



# **CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING**

## **Parish Religious Education Adaptations**



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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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# Chapter 1: Catholic Social Justice: An Overview

## Getting Started

Introduce the concept of Catholic Social Teaching to the teens by summarizing, in your own words, the material found on page 31 of the Teacher's Manual, "Introducing the Chapter." Optionally, you may also have teens read the summary of principles of Catholic social teaching on pages 14–17 of the Student Text. Then have them read the following story.

## The Story

*Casa Juan Diego is a Catholic Worker community in Houston, Texas, where unpaid volunteers provide hospitality for immigrants, refugees, and others in need of help.*

### CASA JUAN DIEGO, HOUSE OF MIRACLES

*By Martha Mary*

I sat in the comedor of Casa Juan Diego and heard a story of a woman who, upon arrival, had been referred to a local hospital. She had massive burns on her leg from the exhaust pipe of a truck. She had ridden several days and nights in order to get to Houston. She had traveled from El Salvador. . .

Access the rest of this story at [www.cjd.org/stories/miracles.html](http://www.cjd.org/stories/miracles.html) from the *Houston Catholic Worker*, Vol. XVI, No. 7, December 1996.

## Discussion

Lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions:

1. What is this story about? How did you react to it?
2. Catholic social teaching says that the dignity of human beings comes from the fact that they are created in the image of God. In what ways are the individuals in this story "images of God"?  
*For example, in the warm welcome and assistance provided by the volunteers at Casa Juan Diego and in the pride the guests take in their work at the house.*
3. What principles of Catholic social teaching were violated in this story?  
*For example, the principle of human dignity was violated through the domestic and sexual abuse of the author's husband; the principle of participation was violated in the disruption of the family and the lack of options the author had for reestablishing herself in society; the principle of human rights, especially the right to shelter, was violated in the woman's homelessness.*
4. What principles of Catholic social teaching were practiced in this story?  
*For example, the dignity of work was practiced in the meaningful work performed by the house's guests; the preferential option for the poor was practiced in the hospitality provided to the guests; solidarity was evident in the woman's realization that she and the other guests were "all God's children."*
5. What role does faith play in this story?  
*Faith motivated the people who served at Casa Juan Diego and sustained the author by enabling her to see her situation in a hopeful light.*  
(How might this story be different if the author or the volunteers did not have faith?)
6. Imagine the next chapter in this story. What do you think happened to the author and her daughter next? How might her story have been different if it had not been for the volunteers at Casa Juan Diego?

## Take Action

*Envisioning a world of justice*

- Work with the group to complete the following project. You will need several large sheets of paper or newsprint and drawing materials (markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.).
- Divide the teens into groups of about five people.
- Tell the teens that they are to work together to illustrate what they think their city or town would look like

if the community fully practiced the principles of Catholic social teaching. What would be different? For example, teens might draw a map of their “new” community showing the addition of environmental initiatives (alternative energy sources, bike paths, etc.), places for teens to safely hang out, health clinics for the poor, and so on. Or their illustration might show scenes of interracial gatherings, people visiting the elderly, and so on.

- When all the illustrations are complete (allow 20–40 minutes), have each group present their vision of a community based on the principles of Catholic social teaching.
- Facilitate deeper reflection by asking questions about how their vision might actually be accomplished.

### *Additional Activities*

- Have teens complete the worksheet, “Social Justice Principles,” from page 196 of the Teacher’s Manual.
- Have teens complete the “Using Your Gifts for Others” inventory on page 21 of the Student Text.
- Conduct the “Injustice in the News” activity on page 9 of the Student Text.

### *Additional Resources*

For additional books, videos, and websites related to this topic, see pages 31–33 of the Teacher’s Manual.

## Chapter 2: Justice and Virtues

### Getting Started

Introduce the concept of the virtues to the teens by summarizing, in your own words, the material found on page 47 of the Teacher’s Manual, “Introducing the Chapter.” Optionally, have teens read about the virtues on pages 35–39 of the Student Text. Then have them read the following story.

### The Story

*At the age of 12, Craig Kielburger and his friends launched “Kids Can Free the Children,” a Toronto-based organization dedicated to ending child labor in developing countries. Today, it is the largest network of children helping children in the world. In just seven years, the youth volunteers raised enough funds to build more than 300 primary schools in 21 countries, bringing daily education to more than 20,000 children worldwide. Their work earned Kielburger and Free the Children a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. In an interview with GlobalTribe, Craig talks about what he has learned about youth and life as an “active citizen.”*

#### CRAIG KIELBURGER ON ENDING CHILD LABOR AND BEING AN ACTIVE CITIZEN

*By Amy Eldon*

CRAIG KIELBURGER: I was twelve years old when I first became involved in human rights. One morning, when I was getting ready for school, I began to search for the comics section of the newspaper. On the front page was the picture of a young boy from Pakistan who had been sold into slavery as a carpet weaver when he was four years old. According to the story, he worked 12 hours a day tying tiny knots to make carpets. He lost his freedom to laugh and to play. He lost his freedom to go to school. When he was twelve years of age, the same age as I at the time, he was murdered. I had never heard about child labor and the differences in our lives shocked me. I was able to relate to him because we were both the same age. . . .

Access the rest of this story at [www.pbs.org/kcet/globaltribe/voices/voi\\_kielburger.html](http://www.pbs.org/kcet/globaltribe/voices/voi_kielburger.html) from the PBS series *Global Tribe*.

### Discussion

Lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions:

1. What, if anything, did you find most surprising about this story?
2. Which of the theological and cardinal virtues are illustrated in this story?  
*For example, love motivated Craig and his friends to take action on behalf of child laborers; hope enabled them to believe that they could make a difference despite their youth; fortitude enabled them to persevere against great odds; justice guided their actions on behalf of the child laborers.*
3. What role do you think these virtues played in the success of Craig’s activism?
4. The Church calls Christians to perform acts of charity, but also to pursue social justice. In what ways do Craig and the other members of Free the Children perform acts of charity?  
*For example, providing school kits or medical supplies to needy children.*  
What are some examples of how Craig and Free the Children work for social justice?  
*For example, by working to change or establish child labor laws, by offering leadership training to young people, and by building schools to provide educational opportunities to young people.*
5. What aspects of Craig’s message did you most strongly agree or disagree with, and why?

### Take Action

#### VIRTUES AND THE NEWS

- For this activity, you will need a variety of newspapers or news magazines, enough to provide at least one for every participant.
- Remind the teens that Craig Kielburger was motivated to take action in response to an injustice that he read about in the newspaper. Explain to them that they will be examining the news for stories of injustice that might spark a similar reaction in them.

- Have the teens form groups.
- Allow the teens some time to review their newspapers for stories of injustice; allow the teens to discuss these stories with one another.
- Ask each group to select one story. Explain that each group should discuss how young people of their age might respond to the injustice described in the story, listing specific actions that young people could take. Each group should also discuss the virtues that would be necessary to successfully undertake their proposed actions.
- Have each small group present their story to the large group, along with ideas for how young people might respond and the virtues that would be necessary to make the response successful.
- As the teens make their presentations, deepen the discussion by asking how the story and their responses relate to the principles of Catholic social teaching.

### *Additional Activities*

- Have teens develop the skits described on page 53 of the Teacher’s Manual (Creative Learning, a).
- Have teens complete the worksheet, “Charity and Justice Compared,” from page 199 of the Teacher’s Manual.
- As homework, have teens investigate Catholic social teaching documents using the information in the activity on page 48 of the Student Text as a guide. Ask each teen to bring three interesting quotes from the Catholic social teaching documents to share with the group at the next session.
- Have teens write letters to their elected representatives on a justice issue of importance to them, using the information on pages 50–51 of the Student Text as a guide. Bring envelopes, stamps, and a list of addresses so the letters can be mailed when the letters have been written.

### *Additional Resources*

For additional books, videos, and websites related to this topic, see pages 47–49 of the Teacher’s Manual.

## Chapter 3: Justice and Society

### Getting Started

Introduce the social context of justice to the teens by summarizing, in your own words, the material found on page 67 of the Teacher's Manual, "Introducing the Chapter." Be sure to explain the principles of subsidiarity, the common good, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor. Optionally, you may also have them read about the principles of the common good, solidarity, and the option for the poor on pages 68–72 of the Student Text. Then have them read the following story.

### The Story

*A Catholic archdiocese and one of its leading businesses takes a look at its operating principles in a developing nation.*

#### BY THEIR FRUITS YOU SHALL KNOW THEM: CAN CATHOLICS MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR JUSTICE IN THE BUSINESS WORLD?

*By Dennis O'Connor*

In the dining room of a Guatemala City guest house, a group of Americans is clustered around a big map of Guatemala. They are watching an animated representative from the union syndicate Unsitragua jabbing his right forefinger at points along the country's Pacific coast. . . .

Read the rest of this story at [www.uscatholic.org/2004/05/cov0405.htm](http://www.uscatholic.org/2004/05/cov0405.htm) reprinted from the May 2004 (Vol. 69, No. 5: pages 12–17) issue of *U.S. Catholic* magazine.

### Discussion

*Lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions:*

1. What are the people featured in this story attempting to accomplish?  
*They are trying to apply the principles of Catholic social teaching to the business world.*
2. What are some examples of people practicing solidarity in this story?  
*The Global Solidarity delegation to Guatemala; the divestment of AT&T stock by the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati; manager Bob Ehram's promotion of just policies at Chiquita; the work of members of the Woodstock Business Conference; Proctor & Gamble's decision to sell fair-trade coffee.*
3. What are some examples of people practicing the option for the poor in this story?  
*Chiquita's decision to stop union-busting; Proctor & Gamble's decision to sell fair-trade coffee.*
4. How would you respond to the following questions posed by the author at the beginning of the article: What responsibilities do Catholic business executives have to seek the common good, even when it may be in conflict with achieving financial goals or other corporate objectives? What can individuals do to effect change, to make sure that their own companies are doing what they can to provide for the poor?
5. What do you think consumers might do to encourage businesses to engage in practices that protect the common good?

### Take Action

*Random acts of kindness*

- Before the session, visit the "Inspiration" section of the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation's website at [www.actsofkindness.org/inspiration/stories/](http://www.actsofkindness.org/inspiration/stories/). Select several of the most inspiring random acts of kindness to print out for use later.
- Explain the principle of random acts of kindness to your teens, sharing some of the inspirational stories with them. Relate the practice of random acts of kindness to the principle of solidarity. Then invite them to commit their own random acts of kindness as homework.
- At the beginning of the next session, invite the teens to share their random acts of kindness. Deepen the discussion by inviting them to think about what virtues were required and/or strengthened by practicing kindness to others.

### *Additional Activities*

- Have teens complete the “Bible Search: Option for the Poor” worksheet found on page 203 of the Teacher’s Manual.
- Have teens complete the inventory of respectfulness found on page 68 of the Student Text.
- Consider encouraging teens to conduct the Fair Trade service project idea explained on page 71 of the Student Text.

### *Additional Resources*

For additional books, videos, and websites related to this topic, see pages 67–69 of the Teacher’s Manual.

## Chapter 4: Justice and the Right to Life

### Getting Started

Introduce teens to the concept of the right to life by summarizing, in your own words, the chapter summary found on pages 110–111 of the Student Text. Optionally, you may also have them read the chapter summary on their own; or, ask them to read about abortion on pages 89–94 and the seamless garment on pages 107–109 of the Student Text. Then have them read the following story.

### The Story

*There are better alternatives to a teenage pregnancy than abortion. Unfortunately, many teens who find themselves pregnant are never counseled about alternatives. This story tells how one school provided its own alternative to abortion.*

#### CATHOLIC SCHOOL GIVES TEENS ALTERNATIVE TO ABORTION

By Elizabeth A. Perry

Like most toddlers, 18-month-old Hunter is full of curiosity and vigor. The sweet-natured, blond, blue-eyed boy with the perpetual grin on his face wanted to be the center of attention, whether his family was being interviewed for a story or not. Ray and Bonnie and their daughter, Sandy, laughed as Sandy's son grabbed the reporter's keys and tried to start his toy car. . . .

Access the rest of this story at <http://clarionherald.org/19991125/art005.htm> originally printed in the *Clarion Herald*, November 25, 1999.

### Discussion

Lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions:

1. What are some of the emotions Sandy felt when she found out she was pregnant?  
*For example, scared and embarrassed.*
2. What are some of the obstacles Sandy faced after she chose to keep her baby?  
*For example: not being able to continue at her regular school, the breakup with the baby's father, the putting on hold of her dreams.*
3. What kind of support was key to Sandy raising a happy and well-adjusted child?  
*She had the support of her family, new schoolmates, church, and, finally, the baby's father.*
4. How do you think society should change to make it easier for women like Sandy to choose life?
5. Imagine that your friend confides in you that she is pregnant. What are some things you could do to help her choose life?

### Take Action

Creating a safety net for pregnant students

- Tell your teens that about one in three girls in the U.S. will become pregnant before the age of 20. Ask: "What sorts of resources would help these teens choose life?" As the teens discuss this question, list their ideas on a chalkboard or newsprint.
- Ask: "What is our community doing to provide support to pregnant teens?" Have them discuss the question based on their own experience.
- If time permits, have them research the question by contacting community leaders (the county health department, high school counselors, crisis pregnancy centers, and so on). Divide the teens into groups and have each group take responsibility for researching one aspect of the problem. Have the teens report their findings at the next session.
- Next, divide the teens into groups and ask each group to write up a plan for improving the community's support for pregnant teens. The plan should be as specific as possible. Have each group present its plan to the whole group.
- Conclude by pointing out that this exercise illustrates the virtue of justice in action; while the virtue of charity prompts people to reach out directly to pregnant women in need, the virtue of justice prompts people to order society in a way that makes it easier for people to do what is right and good.

### *Additional Activities*

- Have the teens prepare a prayer service commemorating the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, as described on page 94 of the Teacher's Manual.
- Have the teens respond to the case study on page 95 of the Student Text.
- Have the teens complete the "Scripture Link" activity on pages 95–96 of the Student Text.

### *Additional Resources*

For additional books, videos, and websites related to this topic, see pages 89–91 of the Teacher's Manual.

## Chapter 5: Justice and Prejudice

### Getting Started

Introduce teens to the concept of prejudice by summarizing, in your own words, the material on page 107 of the Teacher’s Manual, “Introducing the Chapter.” Optionally, you may also have them read the chapter summary on page 131 of the Student Text; or ask them to read about prejudice on pages 116–122 of the Student Text. Then have them read the following story. A note about this article: In describing his experience as an African American, the author expresses strong views that some teens may find challenging. If the discussion of this article shows signs of becoming an argument with the author, encourage teens to practice empathetic listening—that is, simply acknowledging the reality and validity of the author’s experience and feelings. Point out that such empathy is a key to overcoming prejudice.

### The Story

*An African American graduate from the University of Notre Dame shares his different perspective of racial prejudice with his white friend, Jack, also a graduate of Notre Dame.*

#### DEAR JACK: A LETTER ACROSS THE RACIAL DIVIDE

*By Anthony Walton*

Dear Jack,

Late one afternoon last summer, we sat for several hours in your car in front of my house talking about several recent racially based attacks by whites upon blacks in Maine towns. These attacks, unexpected and out of character for the state, set you to reading and thinking about what Gunnar Myrdal called “the American dilemma”: the inability of the United States to live up to its stated creeds and goals, a failure that has resulted in a never-ending conflict. . . .

Access the rest of the story at <http://salt.claretianpubs.org/issues/racism/walton.html> adapted from *Salt of the Earth*, 1997.

### Discussion

*Lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions:*

1. Can you sum up what the author said in this article?

*Teens may suggest a variety of points, e.g., that prejudice poisons ordinary social exchanges, that many blacks feel alienated from the wider American society.*

2. What are some examples of prejudice described by the author?

*The black security guard who questioned the author’s presence in the hotel; the boy who seemed to feel rejected by the author; people who use racial slurs such as “nigger,” or who tell racial jokes, or who go out of the way to welcome blacks in social or business situations.*

3. How does the author describe the consequences of such prejudice?

*The black person is reminded of his otherness and, eventually, loses hope and gives up on the wider society.*

4. Have you had experiences similar to those described by the author? How are your experiences similar to or different from the author’s?

*Encourage teens to probe their own experiences of prejudice, including how their race, gender, or ethnicity affects those experiences.*

5. Think for a moment about the principles of Catholic social teaching. How do you think prejudice affects other social justice issues?

### Take Action

*What do you see in me?*

- In this short activity, teens reflect on how prejudice affects them personally. You will need blank paper, colorful writing instruments (colored pencils, markers, crayons, etc.), and tape for hanging the paper on the wall when teens are finished. You can enhance the activity by asking teens to bring a favorite picture of themselves from home—it could be a current photo, or one from childhood.

- Ask the teens to write “How other people see me” on one side of the paper. If they brought a picture of themselves from home, they can tape it to this side of the paper. Then, on the reverse side of the paper, they should write “How I see myself.” Explain that when they are finished, the top of the papers will be taped to the wall to make a sort of gallery that the teens can browse through, flipping each paper up in order to reveal how each person sees himself or herself. Accordingly, “How I see myself” should be written “upside down” in relation to the “How others see me” side of the paper.
- Explain that on the “How others see me” side of the paper, the teens should write down words, phrases, or sentences describing how they think others perceive them. On the “How I see myself” side, they should write words, phrases, and sentences that describe how they perceive themselves. Allow the teens time to do this.
- When all the teens are finished, tape their papers to the wall along the top edge of the paper, so that each can be flipped up to reveal the teens’ perceptions of themselves on the other side.
- Allow the teens some time to browse through the different papers; encourage the teens to share their thoughts and reactions as they do so.
- When everyone has finished viewing the papers, discuss the contrast between the “How others see me” and the “How I see myself” sides of the paper. Some possible discussion questions include: Did anyone learn something new about another teen? Did anyone realize they had misperceptions about another teen? Could any of these misperceptions be called either positive or negative prejudice? Does it matter whether people see the “real you”? How do others’ misperceptions affect you? How are such misperceptions like or dislike other forms of prejudice (racial, gender, and so on)? Do people always accurately perceive how others view them? Can others’ perceptions help someone see something new in themselves? How can we overcome negative misperceptions and prejudices about one another?

### *Additional Activities*

- Distribute copies of the “Personal Survey” of racism on page 208 of the Teacher’s Manual. Have teens discuss the results.
- Bring in a videotaped sitcom for analysis as described in the “Extending the Session” section of the Teacher’s Manual on page 114.

### *Additional Resources*

For additional books, videos, and websites related to this topic, see pages 107–109 of the Teacher’s Manual.

## Chapter 6: Justice and Racism

### Getting Started

Introduce teens to the concept of racism by summarizing, in your own words, the material on page 119 of the Teacher’s Manual, “Introducing the Chapter.” Optionally, you may also have them read the chapter summary on page 155 of the Student Text; or ask them to read about racism and institutionalized racism on pages 135–137, and inclusiveness on pages 151–152 of the Student Text. Then have them read the following story.

### The Story

*A parish comes together to work through racial healing through an involved and effective process.*

#### WE HAVE A DREAM

*By Richard K. Taylor*

Colette Oldham, a 16-year-old member of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Philadelphia, attends a private high school that is predominantly white. As a white teen from the suburbs, Oldham never had an opportunity to meet African Americans her own age, let alone become friends with them. . . .

Access the rest of the story at [www.uscatholic.org/2001/02/dream0102.htm](http://www.uscatholic.org/2001/02/dream0102.htm) originally from *Salt of the Earth*, 1997.

### Discussion

Lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions:

1. What problem did Saint Vincent de Paul parish try to overcome?  
*Racial tensions rooted in a history of racism against black parishioners.*  
What did the parish do to overcome the problem of prejudice and racism?  
*They started a program to systematically address the issue of racism in the parish.*
2. What virtues, personal characteristics, and spiritual resources did the African American Leadership Ministry need in order to carry out their plan?  
*Teens offer a wide variety of valid answers; under “Lesson 1,” the author explicitly names prayer, wisdom, strength, patience, dialogue, humility, commitment, responsibility, and God’s help or grace.*
3. In your opinion, what was the most important or interesting step the parish took toward forming a real community across racial lines?
4. Think about the chaos stage of developing community across racial lines. Why do you think this stage is necessary?  
*Without it, the truth is never openly addressed and real community never forms.*  
What did the participants need to do to survive this stage?  
*Commitment to the process, self-examination, sharing fears and vulnerabilities, admitting prejudices, expressing a willingness to change, and speaking the truth in love. They also held potlucks and additional meetings to get to know one another more deeply and enlisted the aid of professionals in conflict resolution and diversity training.*
5. Suppose we undertook a similar effort to form real community across racial lines in our school or community. What elements would you borrow from the process described in the article? How would our effort need to be different? Do you think such an effort could be successful?

### Take Action

*Getting to know you*

- Find a way for your teens to experience, if only briefly, a racial, religious, or ethnic subset of their community that is mostly foreign to the teens. For example, if your time is limited, arrange for someone from that minority group to speak to your teens about that people’s history, culture, and experience in the wider community. Alternatively, find a video that profiles a racial, ethnic, or religious group that is unfamiliar to the teens (PBS has a wide variety of useful videos). If time permits, a field trip into an unfamiliar community—for example, a synagogue, mosque, cultural center, soup kitchen, ethnic museum, or group home—would be even better.

- In advance of the experience, point out that the article about Saint Vincent de Paul parish illustrates that overcoming racial division is not easy—in fact, it is hard work. While it may not be possible for each of us to undertake such an involved process individually, we can take the step of getting to know people who are different from us so that we have fewer misperceptions and fears about them.
- Have teens spend some time sharing their perceptions and knowledge about the ethnic, racial, or religious group they will be experiencing. Record their comments on newsprint for later reference.
- After the teens’ experience, have them summarize their perceptions and knowledge about the group again. Record their answers on newsprint.
- Bring out the newsprint from before the experience and compare their “before” and “after” perceptions. Explore with the teens how their perceptions changed, and why.
- To enhance the activity, conclude by asking the teens to develop a short prayer service devoted to greater understanding between different peoples.

### *Additional Activities*

- Have teens answer the racial stereotype questions on page 139 of the Student Text.
- Have the teens complete the “Scripture Link” activity on page 147 of the Student Text.
- Consider undertaking some of the suggestions outlined in “Do Something to Combat Racism” on page 154 of the Student Text.
- Have teens complete the worksheet “Identifying Racism” on page 210 of the Teacher’s Manual.
- Conduct a debate on affirmative action or immigration as described in the “Creative Learning” section on page 126 of the Teacher’s Manual.

### *Additional Resources*

For additional books, videos, and websites related to this topic, see pages 119–121 of the Teacher’s Manual.

# Chapter 7: Justice and Poverty

## Getting Started

Introduce teens to the concept of poverty by summarizing, in your own words, the material on page 133 of the Teacher’s Manual, “Introducing the Chapter.” Optionally, you may also have them read the chapter summary on page 185 of the Student Text; or ask them to read about definitions of poverty on pages 160–161, the scandal of hunger on pages 168–170, and the preferential option for the poor on pages 173–176 of the Student Text. Then have them read the following story.

## The Story

*The author of this essay, Sister Helen Prejean, is famous for her work with death row inmates.*

### CATHOLICS SHOULD HANG OUT WITH POOR PEOPLE

*By Sr. Helen Prejean*

I was 40 years old before I realized the connection between the Jesus who said, “I was hungry and you gave me to eat,” and the real-life experience of being with actual people who were hungry. Before that, when I read “I was hungry and you gave me to eat,” I tended to rationalize, “There’s a lot of ways of being hungry.” “I was in prison, and you came to visit me,”—“There’s a lot of ways we live in prison.” . . .

Access the rest of the story at [www.uscatholic.org/2002/09/sb0209.htm](http://www.uscatholic.org/2002/09/sb0209.htm) from the September 2002 issue of *U.S. Catholic*.

## Discussion

*Lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions:*

1. What does the author say Christians who take their faith seriously need to do?  
*Be in contact with poor people.*  
Why?  
*Because we will find Christ in lepers, prostitutes, thieves—all the people society wants to throw away.*
2. What other aspects of social justice did the author mention in her discussion of poverty?  
*For example: dignity, respect for life, racism.*
3. The author described how she resisted “standing on the side of the poor” at first. What were some of the reasons she gave for her resistance?  
*She resisted growing in faith; also, contact with the poor eventually requires challenging the wealthy and comfortable.*  
For what other reasons do you think some people are reluctant to get to know and help out people who are poor?
4. The author says that our search for God in the poor must be coupled with reflection, prayer, and meditation. Why do you think these spiritual activities are so important?
5. What “spiritual riches” did the author discover through her work with the poor?  
*Working with the poor grew out of her tremendous energy and gifts that she didn’t know she had, and it gave her the feeling of coming home.*
6. Who are the “throwaways” in your school or community? What would it mean to “stand on the side” of these people?

## Take Action

*Scripture hunt: The preferential option for the poor*

- In this activity, teens explore what the Scriptures have to say about society’s “throwaways.” You will need a bible for every teen, paper, and pencils or pens.
- Divide the teens into groups of three or four. Remind the teens of Sister Helen Prejean’s original attitude toward what the Scriptures said about the poor, and invite them to explore what the Scriptures say about society’s “throwaways” for themselves. Explain that you will be holding a contest to see which group can find

and record the most Scripture verses about the poor and society's "throwaways." Have each group assign a recorder to write down the Scripture passage, including a citation, while the other group members search.

- Give the groups ten minutes to search their bibles for appropriate verses.
- When the groups are finished searching, have each group share the verses they found. Write all the verses on the chalkboard or on newsprint. If teens suggest problematic verses (for example, verses advocating that murderers or adulterers be stoned to death), include those as well. When each group has finished sharing its verses, tally the total number of verses that the groups found.
- When all the groups have finished sharing their verses, declare a winner. Then discuss the teens' findings by asking the following questions: Can you sum up what Scripture has to say about poor people, society's "throwaways"? What are the most surprising or interesting verses here, and why? What would our society look like if it acted on these verses—not only as individuals, but also on a social and governmental level? If some of the verses are problematic, ask: Some of these verses seem to contradict the others; how do you think we can resolve that apparent contradiction? (Help teens to understand that Catholics interpret the Scriptures in the context of the whole of Revelation, and that the Bible overwhelmingly supports a preferential option for the poor.)

### *Additional Activities*

- Have teens conduct the group research project, "Where Did My Money Go?" on page 184 of the Student Text.
- Ask teens to complete the Scripture activity on page 173 of the Student Text.
- Have teens complete the worksheet on page 213 of the Teacher's Manual, "Types of Poverty." Explain the three types of poverty as described on page 136 of the Teacher's Manual.
- Have teens debate government-sponsored welfare as described in the Teacher's Manual on page 146.

### *Additional Resources*

For additional books, videos, and websites related to this topic, see pages 133–135 of the Teacher's Manual.

## Chapter 8: Justice and Peace

### Getting Started

Introduce teens to the concept of peace by summarizing, in your own words, the material on page 151 of the Teacher’s Manual, “Introducing the Chapter.” Optionally, you may also have them read the chapter summary on pages 216–217 of the Student Text; or ask them to read about Christians and peace on pages 190–194, nonviolence on pages 197–202, and the just war theory on pages 203–206 of the Student Text. Then have them read the following story.

### The Story

*The Catholic Church played a major role in what became known as the “People Power” revolution in the Philippines in 1986. The Church in the Philippines spent years before the revolution training people in nonviolent resistance, and the Church-sponsored radio station helped to direct protesters during the revolution.*

#### PEOPLE POWER IN THE PHILIPPINES

*By James VanHise*

In the mid-1980s a popular movement sprang up to oust the corrupt Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos. As the resistance gained momentum, two key military officers defected from the government and sequestered themselves inside a Manila military base. What followed was an amazing example of nonviolent struggle as hundreds of thousands of ordinary Filipinos took to the streets to protect the rebel officers from troops still loyal to Marcos. . . .

Access the rest of the story at [www.fragmentsweb.org/TXT2/philip.tx.html](http://www.fragmentsweb.org/TXT2/philip.tx.html)

### Discussion

Lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions:

1. What resources were available to Ferdinand Marcos in this conflict?

*Possible answers might include the military, including tanks, guns, and helicopters supplied by the United States; the state-controlled media; control of the Filipino government; the support of the U.S. government.*

What resources were available to his opponents?

*Possible answers might include Radio Veritas; the authority of the Church; good organization; prayer; large numbers of supporters; virtues such as faith, love, fortitude, and prudence.*

2. Jesus told his followers to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). What are some specific examples of how the Filipino people followed this teaching?  
*For example, the people who gave flowers, food, and cigarettes to the soldiers; the woman who used humor with one of the soldiers; the priests and nuns who prayed in front of the tanks; the people’s refusal to use violence in response to the threat of violence.*
3. Why do you think the military didn’t use violence against the people who were blocking the streets?
4. What do you think was the key to the success of this nonviolent revolution?  
*If necessary, direct the teens’ attention to the author’s statement: “Unfortunately for Marcos, force is not the same as power, and although he still has plenty of force at his disposal, the sources of his power are drying up.” Marcos derived his power from the consent of the people, who effectively stripped him of power by refusing to cooperate with him.*
5. If the defecting soldiers (Juan Ponce Enrile, Fidel Ramos, and their supporters) had decided to wage a violent revolution against the unjust Marcos regime, how might the situation have turned out differently?
6. The People Power revolution successfully removed Marcos from power, but many unjust structures were left standing in Filipino society. What lessons from the People Power revolution might be applied to working for justice in other areas?

## *Take Action*

### *Non-violent conflict skits*

- Explain to the teens that the story about the nonviolent “People Power” revolution in the Philippines is just one of many historical instances where nonviolent actions were successfully employed to overcome injustice. Tell the teens that people who study alternatives to violent conflict have developed various methods of nonviolent action, and that the teens will have an opportunity to imagine some of these methods in action by developing their own skits.
- Before the session, select and print out several of the case studies at the *A Force More Powerful* website, [www.pbs.org/weta/forcemorepowerful/](http://www.pbs.org/weta/forcemorepowerful/). Alternatively, rent the video of the same name and show excerpts.
- Divide the teens into small groups of 3–6 people each. Provide each group with one of the case studies of nonviolent conflict.
- Instruct the teens to read the case study together and to develop a short skit dramatizing one aspect of the nonviolent conflict. The skits should have three parts: An introduction, in which a narrator summarizes the background for the events dramatized in the skit; the dramatic action; and an epilogue, in which a narrator summarizes how the conflict was resolved. Advise teens that they should probably avoid trying to tell the whole story in the action of their skits; rather, they will probably be more successful dramatizing a scene illustrating the sorts of personal interactions that might have occurred during the nonviolent conflict. For example, a skit about the Nashville lunch counter sit-ins might illustrate the interaction between several student protesters, a store clerk, and white shoppers.
- After the teens have presented their skits, discuss the common elements of the various nonviolent conflicts. Ask the teens to imagine how nonviolence might be used to achieve justice or as an alternative to violent conflicts in the world today.
- *Note:* When first introduced to the concept of nonviolence, most people are initially skeptical, often offering many “exceptions” in which nonviolence would likely fail. One way to respond to such skepticism is to point out that violent conflict also carries the potential for failure, along with the likelihood of death and destruction. Point out that our Christian faith calls us to creatively imagine alternatives to violence, rather than dismissing nonviolent approaches to conflict out of hand.
- Additional activities may be found at the *A Force More Powerful* website.

### *Additional Activities*

- Have teens complete the “Are You a Peacemaker?” exercise on page 190 of the Student Text.
- Have teens complete the “Extending the Session” activity “b” (analyzing a current conflict according to just war principles) on page 159 of the Teacher’s Manual.
- Conduct a debate on the concept of a just war as outlined on page 159 of the Teacher’s Manual.

### *Additional Resources*

For additional books, videos, and websites related to this topic, see pages 151–152 of the Teacher’s Manual.

## Chapter 9: Justice and Work

### Getting Started

Introduce teens to the concept of peace by summarizing, in your own words, the material on page 167 of the Teacher’s Manual, “Introducing the Chapter.” Optionally, you may also have them read the chapter summary on pages 245–246 of the Student Text; or ask them to read about work on pages 221–222 and a Christian view of work on pages 223–227 of the Student Text. Then have them read the following story. A note about this article: Some of the economic concepts addressed in this article are beyond the understanding of many high school teens. Advise teens that they do not need to completely understand the economic dynamics discussed in the article. Help them to focus on the “big picture”:

- the principles of justice motivating the company to achieve a living wage;
- the fact that achieving a living wage involved overcoming difficult obstacles;
- the importance of working toward justice despite the obstacles one faces; and
- the need to address justice issues on both a local and a societal level.

### The Story

*What are the responsibilities of an employer to its workers related to a wealth distribution? This topic is covered in depth in the following article.*

#### DISTRIBUTORS OF JUSTICE: A CASE FOR A JUST WAGE

*By Michael J. Naughton*

In this Jubilee year, the issue of wealth distribution, especially as it relates to the larger macroeconomic issues of international debt and globalization, has received a good deal of attention and analysis. For this we should be thankful. What has not received much attention, however, are the responsibilities of managers and entrepreneurs toward wealth distribution in their own businesses. How should managers and entrepreneurs, especially those who bear the name Christian, distribute resources within their limited sphere of influence? Or to put it more bluntly: How do they become distributors of justice, rather than maximizers of self-interest? So as not to be too abstract on this topic, I want to examine a specific organizational practice that has specific implications for wealth distribution—wages. . . .

Access the rest of the story at [www.americamagazine.org/gettext.cfm?articleTypeID=1&textID=771&issueID=300](http://www.americamagazine.org/gettext.cfm?articleTypeID=1&textID=771&issueID=300) from *America* magazine.

### Discussion

*Lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions:*

1. According to the author, how do business owners and managers typically view the role that wages play in their business?  
*In a nutshell, wages provide a reason for employees to work toward the business’s goal of making a profit. More specifically, the article says that wages help organizations achieve increased productivity and efficiency, customer satisfaction and retention, and shareholder wealth by attracting, rewarding, retaining, and motivating employees who best achieve those goals.*
2. From a Christian perspective, why does work always have a value beyond the wages that are paid for it?  
*“Work is always more than its economic output or instrumental value, precisely because work changes God’s creation, and we in turn change ourselves.”*  
Can you share any examples of when you have personally experienced this higher value of work?
3. Why did the managers at Reell Precision Manufacturing want to pay its workers a living wage?  
*Because the company operated on the basis of Judeo-Christian values for the “growth of people.” The managers recognized that the workers deserved a living wage because they were “persons made in the image of God who deserve to have at least their minimum needs met.”*
4. What made it difficult for Reell Precision Manufacturing to achieve its goal of paying employees a living wage?  
*The living wage for the area was \$11, but the market wage for the industry—the wage that the company’s competitors*

were paying—was \$7. Making up the difference would have put the company at a competitive disadvantage that could have put the company out of business.

What other kinds of challenges face business owners and employees who attempt to act justly in the workplace?

5. How did the company overcome the obstacles to paying employees a living wage?

*It increased the value of employees' work from \$7 an hour to \$11 an hour by changing the company's organizational structure, giving employees more responsibility, and providing training to new employees.*

What principles of Catholic social teaching were reflected in the way the company reorganized itself?

*The principles of participation and subsidiarity.*

6. Why is it important for society as a whole to help businesses pay employees a living wage?

*Apart from a comprehensive commitment—a social commitment—to a living wage, those who decide unqualifiedly to pay living wages in highly competitive, commodity-driven, price-sensitive markets risk economic disadvantages that cannot long be borne. If the market wage in the industry is below a living wage, and there is no place to reduce labor costs, employers who decide to raise wages unilaterally will price themselves out of the market.*

### *Take Action*

*The mission of a Christian business*

- In this activity, teens develop a mission statement for a Christian business based on their reading and discussion about justice and work.
- Briefly explain to the teens that many organizations, including many businesses, are guided by mission statements. Explain that a mission statement states the organization's "mission" (purpose and goals) and the means the organization uses to achieve that mission, including its guiding values. If possible, find some mission statements on the web to read to teens as examples. Point out that in order to be useful, most mission statements are short and to the point.
- Divide the teens into groups. Instruct each group to start its own business by choosing a product or service to sell and giving the business a name. Suggest that it would be ideal (but not necessary) for them to choose a type of business in which one or more of them have actual work experience. This should take no longer than five minutes.
- Ask the teens to create a mission statement for their business, using their reading and discussion about justice and work as a guide. The mission statement should answer these questions: What are the goals that this business wants to achieve? What are the values that will help this business achieve those goals?
- When the teens are finished, have each group share its mission statement with the whole group. Ask each group to explain why it chose the goals and values it did. Help the teens imagine how their mission statements might play out if they were applied to a real business. How would customers be affected? The environment? Workers?
- Enhance this exercise by having teens invite business people to critique their mission statements. For instance, the teens might seek out parishioners who are employed in the same type of business their group hypothetically created. Alternatively, you may wish to invite business leaders from the parish or local chamber of commerce to attend the session in order to offer feedback to the teens.

### *Additional Activities*

- Have teens discuss the case study on page 241 of the Student Text. (Remind the teens that the church teaches that the use of nuclear arms is always wrong.)
- Have teens conduct the work-related interview on page 239 of the Student Text.
- Discuss the stay-at-home parenting topic raised in "Creative Learning" exercise "b" on page 171 of the Teacher's Manual.

### *Additional Resources*

For additional books, videos, and websites related to this topic, see pages 167–168 of the Teacher's Manual.

# Chapter 10: Justice and the Environment

## Getting Started

Introduce teens to the concept of caring for the environment by summarizing, in your own words, the material on page 183 of the Teacher's Manual, "Introducing the Chapter." Optionally, you may also have them read the chapter summary on pages 266–267 of the Student Text; or ask them to read about a Catholic view of the environment on pages 251–254. Then have them read the following story.

## The Story

*The author of this article is director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' environmental justice program.*

### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: A CATHOLIC VOICE

*By Walter E. Grazer*

A new and distinctively Catholic voice on environmental issues has evolved over the last decade. It links traditional Church teaching on creation, the common good, social justice, and stewardship to major environmental challenges. This often overlooked development is found in initiatives in parishes, schools, and other Catholic institutions across the country:

- In the Northwest, the bishops issued a major pastoral reflection on the Columbia River that offers a moral vision of pursuing the common good in the midst of polarization and conflict. . . .

Access the rest of the story at [www.americamagazine.org/gettext.cfm?articleTypeID=1&textID=3379&issueID=468](http://www.americamagazine.org/gettext.cfm?articleTypeID=1&textID=3379&issueID=468) from *America* magazine.

## Discussion

*Lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions:*

1. The Church insists that respect for human life and dignity goes hand in hand with care of the environment. What specific examples from the article show how the Church is taking this approach?  
*For example, the National Council of Catholic Women is addressing environmental health hazards and threats to poor children; the National Catholic Rural Life Conference is helping local communities to address the human and environmental effects of large-scale hog farming; dioceses in Connecticut are building a coalition of civic, low-income, and environmental groups to address the effect urban sprawl has on the community and the land.*
2. What is a defining element of the Church's contribution to the environmental debate?  
*The Church links care for the environment with concern for people who live in poverty. Why is concern for the poor such an important part of work for the environment?  
The poor are more vulnerable to environmental hazards because they often live on the margins of society and often have no voice in debates about the environment.*
3. What role does the author suggest that solidarity and concern for the common good might play in debates over environmental issues?  
*Concern for the common good and solidarity provide an alternative to polarizing political arguments in which there are "winners" and "losers."*
4. The author lists three challenges that face the Church as it tries to bring its faith to bear on the environmental crisis. What challenges would you add to this list?

## Take Action

*Creating an environmentally responsible parish or school*

- In this activity, teens evaluate their school or parish to identify areas where the community could practice better care for God's creation.
- Download and print out the "ELCA Environmental Audit Guide for Congregations, Schools and Other Groups" from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America website at [www.elca.org/dcs/epr/environment/pdf/envaudit.pdf](http://www.elca.org/dcs/epr/environment/pdf/envaudit.pdf). Make enough copies for the teens to share in small groups.
- Divide the teens into small teams. Excluding the "Communication" section, the audit contains ten sections focusing on different aspects of environmental stewardship; each team will focus on one section (or, if there

are fewer than ten teams, more than one section) of the audit.

- Explain to the teens that they will be using the guide to evaluate how well their parish or school is implementing environmentally friendly practices.
- Walk through the audit with them, summarizing the purpose of each section. Ask each team to take ownership of one of the audit's sections.
- Allow the teens time to conduct their evaluation, using the audit as a guide. This activity can be scaled according to the amount of time you have available. For example, if you plan to spend less than an hour on the activity, the teens' evaluations will necessarily be limited to what they can immediately observe in the environment of the parish or school. Otherwise, teens may need the assistance of staff from the parish or school to complete the audit.
- When the teens have finished their work, have each team present its findings to the whole group. Collate the findings in a master copy of the audit.
- Discuss with the teens what the parish or school might do to improve its stewardship of the environment. Challenge them to explore possible obstacles to implementing their suggestions, such as costs and inconveniences. What guidance does Catholic social teaching offer for weighing the costs and benefits of caring for creation?
- This activity can be enhanced by having the teens present their findings to the parish council or the school's governing body for possible implementation.

### *Additional Activities*

- Have teens debate the landfill case study on page 264 of the Student Text.

### *Additional Resources*

For additional books, videos, and websites related to this topic, see pages 183–185 of the Teacher's Manual.