that advocacy is about shifting power.

**Summary:** Role play and discussion will help participants to understand that advocacy is about shifting power. Participatory advocacy is about developing the capacity of community members and organizations to facilitate changes necessary to shift power and support rights-holders to claim their rights.

**Materials:**
- Power Walk: Characters handout with the character slips separated; one for each member of the class
- One copy of Power Walk Statements
- Large space to do activity

**Example statements:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Handout</th>
<th>Power Walk: Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I can influence decisions made at the local level (in my town).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I get to meet visiting officials from government offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I have time and access to watch TV, go to the movies and spend time with my friends; I get new clothes when I want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I am not in danger of being sexually abused or exploited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I get to see and talk to my parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I can buy food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I own my own home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example Characters:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Handout</th>
<th>Power Walk: Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>Spouse of mayor:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male university student organizer</td>
<td>Elementary schoolteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American boy in detention facility, age 14</td>
<td>Elementary schoolgirl, age 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse at local clinic</td>
<td>Widowed single mother with 3 children, ages 12, 6, and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural worker, father of 2 children</td>
<td>Girl in wheelchair, age 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief of police</td>
<td>HIV+ pregnant girl, age 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Link to Activity Resources (Character slips and power walk statements) here: https://ghs.crs.org/sites/default/files/Advocacy%20Ed_Power%20Walk.pdf
IV. Stack the Deck (from USCCB)
Target Age: Middle School, High School

This is an example of an educational activity that uses three volunteers and a series of guided exchanges of playing cards to illustrate how a person's background, experiences, and choices can impact his or her opportunities and economic status. This version is adapted for large youth groups.

Materials Needed:
- 3 decks of cards
- dry erase board or flip chart
- dry erase or flip chart markers
- copy of this page

Illustration Instructions:

Choose three volunteers from the group and invite two of them to stand at the front of the room facing the group. The third volunteer should sit between them with a calculator that you have provided to him or her. The third version is the "Banker." Ask the other volunteers their names. Give each of them a deck of cards. Give the third deck of cards to the banker. [Note: You may want to pre-sort the cards in each deck so that they are in order, beginning with 2s and ending with Aces.]

Leader: What is contained in each person's deck represents his or her earning potential, which is affected by his or her background, experiences, choices, and opportunities in life.

One of our volunteers [Person 1 in the text below] has been born into a low-income, working class family in a poor neighborhood. The other volunteer has been born into an affluent, white-collar family in a nice, suburban neighborhood.

We will now accompany our two volunteers as they go through life, with various factors that affect them symbolized by exchanges of playing cards from each of their decks.

Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person 1</th>
<th>Person 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You live in a dangerous environment.</td>
<td>You live in a safe environment with clean air and safe playgrounds. From an early age, you join Little League baseball or softball and get a lot of fresh air just running around outside the house. Since physical activity, health, and exercise stimulate mental activity, please give the Bank your twos and the Bank will give you nines for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your neighborhood is plagued by gang violence and your parents are afraid to let you play outside. You don't get much exercise and as a child, you develop some risk factors for obesity. Since physical activity, health, and exercise stimulate mental activity, please give the Bank your Aces and you will get back sevens.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Children who live in poverty are less likely to attend preschool, less likely to read at home and learn basic skills, and they often enter the educational system behind other students. Also, you live in a poor urban area where the schools are bad. When you start school, there will be large class sizes and students have to share text books. Give the Bank the Kings from your deck and the Bank will give you back sixes.

Nutrition

Person 1

Your family struggles to get by on a minimum wage income and is on and off of food stamps. However, food stamps don’t always last until the end of the month and you sometimes are forced to come to school without breakfast. It is difficult to concentrate on school when you are hungry. Please give the Bank your Queens and the Bank will give you fives for them.

Person 2

You always have three meals a day, usually with nutritious snacks in between, and you always know where the next meal will come from. Please give the Bank your 4 fours and the Bank will give you 4 Jacks.

Parenting

Person 1

Your parents become separated and your dad disappears from the scene for a while. During this time, finances are really difficult. Child support is required by law, but your mom isn’t sure how to navigate the system to try to force your dad to pay it. Besides, you aren’t even sure where dad is living. Since on average, women’s earnings tend to lag behind men, and almost 43 percent of single mothers live below the poverty line, please give the Bank your Jacks and the Bank will give you fours.

Person 2

You have a happy family, but even if your parents were to separate, there’s never a question as to whether you will always have access to financial resources from both of them. Give the Bank your fives and the Bank will give you Queens.

College

You started pre-school at the age of three and you picked up numbers and the alphabet really fast. Your parents also practiced with you at home. You enter grade school one step ahead. You live in a wealthy suburb and the schools are well-funded through taxes. You’ll have everything you need. Please trade in your threes and the Bank will give you tens.
Person 1

You want to go to college, and there is some financial aid offered for low-income students. But even with that, college is really, really expensive. Besides, even though your dad is now back, mom got laid off from her cleaning job. You decide to go full-time at the job you had through high school, a fast food joint, and to put off college for now. **Please give the Bank your tens and you’ll get back twos.**

---

**Discrimination**

Person 1

We haven’t mentioned your race yet. It turns out that some minority groups are twice as likely to live in poverty as Caucasians. Part of the reason for this is that poverty is cyclical and passed down through generations. But segregation, discrimination and other racial injustices also play a role. In your case, you happen to be African American. There was a promotion you were hoping for at the fast food joint. But you didn’t get it. You suspect that race might have something to do with it—you’ve overheard one of the managers say some racist things, but they’ve never been directed at you and you’re not sure you could prove anything. **You lose two nines for your race and the other two because you didn’t get the promotion. The Bank will give you back threes.**

Person 2

It has always been assumed that you will go to college, as will almost everyone in your high school. You take a SAT-prep course and are enrolled in AP classes in the hopes of starting off with some extra credits. Deciding where to go to college is a tough decision; you apply to your favorite places, get in to some of them, make college visits, and finally, you choose one that feels like the best fit for you. **Please give the Bank your sixes and the Bank will give you Queens.**

---

**Leader:** Let’s see how our two volunteers are doing. (To audience) **How do you think the first person’s deck is doing?** The second person’s deck?

Statistics tell us that our first volunteer, who hasn’t gone to college, is **likely to make $20,000 a year less** than his or her counterpart who has finished college.
We’re going to see what effect each person's background, experiences, choices, and opportunities in life had on the earning potential of each of the volunteers.

(To Persons 1 and 2) Please *shuffle your decks*.

Now, **take the top four cards** from the deck and show us what they are.

Let's **add up the numbers** on the cards to see what your earning potential is. Number cards 2 through 10 are worth those numbers. Jack is worth 10, Queen is worth 15, King is worth 20, and the Ace is worth 25. After each person adds their four cards, add three "0"s to the end. For example, if Person 1 draws a 2, a 5, a 6, and a Jack, then his or her earning potential will be $23,000. (Note: based on the cards left in Person 1’s deck, his or her four cards will add up to anywhere between $8,000 and $36,000. Person 2's cards will add up to anywhere between $36,000 and $100,000.)

Draw the “How Easy (or Difficult) Will it be for Person 1 or Person 2 to Survive?” table below on the dry erase board or flip chart. You could also re-create it on a PowerPoint slide and project it instead.

Fill in Deck 1 annual earnings and Deck 2 annual earnings on line one of the table below.

Explain that there is some flexibility in these numbers and that this calculus can change due to the choices that a person makes as an individual. Deciding to stay in school is a personal choice that can affect a person's future.

However, it should be clear that the "deck is stacked against" Person 1 and in favor of Person 2, based on many factors he or she cannot control.

*We sometimes hear about "rags-to-riches" stories where a person escapes from dire poverty to become the CEO of a company, but we should recognize that these cases are too rare.* For many people, the factors we described related to poverty really can impact a person's opportunities.

- **How much is this person earning per month?** (Divide the salary by 12). Write this number on the second line of the table.
- **How much is this person making per hour?** Divide the salary by 52 weeks/year. Then divide again by 40 hrs/wk. This will tell you how much the person is earning per hour.
- **What type of job might this person have?** (Use the chart at the end of this resource for some examples of jobs that earn different amounts.)
- **Is Person 1 making more or less than a minimum wage job?** (Federal minimum wage is currently $7.25/hr. Have students multiply $7.25 by 40 hrs/wk x 52 wks/year. A minimum wage job pays $15,080/yr.)
- **What might cause a person to learn less than minimum wage?** (Maybe he or she is only working part time or temporarily, or perhaps he or she is undocumented.)
- **How does Person 1’s earnings compare with the federal poverty line?**

**Now ask some questions about Person 2’s salary:**

- What is his or her annual income? What type of job might he or she work at?
- How much does he or she earn per month?
- How much per hour?
Sample Median Salaries

$18,000-$21,000: Cashier, Waiter/waitress, Home care nurses, Parking lots attendants, Maids, Child Care Workers

$22,000-$25,000: Ambulance drivers, Janitors, Taxi Drivers, Telemarketers, Retail, Receptionists, Security Guards

$28,000-$35,000: Bus driver, Butcher, Truck driver, Office administrative support, Dental assistant, Highway maintenance, reporter

$38,000-$45,000: Flight attendants, health technicians, social worker, graphic designer

$53,000-$60,000: Elementary school teacher, School counselor, real estate agent, librarian, editor, public relations

$63,000-$73,000: Registered nurse, accountant, occupational therapist, post-secondary teacher, computer programmer

$82,000-$92,000: Electrical engineer, scientist, veterinarian, economist, manager

$100,000+: Pharmacist, Upper management, Airline pilot, corporate lawyer


How easy (or difficult) will it be for Person 1 or Person 2 to survive?

Explain that we are going to see how far the annual earnings of Person 1 and Person 2 go – to see if they can survive on their earnings.

Mention the below expenses and ask the volunteers to subtract these amounts from the monthly income for Person filling in the balance left over at the end of the month for each person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Deck 1</th>
<th>Deck 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual earnings</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly paycheck</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>-$565</td>
<td>-$565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>-$356</td>
<td>-$356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>-$250</td>
<td>-$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>-$220</td>
<td>-$220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used car</td>
<td>-$345</td>
<td>-$345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>-$220</td>
<td>-$220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much is left?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


You can also subtract additional potential costs not mentioned in the above list:

- Field trip - $25
- Cleaning supplies - $10
- Toiletries - $20
- Haircuts - $48
- Vacation
- Recreation - $50
- Birthday gifts - $50
- New pair of shoes and a coat - $150
- Doctor’s office co-pay - $15
- Prescription medicine - $20
- Fix heater - $300
V. Take a Step  
*Target Age: Middle School, High School*

**Instructions for the facilitator:**

This is an example of an effort to help participants reflect on the "unequal playing field" that benefits some while making it more likely that others will be left behind.

**What you will need:**

- tape
- 3 colors of index cards, such as red, yellow, and blue. There should be more yellow (or whatever color you are substituting for yellow) cards than any other color and only a few blue (or the substitution) cards. For example, if there are 30 participants, have 3 blue cards, 20 yellow, and 8 red.

Place a piece of tape on the floor in the center of a large room. Then ask participants to line up shoulder-to-shoulder across the room. The participants in the middle of the line should be standing on the taped line on the floor so that the group is shoulder-to-shoulder in a line across the center of the room. Ask participants to listen carefully and to follow the instructions given.

For a shorter version (ideal for younger grades, if pressed for time, or if in a small room), only read the prompts with * in front of them.

**Instructions for participants:**

If you have a blue card you grew up speaking English as your first language—take two steps forward. If you have a yellow card you grew up speaking English as a second language, but eventually learned English well—take one step forward. If you have a red card you never really learned English until you were an adult—take one step backwards.

*If you have a yellow card your family owned a car when you were growing up—take one step forward. If you have a blue card your family owned two or more cars simultaneously—take two steps forward. If you have a red card your family didn't own a car and you were dependent on public transportation or rides from others—take a step back.

*If you have a red card you lived in an unsafe area plagued by violence—take three steps back. If you have a yellow card you sometimes had to worry about your safety growing up—take one step back. If you have a blue card you never had to worry about safety growing up—take a step forward.

*If you have a yellow or blue card you had health insurance and access to a doctor or hospital if needed when you were growing up—take a step forward. If you have a red card you didn't have these things—take a step back.

If you have a blue or yellow card you breathed clean air growing up—take a step forward. If you have a red card you lived, played, and went to school in a place where the air was very polluted—take a step back.

*If you have a blue or yellow card you were able to go to school every day as a child and had a decent education growing up—take a step forward.

*If you have a blue card you were also able to go to a four-year college—take two steps forward. If you have a yellow card, you went to technical school or perhaps received your associate's degree from a community college. Take a half a step forward. If you have a red card, you did not have any further education after graduating from high school. Take one step back.

*If you have a red card and are standing to the left of the middle line, take another step back. You didn't receive a good education in grade school or high school. You may have lived in an area with a failing school system, or your school may have had very limited resources and students did not have access to the materials or education needed to succeed—take another step back. Or, perhaps you did not have regular access to education because of money, sickness, or another reason at some point in your life.

*If you have a blue or yellow card you always had access to a computer and the internet when you needed it—take two steps forward. If you have a red card you didn't have this access—take a step back.
*If you have a yellow or blue card you always knew where you next meal would come from—take a step forward. If you have a red card you sometimes had to skip meals because your family didn't have enough money—take a step back.

*If you have a red card you were homeless as a child or had to live with relatives, another family, or in a shelter—take three steps back.

*If you have a blue card you had a bank account, savings account, or some other financial savings created for you as a child—take two steps forward. If you have a yellow card your family saved some money for you in a college fund—take one step forward.

*If you have a red card your family was affected by high levels of debt growing up, such as credit card debt, difficulty making mortgage payments, or fear of (or actual) foreclosure on a home—take two steps back.

*If you have a blue or yellow card you made visits to the public library to check out books, borrowed or bought books from elsewhere, or had a habit of reading regularly as a child—take two steps forward.

*If you have a red card you grew up in a poor community where industrial pollution from factories or chemical plants caused sickness or disease in your community—take one step back.

**Now ask participants the following questions:**

- "What thoughts or reactions do you have to this activity? What surprised you?"
- "Which "step backwards" statements were most memorable for you? Why?"
- "How might some of the "step backwards" experiences be connected to poverty?"
- "If you were someone who mostly stepped forward rather than backward, what responsibilities go along with the privileges you have received?"
- "If you mostly stepped forward during this activity, how did you feel while moving ahead of the pack?"
- "If you mostly stepped backward during this activity, how did you feel about slipping behind the pack?"
- "Does this activity help you to identify some of the "root causes" of poverty? Which ones?"
- "Which causes of poverty are missing from this activity?"

Section 5: Resources for Prayer and Reflection
Intercessory Prayer petitions based on Catholic Social Teaching

*Life and Dignity of the Human Person*

For an end to the violence perpetrated by harsh words, deadly weapons, or cold indifference. May our homes, our nation, and countries around the world become havens of peace. We pray to the Lord.

For the grace to see every human being as a child of God, regardless of race, language or culture. We pray to the Lord.

For healing and justice for all those who have experienced violence and racism. We pray to the Lord.

For all who are forgotten or cast off: that we might value each human life, as a priceless gift from God; We pray to the Lord.

That we, both individually and in our community, will continue to see the face of Christ in our neighbor, listen carefully to them and respond out of compassion and justice. We pray to the Lord.

That our lives and the way we treat those around us continue to show our belief that all people are made in the image and likeness of God. We pray to the Lord.

For those who are on death row, that they may know that they are not forgotten and that they are loved by a merciful God. May we, nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ in community, work for the end of the death penalty. We pray to the Lord.

For the families of those who have died to violence, that they may know the care of our compassionate and loving God, and find consolation in the care of community. We pray to the Lord.

*Call to Family, Community and Participation*

For the wisdom to receive the stories and experiences of those different from ourselves and to respond with respect. We pray to the Lord.

For our faith community, that we may celebrate and welcome the diverse faces of Christ in our worship, our ministries, and our leaders. We pray to the Lord.

For our faith community, that we may respond boldly to the Holy Spirit’s call to act together to end violence and racism. We pray to the Lord.

For the courage to have difficult conversations about racism, and for a better appreciation of how our words and actions – or even our silence – can impact our communities. We pray to the Lord.

For all parents who struggle alone to raise their children: that God will give them the strength of the children of God and the support of his holy Church. We pray to the Lord.

For all children born today: that we might receive them as a sign of hope and of God’s never-ending care. We pray to the Lord:

For parents who have experienced the heartbreak of miscarriage and infertility, that they may be cared for by their communities and by one another, and that the God of healing will bring them comfort and peace. We pray to the Lord.

*Rights and Responsibilities*

For the strength to teach our children how to resolve differences non-violently and respectfully, and the courage to model it in our own behavior. We pray to the Lord.
For our public officials, that they will strive to work for fair education, adequate housing, and equal opportunities for employment for all, let us pray to the Lord.

For immigrants that face violence and hatred in this country, that they experience God’s welcome and love in all we do and that together we may bring about a conversion of hearts and minds and an end to the violence and hatred. We pray to the Lord.

**Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

For the children who are US citizens, but live in fear of broken families because of the undocumented status of their parents, that God may bring them Hope as we work toward conversion of hearts and minds. We pray to the Lord

For unaccompanied migrant children, that they may be protected from all harm and reunited with loving families, we pray to the Lord.

For immigrant parents, who have been deported from this country, that their fears for their children are eased and their Hope of reuniting be realized. Let us pray to the Lord.

For the immigrant in search of food, work, and security, that God may guide them and accompany them in their journey. Let us pray to the Lord.

For those who are mentally disabled, that we might cherish the gifts God has given them, humble ourselves to learn from their witness, and in their lives hear the voice of our loving God; We pray to the Lord.

For those struggling with diseases, that we may do our best to comfort them and be with them in their suffering, that each day might be a new revelation of God's love for them; We pray to the Lord.

For all who live in nursing homes, and especially for those who are alone or in pain: that we might cherish the gift of their wisdom, and the enduring example of their faith. We pray to the Lord.

For all people in abusive relationships. May they experience God's love and know that their abuse is not God's will. May they find in our parish community the courage and support to seek help, find safety, and free themselves from domestic violence. We pray to the Lord.

For those who have been victims of sexual violence in our Church and our community, that they are heard and believed, and that as a community we may work for an end to sexual violence and toward greater justice for all. We pray to the Lord.

**The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**

For the protection of all police and first responders who risk their lives daily to ensure our safety; for fair and just policing that will promote peace and wellbeing in all our neighborhoods, let us pray to the Lord.

For those who labor in the shadows of this country for unjust wages and security, that we may bring dignity to their work through reform of immigration and labor laws. Let us pray to the Lord.

That we may all work to convert hearts and change unjust laws that victimize the undocumented, taking courage from the Holy Spirit that empowered the apostles, we pray to the Lord.

For those in our communities who are currently unemployed, that they may find work quickly that values their God-given gifts and talents, and pays them a just wage. We pray to the Lord.

For workers around the world, especially children who work long hours for little pay, that we might all seek ways to promote fairness, justice, and dignity in their lives, we pray to the Lord.

For those who, because of materialism and greed, labor for unjust wages in unsafe conditions. May we acknowledge our shared role in their liberation, and become more diligent and accountable to caring for our global neighbor. We pray to the Lord.
Solidarity
For solidarity in our global human family, that we may work together to protect those who are most vulnerable and most in need. We pray to the Lord.

That we may know ourselves of members of one human family, and act accordingly in solidarity with those who are most marginalized. We pray to the Lord.

Care for God’s Creation
For the earth, that our nation’s leaders will be inspired by God's Spirit to protect all of God’s creation. We pray to the Lord.

For our willingness to challenge over-consumption and materialism in ourselves, our community and our world for the sake the most vulnerable. We pray to the Lord.

That we may experience your presence in the midst of the environment, and be inspired to work for justice to protect it. We pray to the Lord.

Sources:
EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE IN LIGHT OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- Do I respect the life and dignity of every human person from conception through natural death?
- Do I recognize the face of Christ reflected in all others around me whatever their race, class, age, or abilities?
- Do I work to protect the dignity of others when it is being threatened?
- Am I committed to both protecting human life and to ensuring that every human being is able to live in dignity?

Call to Family, Community, and Participation
- Do I try to make positive contributions in my family and in my community?
- Are my beliefs, attitudes, and choices such that they strengthen or undermine the institution of the family?
- Am I aware of problems facing my local community and involved in efforts to find solutions? Do I stay informed and make my voice heard when needed?
- Do I support the efforts of poor persons to work for change in their neighborhoods and communities? Do my attitudes and interactions empower or disempower others?

Rights and Responsibilities
- Do I recognize and respect the economic, social, political, and cultural rights of others?
- Do I live in material comfort and excess while remaining insensitive to the needs of others whose rights are unfulfilled?
- Do I take seriously my responsibility to ensure that the rights of persons in need are realized?
- Do I urge those in power to implement programs and policies that give priority to the human dignity and rights of all, especially the vulnerable?

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Do I give special attention to the needs of the poor and vulnerable in my community and in the world?
- Am I disproportionately concerned for my own good at the expense of others?
- Do I engage in service and advocacy work that protects the dignity of poor and vulnerable persons?

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- As a worker, do I give my employer a fair day’s work for my wages? As an owner, do I treat workers fairly?
- Do I treat all workers with whom I interact with respect, no matter their position or class?
- Do I support the rights of all workers to adequate wages, health insurance, vacation and sick leave? Do I affirm their right to form or join unions or worker associations?
- Do my purchasing choices take into account the hands involved in the production of what I buy? When possible, do I buy products produced by workers whose rights and dignity were respected?

Solidarity
- Does the way I spend my time reflect a genuine concern for others?
- Is solidarity incorporated into my prayer and spirituality? Do I lift up vulnerable people throughout the world in my prayer, or is it reserved for only my personal concerns?
- Am I attentive only to my local neighbors or also those across the globe?
- Do I see all members of the human family as my brothers and sisters?

Care for God’s Creation
- Do I live out my responsibility to care for God’s creation?
• Do I see my care for creation as connected to my concern for poor persons, who are most at risk from environmental problems?
• Do I litter? Live wastefully? Use energy too freely? Are there ways I could reduce consumption in my life?
• Are there ways I could change my daily practices and those of my family, school, workplace, or community to better conserve the earth’s resources for future generations?
Hear us, O God

Hear us, O God. Hear our families of mixed status. Hear those who wait in fear of separation, burdened with anxiety.

Hear us, O God. Hear all who are called "foreigner." Hear us when we experience cold stares or mistrust because of the color of our skin or the language we speak.

Hear us, O God. Hear our brothers and sisters who sweat in the fields. Hear those who work long, backbreaking hours growing food, serving us at restaurants, and cleaning our homes.

Hear us, O God. Hear those young people who were brought to this country as children. Hear their dreams for a future of hope.

Hear us, O God. Hear vulnerable women and children. Hear those who have fled domestic violence, rape, or gangs to seek safety in this country.

Hear us, O God. Hear those who work in the shadows and are exposed to exploitation and harassment. Hear those for whom just pay for a just day's work is always uncertain.

Hear us, O God. Hear us as we raise our voices. Hear your people as we seek laws and policies to protect the vulnerable and welcome the stranger.

Standing together—a single yet diverse body of Christ, we pray: Shepherd of the flock, hear us. Be with us, restore us, and strengthen us, for we belong to you.

May your kingdom come and your will be done. Amen.

Source: http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/hear-us-o-god.cfm
Help Us Build Communities in God’s Vision of Justice

Holy Spirit,
   We praise and thank you!

You anoint us to
   bring glad tidings to the poor
   proclaim liberty to captives
   recover sight for the blind
   free the oppressed
   and build communities in keeping
   with God’s vision of justice.

Show us how to be
   light of the world
   salt of the earth
   seeds that sprout love
   and leaven that infuses humanity
   with the desire to promote
   human dignity and solidarity.

Help us to listen so that
   those in poverty can lead our efforts to
   proclaim a more hopeful vision
   liberate captives from injustice
   heal the blindness of the powerful
   free us all from self-centeredness
   and build community to overcome poverty.

Amen.

Pope Francis’ Prayer for Workers

Lord God look down upon us! Look at this city, this island. Look upon our families.

Lord, you were not without a job, you were a carpenter, you were happy.

Lord, we have no work.

The idols want to rob us of our dignity. The unjust systems want to rob us of hope.

Lord, do not leave us on our own. Help us to help each other; so that we forget our selfishness a little and feel in our heart the “we”, the we of a people who want to keep on going.

Lord Jesus, you were never out of work, give us work and teach us to fight for work and bless us all.

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer for Migrant Families

Good and gracious God, we thank you for the gift of families. We are grateful for all of the joy and love that they bring into our lives, and we ask that you provide special protection for all families, particularly those who face hardships as they move in search of a better life. Show mercy to those who travel in danger, and lead them to a place of safety and peace. Comfort those who are alone and afraid because their families have been torn apart by violence and injustice. As we reflect upon the difficult journey that the Holy Family faced as refugees in Egypt, help us to remember the suffering of all migrant families. Through the intercession of Mary our Mother, and St. Joseph the Worker, her spouse, we pray that all migrants may be reunited with their loved ones and find the meaningful work they seek. Open our hearts so that we may provide hospitality for all who come in search of refuge. Give us the courage to welcome every stranger as Christ in our midst. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

Artist: Kelly Latimore

More Prayer Resources

- Catholic Relief Services Prayer Resources Page https://www.crs.org/get-involved/prayer-resources
- Prayers for the Poor from Catholics Confront Global Poverty https://www.confrontglobalpoverty.org/worship/prayers/

Topic Specific Justice Resources

- Racism
  - Local resource page from Archdiocese of Seattle Missions Office http://www.seattlearchdiocese.org/Missions/educationresources/default.aspx

- Care for Creation
  - Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center “A New Solidarity with Creation” Resources https://www.ipjc.org/programs/a-new-solidarity-with-creation/

- Economic Justice
  - Catholics Confront Global Poverty resources https://www.confrontglobalpoverty.org/
  - PovertyUSA (Resource from Catholic Campaign for Human Development) to explore domestic poverty statistics and stories of Catholics responding) http://www.povertyusa.org/

- Immigration and Migration
  - Catholic Legal Immigration Network https://cliniclegal.org/
  - Justice for Immigrants Campaign https://justiceforimmigrants.org/

- Criminal Justice Reform
  - Ignatian Solidarity Network Capital Punishment Information https://ignatiansolidarity.net/capital-punishment/

- Gun Violence
  - Ignatian Solidarity Network resources on peace and gun violence https://ignatiansolidarity.net/blog/2012/12/15/newtown/
• Gender Inequality
  o "Girl Rising" Resources for Education and Advocacy https://girlrising.org/