

## Session 19

# Living Justice

## Gathering at a Glance

### Pray!

- Concern for the Poor (5 minutes)

### Engage!

- Social Justice Musical Chairs (15 minutes)
- Engage More! Penny Toss (Extension Activity, 15 minutes) \*

### Experience!

- Four Key Concepts of Social Justice (25 minutes)
- Experience More! Do Justice (Extension Activity, 10 minutes) \*

### Explore!

- Two Feet of Social Justice (10 minutes)
- Explore More! Discerning the Call to Serve My Neighbor (Extension Activity, 10 minutes) \*
- Explore More! Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

### Pray!

- “You Did It for Me” (5 minutes)

## Materials and Preparation

- colored pencils
- highlighters
- reflective music
- chairs in a circle for musical chairs
- four sheets of newsprint, each with one of the following titles at the top:
  - “Common Good”
  - “Responsibility of Political Authority”
  - “Human Dignity”
  - “Human Solidarity”
- four blank sheets of newsprint, markers, old magazines, glue, scissors, etc., for making collages
- sticky notes, two for each young person

### For Extension Activities

- \* several pennies
- \* a bucket
- \* a blindfold
- \* two different recordings of reflective music

## Outcomes

The young people will:

- explore the four foundations of Catholic social teaching: the common good, political responsibility, human dignity, and solidarity
- recognize the interdependent relationship between service and justice
- consider their personal call to service

## Background

Social justice is the dimension of Catholic morality that addresses such social issues as war, terrorism, world hunger, poverty, homelessness, and care for the earth. God calls human societies to reflect the loving relationship within the Trinity. This means we are called to respect and protect each person’s God-given dignity. We do this by serving others and working for justice. Service and justice are different but closely connected. Service is responding to people’s immediate physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, and justice is changing the structures that keep people hungry or poor or unhealthy. We call service and justice “the two feet” of Christian social action.

Our guide for service and justice is Catholic social teaching, or CST. Catholic social teaching’s foundations are in Scripture and natural law.

Catholic social teaching has four key concepts: the common good, political responsibility, human dignity, and solidarity. The common good is the social conditions that allow for all people to meet basic needs and achieve fulfillment. Political responsibility is the obligation that policy makers have to ensure the common good and basic human rights. Human dignity tells us that every person, regardless of their identity or circumstances, must be considered “another self,” made in God’s image. Solidarity is the union of our hearts and minds with those who are poor or powerless or who face injustice. For many young people, the knowledge that their church is engaged in social justice can be a compelling reason to engage more deeply in their faith.

## Connections

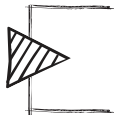
- **CFH:** Chapter 24
- **Scripture:** Luke 6:20–26, Matthew 25:31–46
- **CYB features:** Scripture Highlight near Micah 6:8, Who Is My Neighbor? near Luke 6:17–49
- **CCC:** 1877–1948

## Pray!



### Concern for the Poor (5 minutes)

1. Welcome the youth, and introduce the session with these or similar words:
  - Welcome everyone. I'm so glad you're here. I'm looking forward to spending some time exploring our responsibilities to other people. We'll consider what God asks of each of us as individuals and all of us together as a Church.
2. Direct the young people to turn to Luke 6:20–26 in the **CYB**, and select a volunteer to read the passage aloud. Then direct the youth to the Who Is My Neighbor? feature near Luke 6:17–49 in the **CYB**.
3. Distribute colored pencils and highlighters and play reflective music. Lead the Sign of the Cross, and invite the young people to take a few minutes of quiet to create the prayer as instructed in the article. Ask them to write their prayer below the article or in the margins of the page.
4. Allow for a few minutes of reflection. Conclude with the following words:
  - We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



### VIDEO OPTION

In place of step 2, show the video "The Church, Jesus, and the Poor" (YouTube, 5:49).

## Engage!

### Social Justice Musical Chairs (15 minutes)

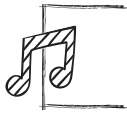
1. Gather the youth in a circle to play a traditional game of musical chairs. Play until one person is declared the winner.
2. Next, play the game this way: each time the music stops, eliminate one chair, but keep the number of players the same. The participants must find a way for everyone to sit on a chair. Continue playing until only one chair remains and all the participants are trying to figure out how to sit on that chair.
3. Debrief the activity by asking the young people the following questions:
  - What was it like to play musical chairs this new way?
  - What can this activity tell us about the kind of world we want to live in?

## Engage More!

### Penny Toss (Extension Activity, 15 minutes)

1. Recruit three volunteers (who are not easily embarrassed) to leave the room, telling them that each of them will have a turn to return to the room and try to toss pennies into a bucket.
2. Instruct the remaining young people how to treat each of the three volunteers when they come back into the room. Tell them to cheer on the first volunteer, to boo the second volunteer, and to ignore the third volunteer, remaining completely silent.

3. Send each of the volunteers back into the room. Explain:
  - The group has been given instructions to respond in ways that have nothing to do with you, but we are doing to make an important point.
4. Blindfold the first volunteer and allow him or her to complete the penny toss as the rest of the participants react according to your instructions. Remove the blindfold when the volunteer has finished, and then move on to the next volunteer. Continue until all three volunteers have completed the penny toss.
5. Debrief the activity by asking the following questions:
  - For the three volunteers, what was it like to be supported, rejected, or ignored?
  - What do you think this activity has to do with our topic today?
6. Conclude with these or similar words:
  - One of the main principles of Catholic social teaching is that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and therefore need to be treated with dignity. We can undermine someone's human dignity not only by treating them badly but also by failing to notice them at all.



### MUSIC OPTION

Conclude with “‘Image of God’ (Christa Wells and Nicolle Witt—worship video)” (YouTube, 4:11) or another appropriate song.

## Experience!



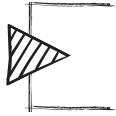
### Four Key Concepts of Social Justice (25 minutes)

1. Post the four titled sheets of newsprint side by side. Ask the youth to have the **CFH** ready. Alternate between reading the **CFH** and writing on the newsprint as follows:
  - Invite a volunteer to read aloud the “Common Good” section on pages 267–268 in the **CFH**. Refer to the sheet of newsprint titled “Common Good,” and ask the young people to brainstorm what that phrase might mean in practical terms. Ask them to think of local and global issues impacting the common good. List them on the newsprint.
  - Invite a volunteer to read aloud the “Responsibility of Political Authority” section on pages 268–269 of the **CFH**. Refer to the sheet of newsprint titled “Responsibility of Political Authority,” and ask the youth to give concrete examples of how the local or national government, as a political authority, should take responsibility for justice in society. List the examples on the newsprint.
  - Invite a volunteer to read aloud the “Human Dignity” section on page 270 of the **CFH**. Refer to the sheet of newsprint titled “Human Dignity,” and ask the young people to brainstorm the various ways our culture deprives people of their dignity. List them on the newsprint.
  - Invite a volunteer to read aloud the “Human Solidarity” section on pages 270–272 of the **CFH**. Refer to the sheet of newsprint titled “Human Solidarity,” and ask the youth to brainstorm groups of people who suffer or whose needs mainstream society neglects out of ignorance, prejudice, or indifference. List the groups on the newsprint.

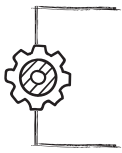
**Catechist Note:**

If your group is large, create eight small groups and assign two small groups to each concept.

2. Divide the large group into four small groups, and give each group one of the newsprint lists. Then give each group another sheet of newsprint and collage-making supplies, and invite them to create a collage from magazine clippings, drawings, or words that illustrate the key concept listed on their newsprint.
3. Display the collages around the room, and allow a few minutes for the youth to look at each one. Conclude with these or similar words:
  - These four key concepts are the foundation for the Church's social teaching. If we truly understand these concepts, they will motivate us to reach out in service and justice, and they will direct us in the best ways for doing this.

**VIDEO OPTION**

As an introduction or conclusion to this activity, show the video "CST 101: Life and Dignity of the Human Person" (YouTube, 3:28).

**DIGITAL OPTION**

In place of step 2, have the groups use a collage app to create a digital collage or visual presentation that illustrates their group's concept and how people can work toward it.

## Experience More!

**Do Justice (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)**

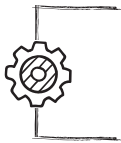
1. Instruct the youth to turn to the Scripture Highlight near Micah 6:8 in the **CYB**. In these or similar words, explain:
  - While you take some quiet time to reflect on where God might be calling you to live out justice, color in the Scripture Highlight. Let these words become your prayer. God is inviting you to do justice, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with him.
2. Play reflective music while the youth color and reflect.
3. Conclude by reading the Scripture Highlight aloud together.

## Explore!

**Two Feet of Social Justice (10 minutes)**

1. Invite the young people to turn to the "Two Feet of Service and Justice" diagram on page 272 of the **CFH**. Tell them that this chart is also sometimes called the "Two Feet of Christian Social Action." Give them some time to look it over and then in these or similar words invite the youth into discussion:
  - To help make the world a more just place where everyone is treated as a child of God, we need to meet people's immediate needs for food, clothing, housing, and safety, and to address the root causes of these injustices.
  - Each of us needs to listen to God's call to discern what next steps we can take to serve others and work for justice. Let's discover a little more about the "Two Feet" of service and justice.

2. Distribute two sticky notes to each young person. Direct them to write “Service” on one note and “Justice” on the other, and then to stick the notes to their shoes. Have everyone stand at one end of the room and tell them that their goal is to get to the other side. Explain in these or similar words:
  - I will read a Christian social action step a person could take and then you have to decide which of the two feet it is: service (helping people survive their present crisis) or justice (removing the causes of those problems). Once you decide, take a step (or hop) on that foot. Once everyone has taken their step, I’ll tell you which it is. If you guessed correctly stay where you are. If you guessed incorrectly, take one step backward.
3. Read through the social action steps:
  - serving dinner at the soup kitchen (*service*)
  - sending a postcard to your senator asking her to support environmental cleanup laws (*justice*)
  - organizing a food drive for the hungry (*service*)
  - signing a petition to provide housing for homeless veterans (*justice*)
  - attending a protest to support immigrant rights (*justice*)
  - collecting baby shower items for expectant moms in need (*service*)
  - tutoring refugee children at an afterschool program (*service*)
  - boycotting the products of a company that mistreats their workers (*justice*)
  - serving on a social justice committee (*trick question, this could be both*)
4. Recognize the young person who got closest to the other side. If you have time, reconvene the large group and discuss the following questions:
  - What groups in our parish or our community are committed to works of justice and works of service to the poor?
  - Which do you think is easier: direct service to the poor or advocating for justice?
  - Have you taken either of these steps yourself? What were the challenges? What were the benefits?



#### DIGITAL OPTION

To add to step 4, project the “Two Feet” image from page 272 of the **CFH** on a sheet of newsprint on the wall at the front of the room. Invite the youth to write their answers to the first question on the newsprint.

## Explore More!



### Discerning the Call to Serve My Neighbor (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Invite the young people to turn to the “When I’m Feeling . . .” feature on page 1770 in the back of the **CYB** to and to find the section “The Call to Serve My Neighbor.” Give them some quiet time to flip through the suggested Scripture passages listed there and find the one that is most meaningful to them as they discern where God is calling them to serve.



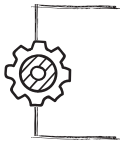
2. Invite the youth to highlight that passage and then write their own prayer in the margin. Play reflective music while the young people are working. You may want to invite them to mark the passage they chose in the “When I’m Feeling . . .” section so they can find it again.

## Explore More!



### Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the young people to turn to page 267 in the **CFH**, and invite a volunteer to read aloud the Sainly Profiles article.
2. In these or similar words, say:
  - Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton was committed to serving the poor through Catholic education. In what ways do you think education can help people in poverty?



#### DIGITAL OPTION

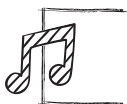
In place of step 1, have the youth look up Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton on the Lives of the Saints website, at [saint.smp.org](http://saint.smp.org). Then have a contest for an online search to see who can find the most schools named after Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton in 1 minute.

## Pray!



### You Did It for Me (5 minutes)

1. Direct the young people to turn to Matthew 25:31–46 in the **CYB**, and invite a volunteer to read the passage aloud (or a few young people can share the reading). After the passage is read, lead a reflection with the following or similar words:
  - When did we see God in the least of these?
  - Think about someone you know who is in need. This could be someone experiencing poverty or violence, addiction, or illness. Bring this person to mind and hold him or her in silent prayer in your heart.
2. Lead the Sign of the Cross, and allow for a few moments of quiet. Then say:
  - We will now say the first names of these people in need, people created in the image and likeness of God. By saying their names, we are seeing them and seeing God in them.
3. Go around the circle, giving each youth a chance to name their person. Then say:
  - God, we lift up all of these people to you. Help us to serve and to work for justice so that all people will know of your great love. We ask this in faith. Amen.



#### MUSIC OPTION

Conclude the session with an appropriate song, such as “Matthew West—Do Something” (YouTube, 4:06).