



Diocese of Buffalo

## Department of Lifelong Faith Formation

A member of the Division for Evangelization and Catechesis

### Catholic Social Teaching

**Rationale:** Catholics are called to discern discrepancies, where they exist, between social realities and Gospel values, and to develop strategies to make Gospel values operative. In order to accept the gospel call to discipleship, students must develop a foundation for a social justice consciousness and participate in service that involves relationships and concrete action.

**Goal:** That students will understand the Church's teaching on Social Justice issues, including their sources rooted in the Old and New Testaments plus Papal and Episcopal documents.

**Objectives:**

- To grow in an understanding of the Scriptural roots of the Church's social teaching.
- To present and explore the seven key principles of Catholic social teaching.
- To critique modern societal values in the light of Gospel values.
- To reflect on how to respond to these issues using principles of moral decision-making.



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\*(Based upon the *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework of the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age* (2008), p. 40-43)

Outline	Activities	Critical Reflection
<p><b>Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching:</b></p> <p><b>I. Life and Dignity of the Human Person</b></p> <p>A. Sanctity of human life and inherent dignity of the human person</p> <p>B. Attacks &amp; threats on human life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. abortion</li> <li>2. assisted suicide</li> <li>3. euthanasia</li> <li>4. embryonic stem cell research</li> <li>5. cloning</li> <li>6. capital punishment</li> <li>7. oppressive governments           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prisoner rights</li> <li>• terrorism</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>* St. Thomas More, St. Katharine Drexel, St. Casimir, St. Stanislaus</p>	<p>For lesson plans and resources about Catholic Social Teaching Visit <a href="http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/foreducators">www.usccb.org/sdwp/foreducators</a></p> <p>List ten attacks on human dignity which are evident in the modern world.</p> <p>View the PBS documentary “The Miracle of Life.” Discuss your reactions.</p> <p>Prepare a case study of a social justice issue which is legal in the U.S. but immoral in the Church’s teaching.</p> <p>Write letters to House of Representative members or U.S. Senators or NYS representatives about supporting legislation that supports the dignity of human life.</p> <p>Role play or simulate a scenario of racism, sexism, ageism, stereotyping, etc.</p>	<p>Many injustices plague humanity today. Suppose you had the power to eliminate three of them. Which would you choose and why?</p> <p>Reflect on the life of St. Maximilian Kolbe and his act of self-sacrifice in a German concentration camp.</p> <p>What is prejudice? How do we become prejudiced? Give an example of a prejudice that is harmful. How can you overcome prejudice in yourself and help others overcome prejudice?</p>



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Outline	Activities	Critical Reflection
<p>3. Discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• people with disabilities</li> <li>• race</li> <li>• age</li> <li>• gender</li> <li>• sexual orientation</li> </ul> <p><b>D. Alternatives to enhance human life</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. subsidized pre-natal care and adoption</li> <li>2. palliative care</li> <li>3. hospice</li> <li>4. measures to reduce violence</li> <li>5. substance abuse prevention</li> <li>6. programs to rehabilitate prisoners</li> </ol> <p>* Holy Family, Joachim and Ann, Rose of Lima, Martin de Porres</p>	<p>View the movie <i>Radio</i> and discuss the challenges of looking at the whole person rather than through their disabilities.</p> <p>Prepare a report on the hospice philosophy of care for the dying. How is this unique?</p> <p>Host a speaker on: the dangers of drugs, alcohol and nicotine; suicide; bullying, including cyber-bullying.</p> <p>Show an episode of MTV's <i>16 and Pregnant</i> or <i>Teen Mom</i> and identify the challenges faced by all members of the family.</p> <p>Contact an agency that helps victims of domestic violence. Request information on current statistics and services available for those seeking help.</p>	<p>How does the portrayal of women in advertising affect a woman's ability to develop a healthy sense of her self and her dignity as a woman?</p> <p>Is violence ever a solution to violence?</p> <p>Discuss: "I destroy my enemy when I make him/her my friend." Abraham Lincoln</p>



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**Catholic Social Teaching** (Page 3)

Outline	Activities	Critical Reflection
<p><b>II. Call to Family, Community, and Participation</b></p> <p><b>A. Sanctity of Marriage</b></p> <p>1. policies to support families and programs to assist in cases of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alcohol and drug addiction</li> <li>• compulsive behavior</li> <li>• domestic violence and abuse</li> </ul> <p><b>B. Sanctity of family: rights and responsibilities</b></p> <p>1. parents as primary educators</p> <p>2. right to choose best education for children based on need</p> <p><b>C. Advocacy for immigrants and refugees</b></p> <p>* St. John Baptist de la Salle, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, St. Peter Claver, St. Martin of Tours</p>	<p>Invite married couples (young, middle aged, elderly) to speak about the joys and obstacles of marriage.</p> <p>Invite parents to speak about the joys and duties of being parents. What qualities are important for good parenting?</p> <p>Sponsor a child in a Third World country through personal financial donations.</p> <p>Discuss some of the social problems that Jesus would see if he returned to today's world. Role play Jesus' response.</p>	<p>What are the ingredients for a long lasting loving relationship? Discuss the importance of children in a marriage and the responsibilities of good parenting.</p> <p>Read Eph 5:22; 6:4. What is Paul's message about family life?</p> <p>If you were to keep only that which serves basic human needs, what would you no longer own that is now yours?</p> <p>Who are the modern day outcasts? How do you think Jesus would treat these people? How can we respond to them and their needs?</p>



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**Catholic Social Teaching** (Page 4)

Outline	Activities	Critical Reflection
<p>III. <b>Preferential Option for the Poor</b></p> <p>A. Moral Principle: universal destination of the goods of the earth (CCC, nos. 2402-2406)</p> <p>B. Goods of the earth for every human being.</p> <p>C. Why we all need these goods (CCC, nos. 2402)</p> <p>D. See Christ in the homeless, outcast, unpopular</p> <p>E. Appropriate use of wealth and other resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-be a voice for the voiceless</li> <li>- assess social acts with their impact on the poor.</li> </ul> <p>* St. Nicholas, Damien of Molokai, John Chrysostom, Vincent de Paul</p>	<p>Play the on-line game called “Hungry Decisions” at <a href="http://www.worldchurchservice.org">www.worldchurchservice.org</a> then search “Hungry Decisions”.</p> <p>Become involved with the <i>Poverty USA-Student Action Project</i> (<a href="http://www.usccb.org">www.usccb.org</a>) to learn about poverty and action to alleviate it.</p> <p>Host a hunger meal, fast, or retreat see: <a href="http://www.foodfast.org">www.foodfast.org</a> or <a href="http://www.education.crs.org/resources">www.education.crs.org/resources</a></p> <p>Invite someone from the Catholic Charities office to speak about their efforts to meet the needs of the poor in your community. (e.g. working with the abused, refugees or working with people who have HIV/AIDS)</p> <p>Prepare a prayer service for World AIDS Day for December 1st.</p>	<p>“Social Justice can be obtained only when the dignity of all people is respected. The promotion of human dignity is entrusted to us by God.” (CCC #1929) What are the ways human dignity can be promoted by society?</p> <p>Discuss the following quotations from Martin Luther King: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”</p> <p>Why do you think that health care for the mentally ill and substance abusers is not funded on a par with other diseases and conditions?</p>



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<p><b>IV. Human Rights and Responsibilities</b></p> <p>A. All have the right to life and what sustains it.</p> <p>B. Society should foster and protect these rights.</p> <p>C. Responsibilities undergird human rights.</p> <p>* Elizabeth Seton, Ignatius Loyola, John Neumann, John Bosco</p>	<p>Gather items that a marginalized population (such as refugees or a home for recently released prisoners, etc). Deliver the donation personally and spend some time with the residents. What did you learn?</p> <p>Research the development of Catholic schools or Catholic health care and how either institution has been an agent for social justice.</p> <p>Read Lk 10:29-37, 17:11-19, &amp; Jn 4:4-12. For each passage summarize Jesus' attitude in your own words.</p>	<p>Comment on this quotation from Elizabeth Seton: "Live simply so that others may simply live."</p>



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<p>* Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Martin Luther King, Jr., Archbishop Oscar Romero, Dorothy Day, St. Joseph the Worker, Adolph Kolping</p>	<p>Brainstorm a list of people whose causes involve working with issues of justice. Invite a person who works for justice to share his/her experiences with the class.</p> <p>In Gal 5:12 Paul says, "Serve one another with love." Investigate the service organizations in your school/ parish. Make a commitment either alone or as a group to assist with one service project this year.</p> <p>Visit a local nursing home. Spend time with the residents. If possible, provide small gifts or entertainment.</p>	<p>Read Lv 19:33-34, Dt 10:12-19, Is 58:6-9, Mt 25:31-46, Lk 4:18-19. What do these passages say about welcoming strangers?</p>



**Catholic Social Teaching** (Page 7)

Outline	Activities	Critical Reflection
<p><b>V. Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers</b></p> <p>A. Right to productive work</p> <p>B. Entitlement to a just wage, benefits, and protection from undue risks</p> <p>C. Right of workers to organize</p> <p>D. Right to acquire property</p> <p>E. Right to take economic initiative</p> <p>F. Respect for the dignity of owners &amp; managers</p> <p>* St. Isidore, St. John Fisher, St. Marie-Rose Durocher, St. Marguerite D'Youville, St. Peter Canisius</p>	<p>Prepare a brief report on a twentieth century international leader committed to doing God's work in their daily lives. e.g. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Bishop Oscar Romero, Cesar Chavez, Dorothy Day, Maximilian Kolbe. What were their leadership qualities and accomplishments? What do their lives and work say to you?</p> <p>Select a problem that exists in your community. List and explain the actions to which a prophet might call people in order to improve conditions.</p> <p>Research the early labor unions and the role of the Church in the labor movement.</p>	<p>Jesus was not afraid to work to serve others. Read Jn 13:1-11. Discuss how you can follow Jesus' example.</p> <p>Many of the products we use and the clothes we wear are produced in sweatshops here and abroad. Would Americans be willing to boycott these products and purchase only non-sweatshop items?</p>

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<p>VI. <b>Solidarity</b> - Moral Responsibility of Christians to commit themselves to the common good at all levels - in local communities, the state, nation, and internationally</p> <p>-just war theory</p> <p>* St. Martin de Porres, St. Elizabeth of Portugal, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini</p>	<p>Utilize the <i>Faithful Citizenship</i> resources found at <a href="http://www.osccb.org">www.osccb.org</a></p> <p>Using pictures from newspapers, magazines etc., make a "people collage" of persons from various races and cultures. Display the collages on a bulletin board entitled "All God's People."</p> <p>Create a 3 minute video on an injustice in society.</p> <p>Using media resources, report discrepancies between American cultural values and Catholic social teaching.</p> <p>Design a 3 minute video that promotes an aspect of justice.</p> <p>Write a letter to a person you failed to show respect toward. Explain what you have learned from your mistake and how you intend to be different because of what you now realize.</p>	<p>What is meant by the statement: "We are a global family"?</p> <p>Read Rom 12:4-6, Eph 4:5-6, Col 3:11. What is the message of these passages?</p> <p>Read Mi 2:1-3, 4:3, and 6:8. Describe Micah's message in these passages.</p> <p>Read the Old Testament Book of Amos. Why is Amos called the "Prophet of Social Justice"? What were the injustices to which Amos was reacting?</p>



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<p>VII. <b>Care for God’s Creation</b></p> <p>A. Moral responsibility to protect and preserve the environment, air, water, and food</p> <p>* St. Francis of Assisi</p>	<p>Hold a clean-up campaign of the local church’s properties. (e.g. cemetery grounds, school grounds, etc.)</p> <p>Invite someone from the parish or diocesan <i>Care for Creation Committee</i> to do a presentation</p> <p>Imagine the world with no suffering or problems. Everyone and everything exists in harmony. Describe this vision of the world in a drawing or a poem.</p> <p>Read the Creation accounts in Gn 1 and 2. Do you think you have any duties and responsibilities toward creation and the environment? List these on newsprint.</p> <p>Write a parable/poem about injustice to Mother Earth. Make sure the message is clear.</p> <p>View the film “Brother Sun, Sister Moon.” Discuss the meaning of the film.</p> <p>Develop a video documentary on one of the seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching.</p>	<p>Identify the 5 most urgent environmental threats in our world today – what is our responsibility as disciples of Jesus to address them?</p> <p>What are some of the prices modern day prophets pay for being faithful to God’s invitation to speak up about injustice? Who are some modern day prophets?</p> <p>If the earth could cry out and complain to the Creator, what would it say? How would God respond?</p> <p>Discuss ways in which people can use God’s resources but still live in harmony with nature so as not to pollute the environment.</p> <p>“Every creature possesses its own goodness. Because of the goodness of all God’s creation, people must respect all creatures as well as the environment.” (CCC #339) What does this statement tell us about how people should interact with one another.</p>

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<p><b>Sin and Its Social Dimension</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Difference between personal sin and social sin (CCC. Nos 1868-1869)</li> <li>2. Foundations for social sin.</li> <li>3. The social aspect of the 10 commandments</li> <li>4. The social aspect of the Beatitudes.</li> </ol> <p><b>Balance of Justice and Charity</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The works of justice do not exclude the works of charity (or vice-versa)</li> <li>2. Charity should shape justice to make it Christian; charity is not extra or optional.</li> <li>3. A perfect world cannot be built by human effort for justice..</li> <li>4. Perfect justice will only be realized in eternal life.</li> </ol>	<p>Identify a contemporary example of a social sin. What is our Christian obligation to address it?</p> <p>Assign each commandment and/or beatitude to a student or small group. Ask them to develop examples of each as a social sin.</p> <p>Develop and implement a service project. Spend time after identifying the structural changes that are needed to alleviate the needs addressed.</p> <p>Why is good works not enough for the Christian disciple?</p>	<p>Identify ways the Church has contributed to social sin. Why can this happen?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Rev. 2011</p>



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