



CALLED TO ACTION

Session 5: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

living the Faith
celebrating Prayer
promoting Justice
ready to Serve

Song – The Cry of the Poor – John B. Foley, S.J.

Refrain: The Lord hears the cry of the poor; Blessed be the Lord.

I will bless the Lord at all times,
His praise ever in my mouth; Let
my soul glory in the Lord, For He
hears the cry of the poor.

Let the lowly hear and be glad:
The Lord listens to their pleas;
And to hearts broken, God is
near, For He hears the cry of the
poor.

Video Link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FYWUv9dTyQ>

Prayer for Generosity (St. Ignatius of Loyola)

Lord, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labour and not to ask for reward,
save that of knowing that I do your will.

Ice-Breaker 1 - Biscuit Challenge

Have participants in a circle and have them tilt their head back and balance a biscuit on their forehead. The challenge is to use their face muscles to move the biscuit to their mouth.

We are fortunate that the only struggle that we had in order to eat the biscuit is to get down from the top of our head into our mouth. Many people in the world are struggling to have access to food. They will be extremely grateful if they can have one single piece of biscuit.

Ice-Breaker 2- A year in a slum

Announce, imagine that you are being sent on mission to live and work in a slum in [insert a country relevant to your group eg Philippines, India] for one year. In addition to the essentials (like clothes and toiletries) you can take one piece of music, one book (which is not to be the bible) and one luxury item you can carry with you in a backpack and one gift for somebody that lives permanently in the slum. What would you take and why?

Allow a few minutes for participants to draw up their list of four items, before sharing their choices with the rest of the group.



Church Teaching

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2443-2445

2443 God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them: "Give to him who begs from you, do not refuse him who would borrow from you"; "you received without pay, give without pay." [Mt 5:42; 10:8] It is by what they have done for the poor that Jesus Christ will recognize his chosen ones. [Cf. Mt 25:31-36] When "the poor have the good news preached to them," it is the sign of Christ's presence. [Mt 11:5; cf. Lk 4:18] [786, 525, 544, 853]

2444 "The Church's love for the poor... is a part of her constant tradition." This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor. [CA 57; cf. Lk 6:20-22, Mt 8:20; Mk 12:41-44] Love for the poor is even one of the motives for the duty of working so as to "be able to give to those in need." [Eph 4:28] It extends not only to material poverty but also to the many forms of cultural and religious poverty. [Cf. CA 57] [1716]

2445 Love for the poor is incompatible with immoderate love of riches or their selfish use: [2536]

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned, you have killed the righteous man; he does not resist you. [Jas 5:1-6] [2547]

Scripture

Do not Delay Giving to Those in Need

(Sirach 4:1-10)

My child, do not cheat the poor of their living, and do not keep needy eyes waiting. Do not grieve the hungry, or anger one in need. Do not add to the troubles of the desperate, or delay giving to the needy. Do not reject a suppliant in distress, or turn your face away from the poor. Do not avert your eye from the needy, and give no one reason to curse you; for if in bitterness of soul some should curse you, their Creator will hear their prayer. Endear yourself to the congregation; bow your head low to the great. Give a hearing to the poor, and return their greeting politely. Rescue the oppressed from the oppressor; and do not be hesitant in giving a verdict. Be a father to orphans, and be like a husband to their mother; you will then be like a son of the Most High, and he will love you more than does your mother.



Called to Action: Written by The Logos Project on behalf of Auckland Catholic Youth Ministry enabling young people to live their faith.

LOGOS
Marist Youth Development

Activity - Rich Person / Poor Person

Background

The Catholic Church have always advocated for the protection of the poor and vulnerable in society. Our Catholic tradition and values encourages us to do what we can to close the gap between the rich and the poor. Jesus story on the last judgement in Matthew's Gospel (25:31-46) instructs us to prioritise the needs of the poor and vulnerable first 'whatever you do to the least of these, you did it to me'.

Task:

Have a place where you can set up two food stations but make sure the stations are hidden from the participants. The stations should demonstrate that food is distributed very unfairly where the first have significantly more food than the second. The first station will represent a Developed Country and the Second will represent an Underdeveloped or Developing Country. For example: the first station can have chocolates, lollies and cookies and the second can have plain rice or small loaf of white bread.

Split the group into two and number each group; First and Second.

Warm up by asking all participants what they had for breakfast. Once they had a chance to share, make them feel excited about the activity they are about to do because it involves food! Make sure they are oblivious to what is going to happen. In order to get them fully excited about food, ask them what their favourite food is. Before proceeding to the activity, ask for a volunteer to say grace.

After the prayer, ask them to walk into the room in their group and get them to sit at their designated station.

Tell them that they are only allowed to eat the food in their stations. Watch and take mental notes on how they react to what they have for themselves compared to what the other group. Their reactions and their feelings will be good tool for debrief.

Give them plenty of time to experience the unequal distribution of food.

Debrief:

Start by asking what happened and ask only for the facts and figures. For example:

"We walked into the room and saw the food that we have to eat and compared it to what others had to eat" Then as they talk about what happened allow them to reminisce about an experience that they have had or are currently going through.

Ask them "What was the purpose of the activity?" (Allow plenty of time for discussion.)

Before concluding the activity ask the group:

"What was something that you can learn and take away from the activity that you can apply to your own life?"

Final Comments:

From the very beginning, the Church always had a preferential option for the poor and the vulnerable. As followers of Christ, it is part of our vocation to care for the poor and marginalized. We are encouraged to contribute to end world poverty in small and simple way so that all God's people will have decent food to eat and a place to call home.

