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LIFE TEEN & CRS RETREAT #SHIFT

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ABOUT THIS RETREAT

This retreat is unlike a normal weekend away for teenagers. This retreat is designed to help teenagers understand basic principles of Catholic social justice and experience service that will not only change their lives, but the lives of many in their communities as well. Life Teen and Catholic Relief Services have partnered to challenge parishes worldwide to utilize this resource with their youth groups as a week of service, prayer, and education.

Rather than taking place over the weekend, this retreat takes place over five days. It is recommended that the retreat is planned as an alternative spring break or summer service opportunity. The retreat lasts for five days, and each day has a unique focus on an area of social justice. Teenagers are given an experience serving a particular group of individuals during the day and process that experience during the evening with a teaching, discussion, and prayer. Teenagers are then challenged to understand the social justice issue they experienced from local and global perspectives.

This retreat works well for a single parish to implement, but is also very effective as a diocesan or community initiative with several parishes grouping together. This retreat also includes various integration points for social media. We encourage parishes and diocesan groups implementing *#Shift* to utilize various social media outlets to share their experiences. This allows groups from around the world to share in a common experience of service and prayer, making *#Shift* a global retreat and an experience unlike any other.

GOAL

#Shift challenges teenagers to re-examine their attitude toward poor, vulnerable, and marginalized individuals both globally and locally. Through experiences of service, prayer, and education, teenagers grow as disciples of Christ and advocates for Catholic social justice during the retreat and move forward to continue to be agents of change in the world.

SCRIPTURE AND CATECHISM REFERENCES

Scripture:
Matthew 25:31-46
Matthew 28:19-20
John 13:1-15

CCC:
1803-1832
1928-1942
2401-2449

OVERVIEW

#Shift is designed to help teens deepen their ability to see the face of Christ in the poor. As they experience the different social issues of their community during the week, they will also learn what the Catholic Church is doing around the world to address these same issues and how they can be involved. Teens will come to a better understanding that they are part of a universal church and have the opportunity to not just hear about the issue, but get to know some of the people that are affected by each issue.

The retreat week begins with a discussion about the nature and root of human dignity. This session forms a foundation for the rest of the week. The following day teenagers participate in service activities that serve individuals within their local community that are experiencing poverty and homelessness. Teenagers process these experiences during the evening and are given the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. On the third day, teenagers participate in service experiences that bring them face to face with the vulnerable and voiceless in society. During the evening session, teenagers are brought to a deeper understanding of the vulnerable and voiceless globally and close the evening in prayer with foot washing. The fourth day focuses on global clean water initiatives and care for creation. The evening session challenges teenagers to begin making an action plan for sustained social action in their local, national, and global communities. The evening session concludes with Eucharistic Adoration. The fifth

day concludes the retreat with a concrete action plan for all of the teenagers. They commit to this action plan and close the week with the celebration of Mass.

RETREAT ADAPTATION

The success of this retreat experience is directly related to the service opportunities the teenagers are given each day. This retreat is unique in the experiences it provides teenagers to process each evening. You may need to adapt the schedule of the retreat if you are unable to schedule certain service opportunities to correspond with retreat sessions. For example, if you are unable to visit a shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness on the second day, you may need to switch that session to the fourth day, instead. This will not disrupt the overall flow of the week.

Additionally, while it is recommended you implement the retreat as five consecutive days, you may consider spacing out the days to be a month long experience on consecutive weeks, with one session each week. Other adaptations include condensing the retreat to be a weekend retreat with one session on Friday, two sessions on Saturday and Sunday, and service opportunities mixed in with each day.

Finally, this retreat can be adapted to be held at a retreat center where teenagers stay overnight, or locally where teenagers return home every night and meet the following morning. Whatever option you choose, be sure that teenagers are attending every session and service project offered.

RETREAT PREPARATION

As a planning team, give yourselves plenty of time to pray about and plan this retreat. This retreat involves scheduling various service sites, so it is recommended that the planning process begin at least 4-6 months before the retreat week (see the retreat planning checklist on page 9). As you plan, stay rooted in prayer and open to the prompting of the Spirit. Here are some specific things to keep in mind as you begin your planning:

- **Core Team.** The adult volunteers that lead small groups and serve alongside teenagers during this retreat are called “Core Members” and are part of the “Core Team.” They are not teen leaders and must be safe environment

trained and certified to serve youth at your parish. Parents, teachers, and adults of all ages can make great Core Members.

- **Adaptation.** The outline in this book is just a starting point. Add, subtract, and change things according to the needs of the teens that will be attending the retreat.
- **Priests.** The Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist are important parts of this retreat. Make sure to invite your priests well in advance. If possible, have more than one priest available for Confession.
- **Music Ministry.** If possible, have a band present to provide music ministry for the whole weekend. Ask the band that plays at your Life Teen Mass to be part of the retreat, or ask other local musicians.
- **Teen Involvement.** As you plan, make sure to involve teens in games, videos, skits, witness talks, etc. In particular, target teens that might not come on a retreat if they are not involved.
- **Advertisement and Invitation.** You can plan the best week ever, but if no teens come – what’s the point? Be sure to get the word out about the retreat early. Create and use flyers, bulletin announcements, e-mails, and social media invitations to get teens excited about the retreat. Use every means available to get the word out. Make sure that everyone on the Core Team is personally inviting teens to come on retreat. Create a retreat promo video that can be shown at Mass and at youth group, and then post it on YouTube.
- **Service Projects.** Make sure all service project sites are scheduled well in advance and transportation needs to and from these sites are given consideration and proper planning. See “Service Project Preparation” below for more details.
- **Pray.** In the end, this is God’s retreat and not yours. As soon as teens start signing up, begin praying for the teens by name.

SERVICE PROJECT PREPARATION

Service project site coordination is a critical aspect of this retreat. Every session includes suggestions for service projects and experiences. These will vary based on the availability of organizations and needs in your community. Some may require travel and all will require advance preparation.

There are several Catholic social service organizations that you should contact about service opportunities in your area – your local Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, and St. Vincent de Paul organizations are excellent starting places. They will be invaluable resources for you as you begin your planning.

When you schedule your service projects, ask for the director or manager of the organization to also be present on the day of your project to provide a brief presentation of the mission and an overview of the services that the organization offers. A service opportunity will be more valuable to teenagers if they have an understanding of how the work they are doing each day ties into the larger mission of the organization and the Church.

As you plan to travel for service projects, be sure to follow all safe environment policies for your diocese and parish. Collect necessary permission forms and liability waivers for the various service sites and a general liability waiver for your parish prior to beginning the retreat. Make sure that all travel arrangements follow diocesan and safe environment guidelines.

Finally, as often as possible be sure that service opportunities bring teenagers face-to-face with the people that they are serving. Organizing the food at a food pantry is definitely a need, but a transformative experience will happen when teenagers are able to interact with individuals that are eating there.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Invite leaders from local Catholic service organizations or other Christian service organizations to speak during your evening sessions or to provide testimonies. You may also wish to consider inviting your parish priest, deacon, or religious brothers and sisters to speak about their experiences serving the poor and

vulnerable. These testimonies can speak volumes to teenagers during the week.

PRAYER EXPERIENCES

This retreat week is rooted solidly in prayer. It is recommended that teenagers pray Morning Prayer from Liturgy of the Hours each day before leaving for their worksites. The prayers for each day can be found at www.ebreviary.com. Additionally, it is highly recommended that the teenagers attend Mass each day. The Eucharistic celebration empowers and sends us forth to serve; it is suggested that Mass is celebrated in the middle of each day, but it may need to be re-arranged to fit your schedule.

If it is possible, celebrate Mass at different parishes including one that does not offer Mass in the native language of the teenagers.

Finally, several prayer experiences require the presence of one or more priests. Be sure to contact your parish priest well in advance of the weekend and invite him to be present to administer the sacraments and pray with the teenagers.

Catholic Relief Services provides several prayer services that can be included in this week for your group, as well. A list of several prayers that can be used at various points throughout the week can be found at: <http://education.crs.org/>

SMALL GROUPS

The teens will need to be broken into small groups of six to eight teens with one Core Member. It is the role of the small group facilitator to establish trust and honesty within the small group so that the teens will feel able to share openly.

SOCIAL MEDIA INTEGRATION

Every session includes hashtags for social media integration. Utilize these hashtags to post about your service projects, as well as interact with other youth groups also utilizing #Shift week. We highly recommend utilizing #Shift as an alternative spring break for teenagers or as a summer trip; by planning the retreat at these times there will be more opportunity for teenagers to interact with each other over social media and learn from the experiences of other teenagers around the world.

SAMPLE RETREAT SCHEDULE

MONDAY:

- 5:00 PM REGISTRATION
- 6:00 PM DINNER
- 7:00 PM SESSION 1: VALUE JUDGEMENT
- 8:00 PM MASS
- 9:00 PM SOCIAL TIME
- 11:00 PM LIGHTS OUT

TUESDAY:

- 7:00 AM BREAKFAST
- 7:45 AM MORNING PRAYER
- 8:00 AM DEPART FOR SERVICE SITE
- 11:30 AM MASS
- 12:30 PM LUNCH
- 1:30 PM DEPART FOR SERVICE SITE
- 5:00 PM RETURN TO RETREAT CENTER
- 6:00 PM DINNER
- 7:00 PM SESSION II: FOR THE LEAST
- 8:00 PM SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION
- 9:00 PM NIGHT PRAYER
- 9:30 PM FREE TIME
- 11:00 PM LIGHTS OUT

WEDNESDAY:

- 5:30 AM OPTIONAL BREAKFAST
- 6:00 AM FAST BEGINS
- 7:00 AM MORNING PRAYER
- 8:00 AM DEPART FOR SERVICE SITE
- 11:30 AM MASS
- 12:30 PM FAIR TRADE/MIGRATION ACTIVITY
- 2:00 PM DEPART FOR SERVICE SITE
- 5:30 PM RETURN TO RETREAT CENTER
- 6:00 PM DINNER AND END FAST

7:00 PM SESSION III: VOICE OF THE VOICELESS
9:00 PM NIGHT PRAYER
9:30 PM FREE TIME
11:00 PM LIGHTS OUT

THURSDAY:

7:00 AM BREAKFAST
7:45 AM MORNING PRAYER
8:00 AM DEPART FOR SERVICE SITE
11:30 AM MASS
12:30 PM LUNCH
1:30 PM CARRY MY BUCKET SIMULATION
3:30 PM DEPART FOR SERVICE SITE
5:30 PM RETURN TO RETREAT CENTER
6:00 PM DINNER
7:00 PM SESSION IV: iTHURST
9:15 PM NIGHT PRAYER
9:30 PM FREE TIME
11:00 PM LIGHTS OUT

FRIDAY:

8:00 AM BREAKFAST
8:30 AM MORNING PRAYER
9:00 AM SESSION V: LOVE FORWARD
11:00 AM MASS
12:00 PM OPTIONAL LUNCH
1:00 PM OPTIONAL ADVOCACY VISIT WITH LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

* Adapt this schedule to accommodate the parish's Mass and Reconciliation schedule.

RETREAT PLANNING CHECKLIST

ONE YEAR TO NINE MONTHS BEFORE THE RETREAT

- Determine if retreat will be alternative Spring break or a Summer opportunity
- Set a date for the retreat
- Secure location for retreat and service sites.
- Share date with priest, musicians, Core Team and teens.

THREE MONTHS BEFORE THE RETREAT

- Initial planning meeting (include Core, musicians and priest if possible). Pray and go through overall goal and flow of the retreat. Assign specific sessions to small groups of Core Team.
- Start advertising the retreat to the teens. Create a registration form that the Core can pass out to teens.

TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE RETREAT

- Second planning meeting. Each session group presents their outline and the entire team works together to ensure that each session works as part of the whole experience.
- Gather an intercessory team of parents and other adults to pray for the retreat, Core and teens.
- Continue spreading the word among the teens.

ONE MONTH BEFORE THE RETREAT

- Have all skits and talks practiced. Get teens involved in each of the sessions.
- Gather supplies and create the environment for each session.
- Design T-shirt and order them
- Check-in with service sites to confirm dates and times.
- Schedule transportation to and from service sites.
- Promote, promote, promote!!!

ONE WEEK BEFORE THE RETREAT

- Gather all supplies.
- Divide teens into small groups.
- Create name tags.
- Final meeting with retreat team – spend time praying for the teens by name, go through retreat schedule.

RETREAT SUPPLIES CHECKLIST

- Environment needs for each session
- Name tags for each teen
- First Aid kit and medical/waiver forms for each teen
- AV needs
 - Sound system
 - Projector and screen
 - DVD player
 - Videos for sessions
 - Music (CD or MP3 player)
- Mass kit
 - Lectionary, Missal
 - Hosts, wine
 - Altar cloth
 - Two candles, matches
 - Small Crucifix
 - Paten, chalice(s)
 - Small container for water and wine
 - Purificators
 - Corporal
 - Small bowl to wash hands, finger towel
- Large Cross
- Rosaries
- Bibles
- Pens
- Monstrance
- Retreat t-shirts and any other retreat gift
- Copies of Examination of Conscience for every teen
- Materials for dinner during session, "For the Least"

VALUE JUDGMENT

SESSION ONE HUMAN DIGNITY

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:26-28
Genesis 2:7
John 13:34-35
Romans 5:1-10
1 John 4:7-21

SOCIAL MEDIA

#ShiftWeek
#YouAreWorthy

GOAL

This session begins the retreat week and challenges teenagers to shift their understanding of human worth and dignity to being rooted in God rather than in money, power, or social standing. This session lays the groundwork for the rest of the week.

GATHER

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

(5 min)

The youth minister welcomes all of the teens to the first evening of the service retreat. He or she introduces the Core Members that will serve alongside the teenagers for the retreat week and leads an opening prayer.

RULES

(15 min)

Explain any general rules for the week. If you are staying at a retreat center, use this time to explain policies and rules specific to the retreat center. Go over any logistical information at this time, as well. Inform the teenagers that each service site may have additional rules and guidelines, which will be explained when they arrive at the site for the day.

Some general rules to consider providing the teenagers with are:

- **Respect.** Every person's input is important. Listen when peers and Core Members are talking, avoid gossip and negative speech and respect individuals at service sites.
- **Boundaries.** Men and women on the retreat should have appropriate boundaries with each other. If you are staying at a retreat center, clearly indicate areas set apart for "women only" and "men only." When interacting with individuals at service sites, remind the teenagers not to give out personal information and follow all rules established by the service site coordinator.
- **Engage.** During the retreat, teenagers will be exposed to several aspects of service and social justice. Some of the projects will be more comfortable than others. Teenagers should engage fully in all activities, pushing themselves outside of their "comfort zone."

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

(15 min)

Divide teenagers into small groups. These small groups should include six to eight teenagers and one or two Core Members. These groups remain the same throughout the retreat week. Provide each group with several pieces of poster board and markers. Explain that they will begin the retreat with a challenge between small groups.

If teenagers have not seen the game show "The Price Is Right," briefly explain the rules. An object or "package" of several objects will be displayed. You can do this live if you have the objects, or project the object or package on the screen. Groups will need to guess the price or value of that item. The group that guesses a value closest to the actual price, without guessing over the actual price, is awarded a point for the round (e.g. if an item is valued at \$30, a group that guesses \$30.01 would be eliminated for guessing an amount that went over the actual price).

Find several items that are similar to each other, but are valued differently because of the brand, rarity, or prestige. This is important, as it will be used in the opening discussion during the Proclaim. A few ideas to get you started are:

- A t-shirt from a high-end clothing store and a t-shirt from a thrift store
- An expensive watch and a watch purchased at a department store
- A dinner prepared at a fancy restaurant and fast food meal
- Baseball cards and baseball cards signed by the player

Add several other items to this list; be sure to research the value and price for these items. Play several rounds and determine two small groups as the winner. Invite one representative from each group to play in the "Showcase" round. In this round, the two teenagers will be presented with two items. The first item is the price for a brand new SUV. Check your local car dealerships for the price of this vehicle, but it should be between \$35,000 and \$50,000 dollars. The second item should be the cost for three fresh water wells in Africa (\$36,000). The teen from a small group with the highest score may choose which item to bid on. The second teen then guesses the price for the other item. Have a small prize for a small group that wins the game and use the final showcase to transition into the teaching for the session.

PROCLAIM

"VALUE JUDGMENT" TEACHING

(15 min)

- We make judgments of value all of the time, often without realizing it. We discern how to make the most-valuable use of our time, what items to spend our money on, and what things we collect or enjoy. We assign worth and value to various material objects, people, and activities; this helps us make our judgment.
- Worth can be determined by a lot of factors. We determine worth by things like brand name – two identical t-shirts are worth different amounts because of the brand name on one versus the other. A guitar signed by a famous musician is worth more than the same guitar that has

not been signed, and a piece of furniture that was crafted by hand from rare wood is worth more than a piece of furniture purchased at a department store.

- We also assign a value to people. We give a sports player a “Most Valuable Player” award for excellence on the field, we determine which classmates are popular and rank their social status based on their group of friends, and magazines rank the “most powerful” and “richest” individuals in the world.
- Unfortunately, the worth of a person is often determined by many cultures using money, power, and social standing as measurements. The Church, however, teaches us the true measurement of a person’s worth.

Image and Likeness

- At the beginning of Sacred Scripture, we learn where a human person receives his or her worth:
- *Read Genesis 1:26-28*
- Women and men are created in God’s image and likeness. This is where the worth of every person is grounded and it is this reality that makes every person equal and worthy of love. God created humanity to have a special relationship with Him; God breathes his life into humanity and allows them to share in his creative ability. (Genesis 1:26-30, Genesis 2:7, CCC 364, CCC 1702-1703)
- The worth of humanity is demonstrated in Christ’s love for us, that Christ would die to save us from our sins. Jesus Christ’s life demonstrates the dignity and worth of humanity, as He took on flesh to redeem us (CCC 1701, John 3:16-17, Romans 5:8).
- Jesus’ life also serves as a witness to the dignity of all people; Jesus often associated with the lowly, the outcast, those on the margins of society, and those that were sinners. Jesus challenges us to see the dignity and worth of every person – even those that society says have no worth or value (John 8:1-11, Mark 2:13-17, Mark 1:40-45). Jesus’ mission was rooted in love – and he

expressed that love in his interactions with the poor.

- The Church continues Jesus’ mission of service to the poor; the Church exists as the instrument for the salvation for all people – the mission of the Church is that all would come to know Christ. The Church does this through administration of the sacraments; these fortify the faithful and sustain the mission of the Church. The Church also seeks to satisfy and care for the physical needs of all people. (CCC 1394)
- The Church understands that every person has rights which flow from the dignity they have as a person made in God’s image and likeness. These rights include basic living necessities – food, water, shelter – as well as the right to just wages for labor, the opportunity for meaningful and humane work, and the right to live in an area of peace.
- As Catholics, we have a responsibility to defend the dignity and rights of all people; this responsibility flows from the mission of Christ so serve all, especially the least.
- We share in this mission; Christ speaks in certain terms that we are to care for the hungry, thirsty, sick, imprisoned, and outcast. Love demands our response to this mission (Matthew 25:31-46).

The Common Good

- Our human dignity is rooted in freedom; we can reject freedom by choosing sin, or we can live our freedom by living the two great commandments of loving God and loving our neighbor. These two commandments are tied closely together – we cannot love God and reject or ignore the needs and suffering of our neighbor (1 Corinthians 12:26, 1 John 4:19-21).
- Love of neighbor requires that we work toward the common good. We must be advocates for individuals in poverty, groups that are oppressed, and those with no voice to local and global government and ruling authorities.
- We must also work to provide and make accessible what individuals and groups need for

a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture. (CCC 1908)

- This week we work toward the common good and will stand in solidarity with the groups that we serve. What we will do is not simply something that makes us feel good or that we do to relieve guilt – it is the call of Christ in our lives and it is our moral responsibility. If we do not serve the poor and voiceless, we contribute to their poverty.
- You encounter poverty every day; sometimes it doesn't look like what we traditionally understand "poverty" to be. We talk to people in our school that are looked down upon, made fun of, that live in poverty or on government assistance, and struggle with depression or anger. These people all experience a kind of poverty as well – some physical and some spiritual.
- Keep this in mind as we serve this week. Every person has dignity – regardless of where we find him or her and what their story may be; and we are called to treat everyone with the same level of respect and love.

Into Service

- This week will be different than many other retreats you may have attended. We will spend our days in service of others and our evenings praying for the people we served, for our own relationship with Christ, and we will learn about how we can continue to serve others.
- During the week, some service activities may be uncomfortable. That is normal; when we come face-to-face with poverty and encounter Christ in the poor we may have a strong reaction to that. Take those feelings into prayer and discussion with the group. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable this week.
- Every person was created in the image and likeness of God, and Christ came to redeem all of us. We are called to be love and to shift our understanding of what it means to love and serve God and each other – but it first begins with a shift in seeing value and worth in all human life, regardless of economic income, social standing, or position in society.

BREAK

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(20 min)

Divide the teenagers into the same small groups as the opening game. The Core Member leading each small group begins by leading a prayer and uses the following questions to facilitate a discussion based upon the teaching:

- How does our culture / society define a person's worth? Is this the best way to determine worth? What is flawed about this understanding?
- Does the perception of a person's worth impact how others interact with him or her? How have you experienced this or witnessed this?
- Why is human dignity so central to our understanding of social justice? How does it impact how we live our faith?
- What experience do you have serving others? Share the experience and the impact it had on you. How was this service an expression of your faith in Christ?
- How do you see the dignity of a person who lives in poverty? What about a person from a developing country? From another culture or way of life?

SEND

CELEBRATION OF MASS

(60 min)

Gather the teenagers together to celebrate Mass to close the session and kick off the week. If the readings for the day allow for it, integrate the story of Christ washing the disciples' feet in John 13 into the homily. Explain that when we celebrate the Eucharist, we are bound to service of our brothers and sisters. Jesus makes this connection explicit when he washes the disciples' feet at the Last Supper.

If the readings do not allow for this teaching, the youth minister or priest should make this connection prior to the beginning of Mass. Challenge the teenagers to pray for the people that they will be serving during the week at Mass.

SOCIAL TIME

After Mass, have social time for the teenagers. This time will build community and help the teenagers get to know each other and the Core Members. Be sure to give any final instructions for the evening and the next day before teenagers go to bed or leave the retreat center for the evening.

ADAPTING THIS SESSION

- Instead of celebrating Mass at the end of the session, invite families to join their sons and daughters for Mass to start off the weekend. After Mass, host a dinner for everyone to begin the workweek.
- For smaller groups, provide every teen with a pen and poster board and allow them to guess prices in the opening game.

FOR THE LEAST

SESSION TWO

GLOBAL HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 20:22-26
Matthew 25:31-46
Luke 4:16-21
James 2:14-17

CATECHISM

2235-2237
2419-2425
2437-2449

SOCIAL MEDIA

#ShiftWeek
#FaceOfChrist

GOAL

This session challenges teenagers to reflect on the places that they experienced Christ during the day in those that struggled with hunger and homelessness. It helps teenagers look at these two issues globally and begin to understand some of their root causes, as well as ways that they can make an impact upon these issues.

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

Life Teen Video: "Meet Sam" (Life Teen Video Support 7)
Life Teen Video: "Examination of Conscience" (Life Teen Video Support 16)

DURING THE DAY

The theme for the service day is hunger and homelessness. These two aspects of poverty are explored through service opportunities within the local community and teenagers are challenged during the evening session to reflect on their attitude toward the hungry and homeless in their local community, their country, and globally. There are several suggested activities that can

provide a significant experience and interaction with persons struggling with poverty:

- Schedule a time to meet with the manager of a local food pantry, warming shelter, or food kitchen. Ask for a representative of the managing organization to explain the mission of the pantry or shelter to the teenagers, highlighting the good work the organization does and challenges that it faces. Set aside three to four hours for teenagers to work at the organization.
- Spend time at a homeless shelter talking with the residents. This particular experience can be tremendously transformative for teenagers. It is easy to fit a person that is experiencing homelessness into a stereotype; these stereotypes make it easier for us to dismiss individuals. By allowing teenagers to speak with individuals at a shelter, play games with them, or share a cup of coffee or meal, the stereotypes can be broken.

- Volunteer time at a transitional housing for families. This housing is reserved for family units that are experiencing homelessness. These can be enjoyable experiences for teenagers because they involve working with children, but they also convey a tragic reality in how homelessness and poverty affects families and the young. Ask the organization if there are chores that need to be done, meals that need to be cooked, or rooms that need to be cleaned. Spend time – if possible – getting to know some of the residents. Some housing is set up for

residents that do not speak the native language of the country in which they reside; if this is the case you may need a translator.

GATHER

DINNER

(60 min)

Gather all of the teenagers together for dinner. As teenagers enter, Core Members will hand them a card (green, yellow, or red) and direct them to tables marked with corresponding colors. Once teenagers have been seated, Core Members serve food. The color of each table determines the kind of food that each table receives.

Green Table – About one of ten teens of the group are seated at green tables. These tables receive a full meal, including a healthy salad, entrée with meat and starch, and a desert. Large pitchers of water and juice are available at the table and refilled by Core Members throughout dinner. They should receive food first.

Yellow Table – Roughly three of ten teens of the group are seated at yellow tables. These teens will walk through a serving line after the green tables received their food. These teenagers will receive one plate of food that includes a small serving of meat and inexpensive noodles (Ramen noodles work well), as well as prepackaged and processed desert (a Twinkie or something comparable). This food should not include vegetables or healthy options. They will have pitchers of water on their table that they can refill on their own.

Red Table – About six of ten teens in the group will be seated at a red table. They will go through the serving line after all the yellow tables have received food and will each receive one small bowl of rice and a glass of water. One-third of this group should receive a glass of dirty water (use crushed up chocolate or food coloring to make the water appear dirty, in case any teenagers attempt to actually drink it). Teenagers will not have the option to refill their water at these tables.

Pastoral Note:

Tomorrow, the teenagers will engage in a 12-hour fast from food. Be sure that there is food available after the meal or after the session for teenagers to eat, especially those that did not receive full meals. Consider serving yellow and red tables their actual meal after everyone has about ten minutes to eat their first meal.

Guest Speaker / Testimony

After teenagers have received their meal, invite a speaker to give testimony about the realities of world hunger and poverty. Ideally, this individual is from a social agency that works with global and local poverty. As teenagers are eating, he or she should point out that:

- Green tables represent the developed world. It should be noted that, though these countries have a higher economic standard of living, there are many places where severe poverty exists – even in affluent areas.

PROCLAIM

“FOR THE LEAST” TEACHING

(15 min)

- What would you do if you met Christ, face to face? What would you say? How would you respond? Throughout His ministry on earth, Jesus encountered many people and healed them, ministered to them, and called them as disciples. For those that had faith, their lives were forever changed.
- Today, you encountered Christ – did you see Him? Jesus tells us that we can find him in the faces of the poor, the hungry, and the homeless. Jesus explains that when we minister and serve our neighbors that live in both spiritual and physical poverty, we serve Him. (Matthew 25:31-40, Luke 6:21)
- We are confronted with two realities: The first is that many people are hungry and live in poverty every day – about 900 million of them. The second reality is that Christ is present with and part of the poor in a very intimate way. Our refusal to serve the poor or our chosen ignorance of those that live in poverty is a rejection of Christ.

The Hungry

- Our opening activity reflected the reality of global hunger. It is important to define “hunger,” and break it into three different levels.
- The first is the feeling of “being hungry.” This is a universal experience. If we skip a meal, we may feel pain in our stomach or possibly feel faint. For many that live in developed countries, this feeling is quickly remedied through a snack or meal that is readily available.
- The second definition of hunger is malnutrition. Individuals or groups may have food, but not the right kind of food to fulfill their bodily needs. This often results in protein and vitamin deficiencies. A person may feel “full” at times, but their body is starving. This kind of malnutrition is called “under nutrition” and can be found among people with lower income.

- Yellow tables represent 30% of the world population. In these places, people have an substandard of living. These tables also represent lower economic areas in developed nations like the United States.
- Red tables represent the developing world that has a low economic standard of living. This includes many countries in Africa, Mexico, and countries in the Middle East. Many of these countries also lack basic sanitation and clean drinking water.

Large Group Discussion

The youth minister or guest speaker facilitates a discussion with the teenagers about their dinner experience and service projects:

- What was your experience of the meal like? How was it impacted by your knowledge of what other people were or were not eating?
- How was your experience of the meal impacted by your experiences of service today? What connections can you make between the meal and the service projects?
- What frustrations did you encounter during the meal? Did these help deepen your understanding of the individuals we served today?
- For Red Tables: How did you feel when you saw the food that you would be receiving? Was it challenging to watch other people have more food than you?
- For Green Tables: Were you surprised that there were so few of you? Why or why not?
- What stood out to you from the service projects today? Share an impactful moment and why it impacted you so greatly?
- Did anything frustrate you today? If so, what was it?
- Where did you see Christ today?

**Adapted from Oxfam International Hunger Banquet as found in Catholic Relief Services resource "Operation Rice Bowl: Hunger Banquet".*

- Think about it – if you only have ten dollars to spend, are you going to buy a pack of four quality pieces of chicken for eight dollars, or are you going to buy less healthy but more inexpensive options? In a developing country, a person may have enough food to eat but the nutritional quality of the food may be so low that it is like not eating at all. Many people worldwide live on less than \$2 USD a day - how does that further limit your choices for healthy and substantial food?
- Finally, the last group are those that are chronically undernourished. Those that are hungry or malnourished are not only found in small pockets; about one in eight people worldwide suffer from chronic undernourishment. This is especially prevalent in developing countries where the number of chronically undernourished continues to rise.
- The most-visible victims of undernourishment are children. Their growing bodies are especially vulnerable to undernourishment and lack of food is often the underlying cause of death of children in developing countries.
- Local hunger often does not look like what we believe it does; many people that are suffering from chronic undernourishment or malnutrition do not fit our notion of what a “hungry” person looks like. This is also true of homelessness.

Christ of the Homeless

- Homelessness can take a variety of forms. People may become homeless from the loss of a job, from a natural disaster, or from displacement due to war or conflict. These are only a few of the major reasons families and individuals become displaced and homeless.
- The right to safe shelter, like the right to food, is a basic human right that flows from our dignity. The key to a shelter is that it is safe – a person that lives in a war torn area is not in a safe shelter, just as a person that sleeps under an overpass is not in a safe shelter.
- We may find ourselves tempted to make judgments on individuals that are homeless, especially if we live in a developed country. We may reason that they have done something to

deserve being homeless – often this is not the case. Often a person is a victim of circumstance; even in situations where a person’s actions may contribute to their homelessness, sin does not destroy human right. Love demands that, even if a person has placed themselves in a situation of poverty, we seek their good and serve them with their basic human rights.

Local and Worldwide

- Poverty in the form of undernourishment and homelessness exists both in our local community and worldwide. We are called, by Christ, to confront both. Jesus has a special preference for the poor; Jesus calls them “blessed.” (Luke 6:21)
- We must also have a special love for the poor and be advocates for their well-being and good as well as active agents in serving them. This can take a variety of forms:
- Globally, we must learn about the causes of hunger and homelessness. We may not be able to travel to a foreign nation to build houses or to serve food, but we can lobby our elected officials to employ the resources of our home nation to help. We can give money to organizations that seek to build shelters and provide food to individuals in developing nations. Often, these organizations have local offices where we can volunteer with paperwork, making calls for donors, and local fundraisers.
- We can also be advocates for those in poverty in our conversations. During times of conflict, natural disaster, or even in daily news headlines we see faces of poverty. We may have friends that are dismissive or even confrontational about poverty – they may feel that a person that is homeless or hungry has done something to “deserve it,” or they may feel helpless. We can help guide their understanding and provide them with insight as to how they can help.
- Locally, we can give our time to organizations that serve those that are hungry and homeless. Often, warming shelters and food pantries are short on donations, volunteers, and funds. We can provide help, money, and supplies to support these necessary organizations.

- To be ignorant of the poor is to be ignorant of Christ. The words of the early Church fathers were repeated in a document from the Church called "Gaudium et Spes," "Feed the man dying of hunger because if you have not fed him, you have killed him." (Gaudium et Spes 69)
- We must be people of prayer and of action when confronting global and local hunger and homelessness. Christ demands this of us, how will you respond?

BREAK

LECTIO DIVINA

(30 min)

Divide the teenagers into their small groups. If you are not using the same small groups throughout the retreat, divide the teenagers into groups of six to eight with one or two Core Members in each group.

Explain that Lectio Divina is a form of prayer that uses Sacred Scripture to listen to the voice of God. The teenagers will be praying a modified form of Lectio Divina that allows time for sharing and discussion. This is the format your group can use to pray. If possible, provide a bible to every teenager for the prayer.

Ask teenagers to open their bibles to Matthew 25:31-40. Invite one of the teenagers to read the passage out loud and invite the rest of the teenagers to follow along. All of the teenagers should listen for a word or phrase that stands out to them. After the passage has been read, ask the teenagers to take a few moments to silently pray through the word or phrase that stood out to them. Then ask:

- What word or phrase stood out to you? What is it about this word or phrase that stood out to you?
- During your prayer, did any other images, words, or phrases come to mind? What were they?

Invite another teenager to read through the passage a second time. This time, invite the

teenagers to be attentive to any images that come to mind during the reading. One way to do this is by inviting them to place themselves in the reading as a character. Allow teenagers a few moments to reflect on this, then ask:

- What images came to mind during the reading? Were these images challenging for you? How so?
- Is the image you received similar to the word or phrase that stood out to you? If so, how do you feel they are connected?

Ask a teenager to read through the passage a final time. This time, invite the teenagers to pray through the word and image they received in prayer and listen for how the reading challenges them. Then ask:

- What challenges did you hear in this reading? How is God calling you to act?
- How are God's call, the word, and the image connected? How can you continue to pray through these gifts during the week?

Close the small group by asking the teens for any additional comments or thoughts, then invite one of the teenagers to lead the closing prayer.

SEND

SOCIAL EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

(15 min)

Gather all of the small groups into the main meeting room to transition into the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Explain that Christ gave the Sacrament of Reconciliation to the Church so that we could receive His mercy and grace for the forgiveness of our sins. When we approach the sacrament, we confess sins that have broken our relationship with God and with our neighbor. The grace of the sacrament reconciles us back to God and to the Body of Christ.

We can prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation by examining our conscience. Explain to the teenagers that they will be using Matthew 25:41-

46 as an examination of sins they have committed against their neighbor. They will bring these sins to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and resolve to be aware of them moving forward.

Pass out the "Examination of Conscience" handout found on page 24. Allow the teens several minutes to pray and journal through this handout as they prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. A second examination of conscience modeled from the Ten Commandments can be found on page 26 for use, as well.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

(60 min)

Invite your parish priest to be present to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation to the teenagers. If you have a large group, invite several priests several months prior to the retreat to be present to hear confessions.

Create a prayerful environment in the main room by playing some quiet worship music. If your music minister is available, ask him or her to lead a few worship songs as teenagers begin going to Reconciliation. Maintain a prayerful atmosphere in the main room and allow teenagers to pray their penance in the main room during this time.

After teenagers have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, have another area where they can go for social time so the main room can be an area of prayer.

FASTING AND PRAYER

Before the teenagers leave or go to bed for the evening, explain that they will be engaging in a fast from food as an act of prayer and solidarity with the poor the next day. This fast will be 12 hours and will begin at 6:00 AM. Have food ready for the teenagers at 5:30 AM if they would like it. During the fast, teenagers are only allowed to drink water (if there are teenagers that have special dietary needs, or who are required to eat multiple meals during the day, explain that they are exempt from the fast). They will offer up this time of fasting in solidarity with all those that experience hunger worldwide, and will make it a prayer for them. The fast will be broken the following evening at 6:00 PM.

You may choose to utilize the "Food Fast" from Catholic Relief Services as supplementary resource during the day. CRS Food Fast is an experience for Catholic youth that engages them in exploring the issue of hunger in a world of plenty. Through fasting, art, video, social media, reflection, games, and prayer, youth will come face to face with the reality of hunger for almost 1 billion people in the world. They will discover how Catholic Relief Services supports people that are hungry in acquiring food and gaining long-term food security. Central to this exploration of faith and justice, participants will be challenged as disciples of Jesus to discover their roles in eliminating hunger across the globe. To access Food Fast resources, visit foodfast.org.

ADAPTING THIS SESSION

- During Reconciliation, invite your priest or deacon to expose the Blessed Sacrament for a time of Eucharistic Adoration as teenagers go to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Close with the divine praises and benediction.
- Incorporate the teaching into the speaker during the meal. Much of the teaching material will work very well if presented by a guest speaker. Be sure that he or she covers the main ideas and incorporates Christ's presence among the poor, as this is critical to setting up small group discussion.

SOCIAL EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

HUNGRY AND GAVE ME NO FOOD

- Have I been wasteful in my consumption of material goods?
- Am I greedy and envious of what other's have? Do I spend time angry about other people's blessings and focus on what I do not have?
- Have I looked the other way when I've encountered a person that is begging for money or is in poverty?
- Do I look down on or think less of the homeless, people that require government assistance for food, or people in developing countries?
- Have I deliberately avoided opportunities to serve those in poverty?

THIRSTY AND GAVE ME NO DRINK

- Am I mindful of my water consumption?
- Am I appreciative of clean water?
- Do I care for the environment? Have I littered or deliberately destroyed parts of the environment?
- Do I seek to pray for others and intercede for them, especially those that I do not like or that I struggle with?
- When presented with the opportunity to speak the Gospel to another, do I avoid the opportunity or change the topic?

STRANGER AND GAVE ME NO WELCOME

- Do I reach out to the marginalized and outcast of my school or do I ignore them?
- Do I make fun of those that are different than I am, especially those that are immigrants,

exchange students, or those that have cultural or language differences?

- Have I discriminated against others based on their gender, race, or religion? Do I make racist or sexist jokes? Have I laughed at these jokes?
- Have I shown hospitality and love to others that come to my church? Do I welcome visitors to youth group and the parish or do I ignore them or feel annoyed by their presence?
- Do I see people from another country as "the other"?

NAKED AND YOU GAVE ME NO CLOTHING

- Do I uphold and fight for the rights and dignity of those that cannot defend themselves, especially the unborn, elderly, and immigrant? Have I knowingly encouraged others to consider abortion or defended the practice of abortion or euthanasia? Have I clothed the vulnerable with love and compassion?
- Have I destroyed the dignity of others through pornography, sex outside of the Sacrament of Marriage, reading sexually explicit materials, or through encouraging others to engage in these activities?
- Do I have material possessions that I do not use, but I refuse to give away? Do I allow clothing, technology, or other material things to take away from my relationship with God, or to replace God or relationships with other people? When I donate used clothing, do I give away good clothing or material that is dirty, worn, or falling apart?
- Do I tithe regularly? Do I support the Church and other charitable causes through the gift of my money? Am I greedy?

- Have I stolen from others? Have I cheated or lied in order to gain material goods?
- Do I think less of those who can't afford clothes?

ILL AND IN PRISON AND DID NOT CARE FOR ME

- Have I actively supported capital punishment? Do I harbor hatred against criminals rather than praying for their repentance and God's mercy for them?
- Do I love those who persecute me by praying for them or do I respond by fighting them out of anger and frustration?
- Do I show compassion to those that are sick and dying, or do I react with fear and avoidance?
- Have I participated in activity that lead others to sinful behavior?

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE



- 1. I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods besides me.** Did I fail to love God, to make God first in my life, to thank Him, trust Him, love Him as He deserves? Did I fail to pray? Have I doubted or denied my faith? Was I careless in saying my prayers? Do I give God time everyday in prayer? Do I make a god out of my work, my possessions, or my image in the eyes of others so that these rule my life instead of God? Am I angry toward God because of illness or misfortune? Have I been involved with magic, horoscopes, Ouija boards, or fortune telling?
- 2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.** Did I curse or swear? Did I use God's name in vain, lightly, carelessly, by blasphemy? Have I used foul language or jokes? In conversation, have I passively listened to slander and to jokes demeaning to the Church or to God's authority?
- 3. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.** Have I deliberately missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation? Did I leave Mass early without a good reason? Have I been to communion at least once a year? Did I receive Holy Communion in the state of serious sin? Have I been to confession recently? Have I allowed myself to become so dominated by my work and chores that I have not set aside Sunday for spiritual and family activities?
- 4. Honor your father and your mother.** Did I honor and obey my parents? Did I respect my brothers and sisters? Did I respect others with lawful authority, especially teachers? Have I talked back? Did I fail to help at home or to spend time with my family? Do I blame my parents for my own shortcomings?
- 5. You shall not kill.** Did I give in to feelings of anger or jealousy? Did I keep hatred in my heart? Have I ever struck anyone in anger, intending to injure the person? Did I fight; give a bad example or cause scandal? Have I abused alcohol or drugs? Have I had or in any way permitted or encouraged abortion? Have I thought about suicide? Have I killed someone? Have I killed someone with gossip or what I said?

6. You shall not commit adultery. Did I consent to impure glances? Passionate kisses? Sinful touches? Did I give my mind over to lustful thoughts or fantasies? Was I immodest in dress or behavior? Did I look at pornography, impure books, magazines or videos? Am I guilty of impurity with myself or with others? Do I avoid laziness, gluttony, idleness and the occasions of impurity?

7. You shall not steal. Have I stolen what is not mine? What or how much? Did I return it or make up for what I have stolen? Have I cheated on tests or homework? Did I waste time at work? Have I been extravagant in my manner of life, to the neglect of the poor at home and abroad?

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Have I lied or gossiped? Talked about another person behind their back? Do I always tell the truth? Am I sincere? Did I reveal secrets that should have been kept confidential? In any of my previous confessions, did I lie to or deliberately conceal something from the priest? Am I critical, negative or uncharitable in my talk? Have I injured the reputation of others by speaking about their failures and sins with little desire or intention to help them? Have I condoned prejudice and hatred toward people of other nationalities, races or religions?

9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. Have I consented to impure thoughts? Have I encouraged them by stares, curiosity or impure conversations? Did I neglect to control my imagination or desire of other people? Have I rejected my family in my heart, wishing to distance myself emotionally and personally from them?

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods. Is my heart greedy? Am I jealous of what other people have? Am I envious of others because I don't have what they have? Do I habitually compare myself with others? Am I moody or gloomy? Do I work, study and keep busy to counter idle thoughts? Am I critical, negative or uncharitable in my thoughts of others? Is my heart set on earthly possessions or on the treasures in heaven?

VOICE OF THE VOICELESS

SESSION THREE

ADVOCACY FOR THE VULNERABLE

SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 15:7-11
Nehemiah 9:27
Proverbs 3:27-28
Matthew 22:36-40

CATECHISM

1928-1942
2270-2279

2297-2298
2401-2463

CHURCH TEACHINGS

United States Conference
of Catholic Bishops: Seven
Themes of Catholic Social
Teachings

SOCIAL MEDIA

#ShiftWeek
#OneVoice

GOAL

This session provides teenagers with an understanding of the challenges that four vulnerable groups of individuals face both locally and globally – the unborn, elderly, migrant, and laborer. Teenagers are challenged to become advocates and “voices” for these vulnerable individuals.

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

YouTube: “Fair Trade: A Parish Story,” by Catholic Relief Services

Catholic Relief Services Food Fast offers additional media, prayer and activity resources at <http://www.foodfast.org/>

DURING THE DAY

The focus of this day is two-fold: First, teenagers will engage in a 12-hour fast from food in solidarity with those who live in hunger and poverty. This fast is a time of prayer; encourage the teenagers to offer up all of their experiences as a prayer for those that live in poverty. The second focus is on service experiences that focus on the vulnerable and voiceless. The evening session will focus on migration, rights of workers, the unborn and elderly. These are all groups that often are neglected, victimized, and lack basic rights. Some service opportunities may be easier for your group to arrange than others; all activities should focus on at least two of these groups:

- Schedule work time at a facility that assists with migrant workers finding labor. A local Catholic Charities’ office may be able to help you locate an agency that does this.

- If you did not visit a family housing facility for non-English speaking (or non-native speaking) families, today is a great day to do that. This experience will provide discussion topics on the challenges of finding work in a country where one does not speak the native language.
- Visit a crisis-pregnancy center and assist with cleanup, item collection, and meet with the director regarding their mission and ministry. Be sure that the crisis pregnancy center you attend is fully pro-life and does not provide contraception or referrals for abortion. Many Catholic and Christian crisis pregnancy centers exist that will fill these requirements.
- Schedule a visit to a retirement facility to visit with the residents. Many facilities have large recreation rooms where teenagers can meet one on one with residents.
- Provide teenagers an experience of unfair labor. Bring a group of teenagers to your main meeting space and divide up labor. Obtain several broken down boxes from various department stores. They should give these to you for free. Lay the boxes out with tape for the teenagers. Assign most of the teenagers to build and fill the boxes with newspaper, then stack the boxes. Assign one or two teenagers to act as supervisors and give instruction. At the end of the activity, “payout” each worker based on the price of boxes. At one US dollar per box, material cost will be .20, the supervisor will receive .75, and each worker will receive .05. Another physically demanding or tedious activity may be substituted for this one; the activity should represent the inequality of pay that exists for workers based on cost of items and the lack of voice that workers have in fighting for fair wages and working conditions.

GATHER

FAMILY DINNER

(60 min)

Gather all of the teenagers back from worksites and serve dinner. This dinner should be served “family style” within small groups. This is a great opportunity for groups to build community and end the 12-hour fasting. During the dinner, a small group leader can use the following questions to begin a discussion from the day:

- What did you think of the service activities today? What made them challenging or stood out to you?
- Was it difficult to work today without eating and only drinking water? How did this action build solidarity with migrants and with workers?
- What conditions do you think are acceptable and appropriate for workers? Why? How can we be advocates for these kinds of working conditions, both domestically and internationally? How do

our purchases help or hurt the conditions of laborers?

- Why is it important to be advocates for the vulnerable and voiceless in our society? How can we be better advocates for the unborn, elderly, and migrant?

PROCLAIM/ BREAK

ROTATING SESSIONS

(80 min)

The teens are broken up into four groups for the teaching and discussion for this session. There are four sessions that focus on a specific group that is vulnerable or voiceless. There are notes provided for the facilitator of each group to use when leading the discussion and teaching. Each rotating session should focus on providing pieces of information in order to lead a discussion,

rather than simply being a teaching. Each rotating session is 20 minutes long.

If possible, presenters should use images and video to reinforce their teaching and discussion.

The Unborn

Facilitate a brief teaching using the following talking points:

- Every human life has dignity and worth because it is created in the image and likeness of God. The unborn are no exception; the Catholic Church understands that human life begins at the moment of conception and unborn children have the right to life.
- For this reason, we must protect unborn children. They are especially vulnerable because they do not have a voice or the ability to be advocates for themselves.
- Abortion is the deliberate termination of pregnancy. It is a grave evil and under no circumstances can be approved as a primary medical procedure. However, many countries legally provide abortions even up to the final trimester and days before a birth.
- This attack on human dignity destroys our foundational understanding of all human dignity. It places a value on life and this “value judgment” carries over into other areas – once we value one life over another, we apply the same reasoning to other areas of human dignity.
- Abortion must be opposed. We do this through advocacy, education, and prayer. We advocate in behalf of the unborn by lobbying our government officials to pass legislation that will restrict and ultimately end legalized abortion. We must oppose programs and groups that fund abortion clinics and organizations that support and advocate for abortion.
- Advocacy also means supporting organizations that provide women who are considering an abortion with other alternatives. Crisis pregnancy centers, Christian pregnancy counseling, and supportive church groups can help mothers choose life. These groups are critical – we cannot seek to simply end abortion,

we must provide alternatives so women know they have a real choice and opportunity to choose life.

- We must educate ourselves in the issue so we can help others understand why abortion is wrong. Many people do not understand the Church’s teaching and we can help lead them to understand the gift of life.
- Finally, we must pray for an end to abortion and for services that help mothers make a decision to choose the life of their baby over abortion. Prayer is powerful – we cannot underestimate it.

After the teaching, lead a brief discussion with the group using the following questions to facilitate:

- How are unborn children a vulnerable group in our world? What are our responsibilities in defending their rights, especially their right to life?
- How can we become better advocates for the unborn?
- What can we do to help educate ourselves and others about the rights of unborn children? How can we pray for an end to abortion?
- Why is this a social justice issue? How else does abortion impact society and the world, apart from destroying the life of a child? What other consequences are there for society?

Migration

Facilitate a brief teaching using the following talking points:

- Migration is the movement of individuals or groups from their homeland due to economic difficulty, conflict, or displacement from natural disaster. Oftentimes these groups of people are mistreated and are stripped of their rights as they leave their native lands. There are four types of migration:
- Refugees – These are groups of people that are displaced because of a conflict, persecution, or natural disaster. They are forced to leave their homes and often move across borders seeking

safety. Refugees often consist of large groups and, in cases of conflict, may all be members of a single ethnicity or religion. For this reason, refugees may face discrimination or second-class treatment in areas where they seek to relocate. Refugees account for roughly nine million people worldwide.

- Many refugees are unable to return home due to the nature of conflict that exists there. They are often required to assimilate into a new culture or group together in neighborhoods composed of other refugees. Host countries do not always extend basic human rights to refugees.
- Internally Displaced Persons – IDPs are displaced for many of the same reasons as refugees, but remain within their own borders. For this reason, they often remain close to the conflicts and groups that caused their displacement and are vulnerable to violence or repeated displacement from growing conflict. There are few international or local protections in place for these individuals and groups.
- Economic Migrants – These individuals move out of economic necessity. When industries shutdown in the area or previous means of income are no longer available, many people migrate to other areas, sometimes in different countries hundreds or thousands of miles away, in order to support family. This migration is especially acute in Latin America, where borders have been militarized and the rights of many migrant workers are violated.
- When a migrant worker arrives to work in a new area, they may be forced to take low paying jobs with poor working conditions. This is often the result of a language barrier, absence of citizen documentation that prevents one getting a job, or lack of available jobs in the region. In the case of an undocumented migrant worker, they are also vulnerable to being taken advantage of by companies that utilize their labor for sub-standard living wages.
- Human Trafficking – One of the worst developments in migration is the rise of human trafficking. Many times IDPs, economic migrants, and refugees are vulnerable to human trafficking, but other individuals may be kidnapped or coerced into trafficking rings for

labor or sexual exploitation. Some estimates indicate that human trafficking makes 32 billion dollars annually (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014). It is a global problem, primarily involving vulnerable women and children in both the labor and sex industries.

After the above information is presented, facilitate a discussion with the teenagers using the following questions as a starting point:

- Why is migration a social justice issue? How does it destroy human dignity?
- How are migrant workers received in our home country? Does this reflect how we are called to treat them and receive them based on our faith?
- What can we do to help support human migration patterns? Are there areas where we need to be advocates in government legislation to protect the rights of migrants?
- Are there ways that we can become more educated in migration issues? Where are places that we can look for information? Why is it important to stay updated in world events, especially regarding migration?

Fair Trade

Facilitate a brief teaching using the following talking points:

- Every person has the right to work; the ability to work a meaningful profession is central to human dignity. Adam and Eve were given the work of caring for the Garden of Eden in Genesis. To be able to work is part of humanity's vocation.
- The rights of many workers, however, are violated by unjust employment practices. Fair trade principles confront these practices. Fair trade criteria include the following:
- Paying a fair wage to workers, based upon the local marketplace; offering employees advancement opportunities; providing equal employment opportunities, particularly to the most disadvantaged; providing safe and healthy work environments are all aspects of fair trade.

- Additionally, fair trade requires companies and organizations to engage in environmentally sustainable practices, be open to public accountability, build long-term trade relationships with producer organizations, and to provide technical and financial assistance to producers whenever possible.
- Many workers are taken advantage of when an organization or company does not follow fair trade practices; human dignity is sacrificed in favor of profits. This practice is particularly present in the coffee industry.
- Non-fair trade companies often pay little for coffee, even as workers are subjected to harsh conditions and volatile marketplaces. Additionally, sustainable environmental practices are often ignored in favor of streamlined practices that lower cost but cause harm and long-term relationships are not built with workers. Instead, workers are expendable and, as a result, have unstable income.
- We often buy products that perpetuate this cycle. Though we do this unknowingly, we demonstrate our support of non-fair trade practice when we spend our money.
- In order to combat unjust working conditions and pay for workers, we must be educated about products that do not use fair trade practices. Often, companies that follow fair trade principles will mark their products as such. If a product, especially one that is vulnerable to labor abuse, is not labeled as “fair trade,” we must research their labor practices. We can do this using the internet, or by checking Catholic Relief Services Fair Trade website, <http://www.crsfairtrade.org/>, for more information.

Facilitate a discussion with the teenagers using the following questions:

- Why is fair trade a social justice issue? How is the dignity of work related to the dignity of a person?
- In what ways can we unknowingly contribute to unfair labor practices? Are there people and industries that are especially vulnerable to this?

- What do we need to do in order to be educated about the products we buy? How can we encourage others to do this as well?
- How did the activity this afternoon give you a view of fair trade practices and the reality many workers face?
- How are Fair Trade practices a part of our faith? How do I contribute to a system of just economics?

The Elderly

Facilitate a brief teaching using the following talking points:

- The elderly are often overlooked and forgotten in discussions about human dignity. The elderly deserve special respect and protections that will preserve their dignity; this is especially true for end of life care.
- A growing trend worldwide is beginning to value euthanasia as a viable option for a form of end of life care; this is the deliberate termination of an individual with a terminal disease. It is often used on elderly individuals.
- The Church opposes euthanasia as a grave matter contrary to human dignity. Unfortunately, many people believe that this is a merciful response to suffering. Though suffering is challenging, Christ is with those that suffer in a special way. Many measures can be taken to care for and alleviate the pain of those that are ill and dying, but deliberately ending life is not one of them.
- The elderly must be included in our community, regardless of health or handicap. Within our own families, we must pay due respect to the elderly and the wisdom they offer. Elderly that reside in assisted living facilities or retirement homes can become lonely or neglected.
- We can bring joy and relief to this loneliness by spending time in these facilities; we can do this for both our family members or for residents of these facilities that we can get to know through visiting hours.

- Human dignity is not lost through age or disability; we have a responsibility to provide appropriate and dignified care for the elderly of our community.

Lead a brief discussion with the teenagers using the following questions:

- How do we include, honor, and respect the elderly members of our community? As teenagers, what can we learn from the elderly community in our parish?
- What can we do to honor and respect our parents and grandparents?
- Why is it important that we respect the dignity of the sick and dying? Why do you think people view the dignity of these individuals differently?
- In our country, who are the vulnerable and weak? What can we do to actively fight for the rights of these individuals?

SEND

FEET WASHING

(20 min)

Invite the teenagers into the main meeting room for a time of prayer. Set up several chairs and basins of water (one set for each group). The music minister plays quietly as teens enter and the youth minister explains:

Jesus, on the night before his death, does something incredible – he washes the feet of the disciples. This simple act was given to us as an example for us to follow. Washing feet was the ultimate sign of humility; it was the sign of a servant. This is the action Jesus performs:

Read John 13:1-16

If we want to follow Christ, we must also learn to wash feet. To wash the feet of our brothers and sisters means to serve those that society forgets, those that have no voice, and those that are oppressed. It is an act of love that demonstrates that no one person is above another – but that we

are all given the same human dignity. The act of feet washing even extends to those that hate us – Jesus' washed Judas' feet along with the rest of the disciples, even though he knew Judas would betray him.

Tonight, we end our day by washing each others' feet. This simple action becomes our prayer, and our prayer becomes our way of life.

Explain to the teenagers that one teen will sit in the chair to begin the prayer and another teen will wash his or her feet and pray for the person in the chair. Then, the person who washed feet will sit in a chair and another teen will wash his or her feet. Continue this until the final teen of the small group sits in the chair; the first teen to sit in a chair will wash his or her feet. Once each small group is finished, they will pray for other groups and enter into a time of worship.

WORSHIP MUSIC

(20 min)

After all of the teenagers' feet are washed, the music minister leads an extended time of worship. This period of prayer ends with a challenge for the teenagers to go forward and wash the feet of the oppressed, homeless, and those that persecute them.

ADAPTING THIS SESSION

- For smaller groups, rather than having to rotate sessions choose two issues to talk about and then facilitate a discussion. Pass out copies of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and divide the teenagers into two groups. Assign each group one of the remaining two topics and instruct the teenagers to research and present the Church's teaching on that topic, as well as why it is a social justice issue and how we can respond to it.
- In addition to washing the feet of each member of the group, invite other members to pray over him or her with any prayer request he or she has while having his or her feet washed.

iTHIRST

SESSION FOUR

CARE FOR CREATION AND CLEAN WATER

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:28-30
Matthew 21:20-21
John 4:6-29
John 21:15-19

CATECHISM

2415-2418
2437-2441
2447-2449

SOCIAL MEDIA

#ShiftWeek
#iThirst

GOAL

This session challenges teenagers to understand how care for creation and clean water initiatives are important aspects of social justice. The session moves teenagers to begin thinking about a plan for sustained social action locally, nationally, and globally.

DURING THE DAY

The focus of this day is on clean water and care for creation. There are several environmental activities that teenagers may participate in that teach proper care for creation and the relationship that humanity shares with creation. Often improper care for the environment results in the destruction of human life or the degrading of the quality of human life. These environmental concerns are also connected with clean water initiatives in many areas. During the day, consider scheduling the following activities:

- Water Restriction. Give each teenager a container (between three and eight liters) of water to use during the day. Challenge them to use this water for all of their bathing, eating, and cooking during the day.
- Highway or Park clean-up. Contact your local park and recreation agency regarding clean-up of a city park or other public area. There may be

other projects that the agency needs help with, which may include planting trees, laying mulch, or working with recycling. Schedule a couple of activities that various groups can participate in. Any activity scheduled should focus on the theme of “care for creation.”

- During the afternoon, teenagers participate in the “Carry My Bucket” water simulation found on page 44. Take time to process this activity with the teenagers using the questions provided in the outline.

GATHER

WORSHIP

(10 min)

Begin the session with a time of worship led by the music minister. This time of worship focuses on call and mission; the music minister should select songs that reflect this theme.

WHERE I SAW CHRIST

(20 min)

Transition out of worship with an opening prayer. The youth minister recaps some of the major moments and service projects from the weeks. If you have been taking pictures or video, this is a great time to share those as a slideshow or movie set to music. After the recap, invite teenagers to come forward and share where they saw Christ during the week. This may have been during a service project, a moment of prayer, or during social time.

Allow several teenagers to share during this time; if possible choose one or two ahead of time to give a longer testimony about their experience from the week.

PROCLAIM

"iTHIRST" TEACHING

(15 min)

- This past week we have experienced several aspects of service first-hand. Today, we spent time exploring what it means to be good stewards of creation and the right to clean water that many communities lack. These two areas of social justice often go overlooked because we do not understand the issues that each present.
- Water is a basic human right, but many people survive without ready access to clean water.

In some communities, individuals walk several miles for just a small bit of clean water. These trips can be dangerous and are taxing on those that make them. Even when they walk, sometimes the water source they draw from is still polluted.

- Dirty water is responsible for a significant amount of disease and death in developing countries. Water-borne illness is one of the leading causes of death in children. We need water in order to survive; what would you do if you only had dirty water to drink?
- This is not a question for many people but a daily reality. It is also a reality that we can change. There are many clean water initiatives that build wells in communities that do not have access to clean water. These wells bring more than clean water – they bring stability.
- When a well is constructed in a community, it can serve hundreds of people. The presence of a well alleviates the need for women and children to walk long distances for water; the building of a well is often followed by the construction of a school for children that otherwise would not have the opportunity for education.
- Most importantly, clean water respects the dignity of the human person. Access to safe and sanitary water is a basic human right; water is essential to life.

Care for Creation

- We can contribute to clean water initiatives by being advocates to our local officials to vote in favor of supporting clean water initiatives domestically and globally. We can also donate our money and even our time if we choose to travel to assist in the construction of a well, to clean water initiatives.
- There are very straightforward ways in providing individuals with clean water and they include donating money personally, rallying groups at our schools and parishes to raise money to sponsor the building of a well, and participating in mission trips to visit communities where the

construction of a well and education about clean water is taking place.

- There are many more ways to unknowingly contribute to the problem. When God created humanity, God gave us dominion over the earth. He put creation in our care, but recent humanity has not taken their responsibility seriously.
- Though it may seem inconsequential, environmental care is a major social justice issue. Pollution destroys clean water sources and surrounding environments that sustain the livelihood of many people. Air pollution is highly suspected to be responsible for climate change; this climate change impacts millions of people who are victims to changing weather patterns, unusual heat or cold, or that work in agricultural professions that are impacted by changing weather.
- Sustainable environmental practice and care can help reverse these effects while also protecting the earth for future generations.

What Now?

- All of this can seem daunting; how do we feed the hungry, provide shelter to the homeless, welcome the stranger, and give water to those that are thirsty? So many of these issues take place seemingly out of our reach and ability to have a real impact.
- The statement, “I can’t make a difference,” is a lie we must reject. Christ calls us to serve our brothers and sisters and empowers us to do so. We are called to make a difference beyond this week and we must seek what difference that will be through prayer.
- We are going to begin forming a plan for the next year to continue serving and acting in the world, in our country, and in our local community. Service is not a week and social justice is not an experience – it is a lifestyle that is intricately tied to discipleship.
- Jesus calls us to do something great – this week was just the beginning. As we begin to bring things to a close, the time has come for us to make a difference in our world.

- Encourage your group to take the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor. Sponsored by the Catholic Climate Covenant (catholicclimatecovenant.org), this offers a unique and holistic opportunity for individuals, families, parishes, organizations and institutions to express their faith through a commitment of protecting God’s creation and advocating on behalf of our global brothers and sisters who face the harshest impact of climate change.

BREAK

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION AND PLANNING

(30 min)

Divide the teenagers into their small groups. Provide each group with a large poster board or piece of butcher paper and markers. Explain that each group will be creating a plan for sustained social action in their community and advocacy within the global community. The Core Member leading each small group will facilitate this process, and he or she can use the following questions to guide the discussion:

- What are three areas of social justice that we experienced this week where we feel we can make an active difference both locally and globally in the next year?
- What is our goal in these three areas? What change do we hope to create or what is our desired outcome?
- What are concrete action steps that we can make toward these goals on a daily basis? Weekly basis? Monthly basis? How can we check progress?
- Do these goals involve global advocacy? How can we be advocates for change in these areas in a local, national, and global level?
- What people need to be involved in order to help this change occur?
- What role does prayer play in these goals? How can we involve the larger community in praying

LOVE FORWARD

SESSION FIVE

SUSTAINED SOCIAL ACTION

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 28:19-20
John 20:21

CATECHISM

849-852
1928-1942

SOCIAL MEDIA

#ShiftWeek
#LoveForward

GOAL

This is the final session of the retreat week and it challenges teenagers to commit to a plan of sustained social action in their local community, their country, and globally.

GATHER

PRESENTATION OF ACTION IDEAS

(15 min)

Gather teenagers together and pray Morning Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours (see introductory materials on page 5). Invite each group to present their ideas for sustained social action to a large group. The youth minister facilitates these presentations. He or she pins up the paper that each group used from brainstorming and writes down recurring ideas or themes on a separate piece of paper.

PROCLAIM

"LOVE FORWARD" TEACHING

(15 min)

- Jesus redeems us and gives us a model of service. He loves unconditionally and serves those that society forgets. As disciples, we must do the same.
- Discipleship and service are not choices or one-week experiences; they are lifestyles. If we want to truly change the world in a positive way, we must be ready and willing to make service a lifestyle.

- We cannot stand by and allow suffering, poverty, and injustice to continue in our world unopposed. Jesus calls us to do more. As part of a global community, we are responsible for the care of our brothers and sisters.
- St. Paul uses the image of the body to describe the relationship we share with others; there are many parts of the body and Christ is the head. We are all connected, though we have different functions, and we are all important. When one part of the body suffers, all parts suffer – and when one part is honored, all parts are honored (1 Corinthians 12:26).
- If you hurt your foot, your whole body will react. Your face will grimace, you may shed a couple of tears, your body will jerk back in reaction to the pain. When the Body of Christ is in pain, we are all affected.

Sustained Social Action

- Change requires commitment. One big thing will not change the world, but many little things will. We must cultivate an attitude of service. There are four ways that we can do this:
- First, we must practice the virtue of charity in our daily lives. We want to believe that if we were confronted with a person that was homeless we would talk with them and love them, perhaps even invite them to eat a meal with us – but the reality is that such a heroic action won't happen if we don't live an attitude of love every day. Love the people closest to you, serve the vulnerable and poor in your school, care for your family – these are the actions that build habits which result in an attitude of service.
- Second, we must get involved. Life can be busy, especially as a teenager. Time is limited and therefore it is valuable. God blesses the time we give; it is truly a gift to those that you serve. If you don't make a habit of giving time to service now, you never will. Life never gets "less busy," there will always be excuses to serve later – but excuses don't help people that need it.
- Third, become an advocate. There are some global issues of poverty, migration, and fair trade that we cannot tackle alone. We need the support and resources of our government

to step in and serve. Write to your elected officials, become a part of groups that lobby for legislation that protects workers and provides aid to countries that need it. Become educated about political issues so you can vote intelligently for candidates that support social justice and pro-life issues.

- Use this time to talk about the USCCB and CRS initiative "Catholics Confront Global Poverty." Information and handouts can be found on pages 46 to 47.
- Finally, we must commit to a course of action. There are so many areas that need to be served that we will become overwhelmed if we try to tackle them all. This week we have been exposed to several areas and people that need our voice and service.
- Last night we brainstormed ideas for ways that we can serve. Today we are going to set three goals for our service in the next year. These will help guide our actions as a group and be our commitment to our brothers and sisters worldwide as we strive to love as Christ loves us.
- Pass out the handout found on page 45 titled "The Two Feet of Love in Action," from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for teens to use as a guide to their discussions. Additional copies and information about "The Two Feet of Love in Action" can be found at usccb.org/twofeet.

BREAK

THE BIG THREE GOALS

(15 min)

After all of the groups have shared, the youth minister recaps the main themes and ideas that came through in all the groups' presentations. He or she identifies the three or four themes and invites the teenagers to begin brainstorming three goals that the youth group can create for the next year. These goals should be:

- One local goal
- One national goal
- One global goal

Invite the teenagers to discuss and formulate these goals. Once the group agrees on these goals, the youth minister writes them on a large piece of paper and pins it up in the front of the room.

The group then determines four or five action steps for each goal. Use the following questions to help the teenagers formulate action steps:

- Who needs to be involved to help us reach our goal? What is the role of the parish in this project?
- Does this project require a budget? How much?
- What commitments do we need to make daily, weekly, and monthly to make this project successful?
- What will we use to measure success and track our progress?
- How will we know we have met our goal? How will this project continue after the goal is met?

Write down action steps below each goal on the main sheet of paper. Display this prominently in the room.

COMMITTEE SEPARATION AND PLANNING

(30 min)

Divide the teenagers into six groups:

- Local Logistics
- Local Marketing
- National Logistics
- National Marketing
- Global Logistics
- Global Marketing

The logistics groups will focus on action steps for how the project will be completed. They will determine how the goal will be met using the action steps. This includes setting dates for service projects (if necessary), contacting

representatives, local organizations, or parish members regarding events or the cause, and they will coordinate the details of supplies, collections, and deliveries (if necessary). This group will also help set a budget or a monetary goal for the project.

The marketing groups will contact others to inform them of the initiative and invite others to participate; they will create marketing materials for the project and develop a social media strategy to help promote the cause. They will also determine how to promote fundraising events, if necessary.

Each goal has two groups assigned to it; these groups will meet together (e.g. the local marketing and local logistics groups meet together) to go over and assign tasks moving forward. The groups can meet separately during this time or after the retreat, but each teenager will be responsible for their role in the group.

SEND

IDEA SHARING AND COMMITMENT

(15 min)

Each group for local, national, and global initiatives will present their final plan and action steps to the rest of the group. This is a great time to get feedback or note where resources can be shared.

After all of the plans have been shared, invite a teenager to pray for God's will to be done in the efforts of the group. Offer the plans to God for His glory that they would be a powerful conduit of love. After the prayer, transition into the closing Mass.

CELEBRATION OF MASS

(60 min)

The retreat week ends with the celebration of Mass. Invite parents, supporting agencies, and any other community members that were involved in the week to pray at Mass. This Mass can be offered for the teenagers that attended

APPENDIX

Carry My Bucket

20 minutes

Activity Summary

This activity requires participants to carry water, joining them in solidarity with people throughout the world who travel long distances to wells and rivers every day to get the water they need to use each day.

Materials Needed

Buckets (or use gallon jugs that can then be used throughout the Food Fast during water breaks), place to fill buckets, tape

Procedure

Divide participants into groups of two to four and give each group two buckets or four gallon jugs. Use the tape to mark a starting point (the well or river) and a finishing point (home) for the groups to carry water. Have group members designate a person to fill the bucket at the well and then another person(s) to carry it home. Groups can have more than one person carry the bucket and can decide on the best way for their group to carry it.

Consider setting up obstacles to demonstrate the often harsh and dangerous conditions in which people must gather water at a well or river and then return home. Obstacles could include: animals, forests, marketplaces, hills and robbers. Participants can be used as obstacles as well as chairs, stairs and tables. Don't make obstacles so challenging that participants could hurt themselves. Have supervisors near obstacles to prevent mishaps.

Option: Weather and light conditions permitting, have participants go outside for this activity.

Debrief

In the United States most people can turn on a faucet and get water any time of day for cleaning, cooking, drinking, etc. However, in many parts of the world, people in need, usually women and girls, travel long distances to wells or rivers to get water. This water has to last the entire day and is not always clean.

Ask participants:

- Was it easy to carry the water? Could you do this for over a mile, three miles, or longer?
- Did you know many people in the world, mostly women and girls, do this every day?
- How does this impact their health and safety?



The Two Feet of Love *in Action*

“The conscience is called by this social teaching to recognize and fulfill the obligations of **justice** and **charity** in society.”

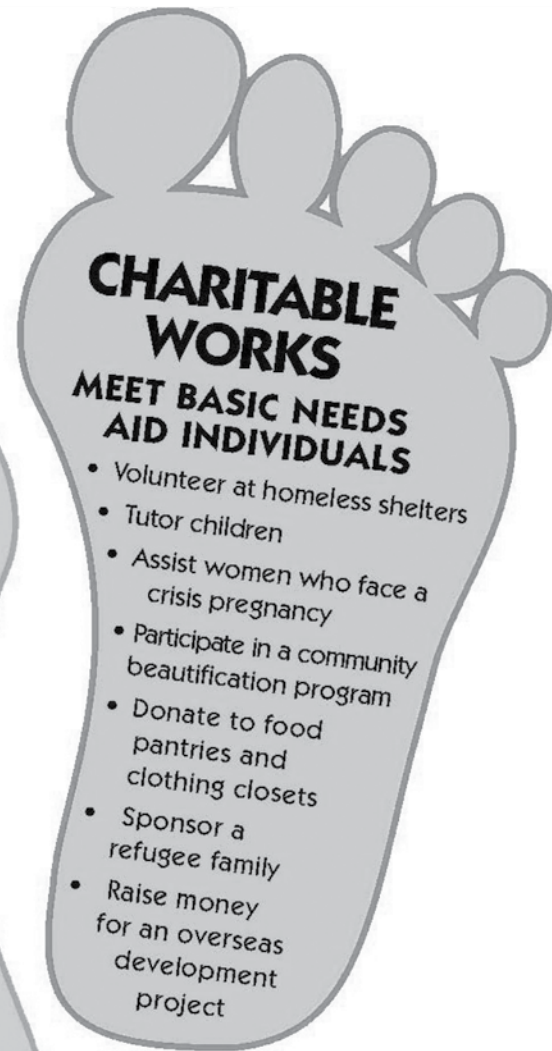
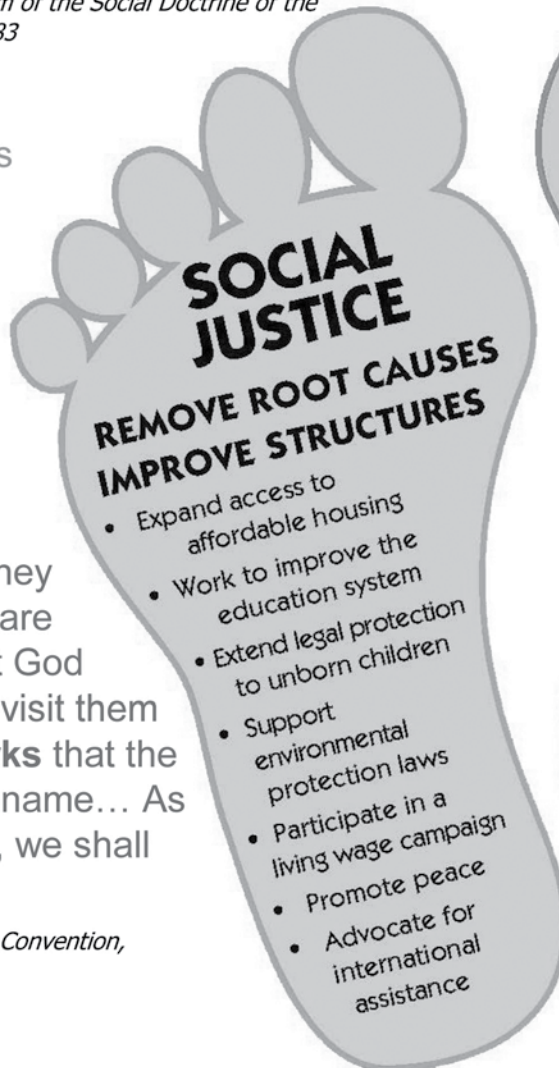
—*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 83*

“**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*



HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY
**SET UP
MEETINGS**
WITH YOUR
**MEMBERS OF
CONGRESS**



Photo by
Philip
Laudrey/
CRS

CATHOLICS
CONFRONT
GLOBAL
POVERTY

YOUR INVOLVEMENT MATTERS.

Scheduling in person meetings with your Members of Congress can be challenging, but research shows that nothing proves more impactful. The guidance below should help you to successfully schedule your meeting, communicate effectively, and follow up afterward.

STEP ONE: PLAN AHEAD

- Join your Member of Congress (MOC)'s mailing list. This way you can find out what issues they focus on and when they will be back in your home state so that you can set up a meeting.
- Familiarize yourself with your MOC's jurisdiction, voting record, ideology and why they may be likely to agree or disagree with your point of view.
- Call the Member's district or DC office 4-6 weeks before the desired meeting date. Have multiple dates and times available.
- Contact your local district office, whose staff may be more available for meetings than their counterparts in DC, and may be able to meet for longer periods. The DC office can often provide names of the best district staffers to contact about meetings. Titles of staffers to meet with may include: District Director, Field Representative, or Regional Director.
- Contact your Catholic Relief Services Diocesan Director, the Diocesan Social Action Director or your state's Catholic Conference to find out about advocacy trainings they offer and/or whether they organize visits to Members of Congress: this will help you network with people who may have established relationships with MOCs, or allow you to join a group visit to an MOC's office.

STEP TWO: MAKE YOUR REQUEST

MAKE IT PERSONAL AND LOCAL

- Be sincere and emphasize your own connection to the issue. A personal experience or emotional connection will make you stand out.
- Tie your request to what is happening in the Member's district or state. Demonstrate that their constituents care about the issue. Non-local issues are usually less of a priority for MOCs.
- Always address the Member by name, never with generic greetings.
- Use consistent and correct contact information. Make sure that the MOC's office can reliably get in touch with you.

Get involved.
Call 1-866-608-5978
Email
info@confrontglobalpoverty.org
Or visit confrontglobalpoverty.org



MAKE IT CONCISE BUT RELEVANT

- Provide as much detail in the meeting request as possible, but keep it short and to the point. Include background information on yourself or your organization and as many logistical details as possible: when you would like to meet, where, what time, with whom.
- Limit the number of issues you want to discuss to two or three. Use each issue you want to discuss as an opportunity for another meeting.
- Establish a correlation between the Member and the cause. Did the Member vote for similar legislation or show past support, or do they have connections to the cause?



MAKE IT WELL-TIMED

- Request a meeting for when your MOC will be in the district, and will be more likely to have time to meet.
- Try to make your request during a time when there are no “hot-button” issues swamping the Member’s office.

STEP THREE: BE PERSISTENT

- If a meeting is scheduled, call or email a few days before to remind staff of the upcoming meeting.
- Don’t flood your Members’ offices with repeated requests for the same meeting. This will have a negative effect. Instead, space your follow up.
- Use a variety of methods to contact the MOC about issues: phone, email, Web forms or postal mail. Some MOCs are more responsive to one type of communication.
- Find out if Catholic Relief Services has a relationship with the Member or their office. An established relationship may help get a face-to-face meeting.
- If you can’t get a meeting with the MOC, request a meeting with a staff member. This may be just as good, since staffers decide which issues to put before the Member.

STEP FOUR: FOLLOW UP

- Engage your MOCs and their offices in follow up activities. First, make sure to send a thank you letter offering to provide expertise on the issues that were discussed and request a follow-up meeting. Invite the MOC and their staff to relevant local events. Other ideas include: asking a question at a town hall meeting over a recess, coordinating a site visit for the Member to see your organization’s work first hand, or inviting the Member to a fundraiser or other event.
- One meeting is not enough to develop a commitment from the Member to your issue. Work on long-term relationship-building with local district staff, so you have a basis for future meeting requests, and can more easily schedule in-person meetings when the Member is visiting the district. Try to meet a few times a year with one of your district contacts about the same issue or new issues that have come up.

CATHOLICS
CONFRONT
GLOBAL
POVERTY

YOUR INVOLVEMENT MATTERS.

Photo by Philip
Lautner/CRS

Get involved.

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