



Social Justice Resources for Secondary Students

Social justice is not some kind of optional extra for Catholics. We are all called to a loving relationship with God, which as Jesus taught is demonstrated by care for the most vulnerable in society.

The following resources are provided to help in your important work – teaching social justice to today’s teens.

Scripture

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To let the oppressed go free,
To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour. (Luke 4: 18 – 19)*

Further Scripture Passages highlighting social justice:

Topic	Scripture	The Catholic Youth Bible Page Reference
God demands justice for the poor	Psalm 82: 2-4	Page 669
Righteous Ruler	Psalm 72: 1-2, 12-14	Pages 660-661
God’s concern for the poor	Psalm 146: 4-9	Page 706
God’s concern for justice on the earth	Isaiah 42: 1, 6-7	Pages 875-876
God’s concern for the poor and distressed	Isaiah 1: 11, 16-17	Pages 835-836
The Holiness code in the book of Leviticus insists ‘love they neighbour as yourself’	Leviticus 19: 18b	Page 146
Duty of care for the poor	Ecclesiasticus 34: 23-26	Page 813
Jesus and Social Justice	Matthew 7:21	Page 1135
Jesus and Social Justice	Matthew 25: 31-46	Page 1163
Jesus and Social Justice	Luke 16: 19-24	Pages 1236 – 1237

Prayer

God of Truth and Justice, you call us to live in right relationship with you, with one another, and with all of creation. Made in your image, we thirst for justice. Distracted by false images, we seek material goods and artificial status. We do not use your creation fairly or well. Open the minds of this adult generation to see the destruction caused by greed. Let us not hold back from seeing the hardship of others caused by the unfair distribution of earth's resources. May we acknowledge our part in this misery, and take whatever steps we can to change it. Open the hearts of young people to also see a true picture of the world we live in. May they have courageous and honest teachers to assist them to see what is happening in their world, locally, nationally and globally. May they learn to make sound judgements and, together with others animated by Jesus, the Just One, Take action to bring the world to the peace and justice you desire for it.

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Fast Facts

Defining social justice and its importance

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/socialteaching.html>

Key Catholic Social Justice Principles

<http://www.osjspm.org/document.doc?id=13>

http://catholicsocialservices.org.au/Catholic_Social_Teaching

Pope Benedict's XV1 Blessed are the Peacemaker Speech Jan 1st 2013

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20121208_xlvi-world-day-peace_en.html

Reflections on Blessed are the Peacemaker Speech

<http://nronline.org/blogs/making-difference/reflections-pope-benedicts-2013-world-day-peace-message>

What is the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council?

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/>

Indigenous relations:

http://www.catholic.org.au/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=17&Itemid=183



Further Reading

SOCIAL JUSTICE: Fuller Life in a Fairer World

Offers a succinct overview of how Catholic social thinking developed and why it is so important today. The book is written especially with teachers, students and social justice groups in mind. It explores how faith adds meaning and motivation to our efforts to transform our societies and the earth into a true home for everyone.

Using the featured text as a guide, a series of classroom activities and discussion questions have been written to assist other teachers. The questions and suggested activities have been written by a practising RE secondary school teacher.

Topic: Poverty

1. The prophets believed that 'to know God involved an obligation to care for the poor and hungry.' Do you think this principle is aligned with social justice today? If so, give examples of organisations that practice what the prophets referred to as having a 'duty to care' for those in need. Include some brief dot points on how these organisations respond to society's poor and disenfranchised.

2. Justice and Charity are both grounded in the Christian scriptures (e.g. The Beatitudes, The Good Samaritan, Rich Man and Lazarus). Giving to the poor, known as alms giving, is also an important practice in other monotheistic religions such as Judaism and Islam.

Look up definitions of charity, justice and social justice. Has this definition changed since the days of Jesus? How?

3. The difference between charity and justice: charity is giving direct aid to people who are in need; justice is about identifying and addressing the causes of people being in need. Fill in the table below to highlight the difference and some similarities. (Here are some examples. Fill in your own version and examples.)

Charity	Actions (examples)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides immediate services such as food, shelter, clothing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving money to someone in need Donating to appeals for flood, fire and other natural disasters Volunteering at a community organisation: soup kitchen, aged care, meals on wheels, breakfast for kids in need
Justice	Actions (examples)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groups that promote social change in institutions, at government levels; locally and globally Lobbying and advocating for rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buying only fair trade goods Campaigning the UN to help victims of military regimes Demonstrating at a rally for violence against women



4. Look up charity organisations in Australia and those organisations that deal with justice. List them. Put an asterisk next to the ones you and your family have supported or donated to.

5. [Recount and reflective writing]

Write about a personal encounter you have had with someone who is poor or homeless, addicted to drugs/ alcohol or marginalised in some way. Would you now treat them any differently?

If you have not had an encounter, cut out newspaper articles with pictures or download from the internet stories and images that portray the marginalised. How would you treat them if you were to meet them?

6. Spotlight on heroes

Oscar Romero: a champion of the poor, he was shot and killed by the military regime for standing up for the rights of the powerless. Write an obituary for Romero based on his life story as a modern day martyr. Or Frederick Ozanam: founder of St Vincent De Paul and social reformer.

7. [Research in groups]

Research topics	Inquiry Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunger and Poverty in the World: use Google to compile figures The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/ The United Nations Commitment to Climate Change http://www.unep.org/climatechange/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the causes? Which countries are affected the most? What is the world doing about it? What is it and what are its main goals? (MDG 8 goals)? What policies have been implemented? Is it an achievable vision? (MDG 8) Should First-World countries cancel debts of ThirdWorld countries? What part does climate change play in creating and increasing poverty? List the ways this is happening in poorer countries and the forested regions What are the consequences of climate change and can the UN prevent its impact on us?



8. [Visual literacy Response]

What are some recent movies that include themes of Poverty, Powerlessness and Hunger? E.g. *The Pursuit of Happyness*, *Precious*, *The Blind Side*, *Slum Dog Millionaire*, *The Help*, *Les Miserables*.

- Choose one movie to write a review or a blog on.
- What is the message and how are the issues portrayed?
- Do they offer a solution or hope?
- How did the film emotionally connect with you? What made you feel compassion for the characters?
- Think about the theme of dehumanisation and lack of human dignity. Is it possible for 'good' to come out of their experiences for the common good? Is change possible?
- Compare your review with another view in the classroom and discuss. Create an online forum or a class discussion.



Topic: Human Liberation Issues—Human Rights

9. [critical and creative response]

Listen to singer Guy Sebastian's song called 'Get Along'. He calls on all religious faiths to have one common purpose—to get along. Discuss:

- What do you think is the role of religious leaders, or people of faith, in bringing about peace? Is it possible to be united in one common goal?
- How are music and lyrics used to tackle injustice?
- Find examples of modern day social justice artists—their songs, visual art, theatre, lyrics, poetry, literature, cartoons, graffiti—and share them with the class. Explain how these artists have moved you.

10. Group Work: Media Campaign

Research some recent effective media campaigns which have raised awareness and encouraged action such as: Make Poverty History, Live Aid, Kony 2012, Amnesty International or others of your choice.

Using these campaigns as examples, choose an issue of your choice and design a media campaign to raise awareness of the issue and suggest action to be taken so that reforms can be achieved. You may choose from these topics:

- Human trafficking (refer to Stop the Traffik global campaign: <http://www.stophetraffik.org.au>)
- Slavery (The Hagar Project: <http://www.hagarinternational.org> and Destiny Rescue: <http://www.destinyrescue.org/aus/>). Consider these statistics: According to Destiny Rescue—an organisation that rescues children from human trafficking and sexual exploitation—4 there are an estimated 1.2 million children trafficked each year, the majority of them being lured, bribed or forced into the sex-trade. That's one child every twenty-six seconds!
- Child labour/child soldiers/child forced marriage (google fair trade products, products made by forced or child labour)
- Racial discrimination <http://www.un.org/en/letsfightracism/>
- Cultural based violence against women sanctioned by their society: honour killings, girls cruelly punished for wanting to read, stoning of women, domestic violence file://localhost/(http://news.yahoo.com:malala-yousefzaistand-write-171851902--abc-news-topstories.html)

There are many aspects to a media campaign, such as visual, print, audio and electronic. Choose at least three of these mediums.

- A logo
- A featured article/press release
- A blog
- Mock up of a facebook page (ask your teacher's permission)
- A print advertisement
- Design for a t-shirt and/or other merchandise of your choice, such as stickers
- Tweets (mock up: not on Twitter—ask teacher for guidelines)
- A one page fact sheet
- A petition for people to sign
- A short YouTube-style advertisement for TV or internet use.
- (Not on actual YouTube or from your mobile phone. Use appropriate recording equipment with teacher's permission.)
- A song or jingle
- A poster

11. Research these well-known peaceful fighters below who gained their freedom without violence.

- Aung San Suu Kyi
- The Dalai Lama
- Nelson Mandela
- Martin Luther King

Discuss how they have achieved freedom under oppression. How have they used their struggle for freedom to inspire others and bring awareness and action to right this injustice?

12. Spotlight on Heroes

- Dom Helder Camara
- Mum Shirl

Write an imaginary scene of one day in their life in action.

Topic: Effects of Climate Change

13. (pg 32/33)

The most serious threats to human well-being is the danger of global warming which contributes to major climate change. Consider the effects of global warming on our society, especially Third World countries.

Research these topics below. Create a PowerPoint Presentation, or any visual presentation, relevant to the topic of climate change below:

- Countries that are most at risk of rising of sea levels and flooding Overpopulated countries that are already suffering due to insufficient food production
- Deforestation and mining: which countries are most at risk of soil erosion, loss of habitats and agricultural or pastoral lands?
- Most polluted countries due to dirty power stations, suburban high density, poor hygienic standards, overpopulation

The United Nations Millennium Develop Goal 7: Ensuring Environmental Sustainability. The target was to:

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources
- Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss
- Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
- By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Reference: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/environ.shtml>

Discuss in groups:

- Do you agree that we are all 'equally' responsible for the protection and care of the environment?
- What is Australia's commitment to emission targets? Refer to the Kyoto Protocol <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/government/initiatives/kyoto.aspx>
- Do you think it's fair? Is the carbon tax accepted by the majority? Why or why not? How has it impacted on our living expenses, especially for those on low incomes or on pensions?
Make a flow chart showing the effects of global warming from both a scientific and social perspective.
- What have been the impacts of climate changes in recent natural disasters? Hurricanes, tsunamis, bushfires, earthquakes, snow storms? Look up some current disasters that have had a high death toll and destroyed entire cities and towns (e.g. Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans).
- Has the general community and charity/aid organisations helped adequately? Find examples.
- How can YOU learn to consume more modestly with greater awareness. Give examples.

Topic: Effects of the Global Financial Crisis and Collapse of Financial Market



14. p. 72 How did the global financial crisis happened? 'Too many people were making too much money from dishonest and misleading practices.'

- What is your understanding of the Global Financial Crisis?
- How has it affected Australians and job security world wide?
- What other negative ripple effects has it had?
- What is the situation with Greece having their national debt cancelled and bailed out of financial destruction? Look up news articles to summarise these points. Use the internet or print newspapers to make a collage of headings.

15. How do we define First World Problems and Third World Problems? Create a table to compare and contrast the issues we face in the world. Use daily news to compile this table, rating the level of importance that will ensure the best possible living standard.

First World Problems	Third World Problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obesity: Leading to health problems and death • Increase in basic living needs: housing rent, electricity, fuel, food, etc. • Loss of jobs • Ageing • High taxes • Drug and alcohol addiction • Etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of water and food • Poor sanitation • Sweatshop labour • etc

*Include a special section in the First World Problems for Indigenous issues.

16. Research capitalism and neo-liberalism. What is your understanding of these concepts when relating it to the principle of 'utilitarianism' (for the greatest good of the greatest numbers)? How does the Church dispute this? (p. 54)

17. There are a few forms of justice, such as:

(a) Commutative or Exchange Justice (p. 55). In the economy it can mean an exchange or commutative justice (equality in exchange of goods and services).

(b) Distributive Justice: ensures that goods are distributed proportionately so everyone can live well and contribute to society. Write your definition of economic 'justice'.

18. Spotlight on Heroes: Joseph Cardijn

Joseph Cardijn empowered working people to have control over their lives and circumstances. He developed the See, Judge, Act model for social analysis. Read about his radical ideas on social change (p. 67).

The See, Judge, Act model in brief:

See: examine the facts or events/situations that need to be addressed. Ask how, why, what, where.

Judge: reflect on the rights and wrongs of the situation. Think about why it happened and whether it's right.

Act: respond and take action on an event/situation. Plan on what can be done and what action to take.

Once these three steps are taken, one evaluates the actions to see what has been learnt from the process.

How can this model work for human rights issues today? What situations can you apply it to?

Topic: War and Suffering

19. Pope John Paul II was opposed to war and emphasised the importance to develop other forms of mediating conflict. He stated, 'To kill in the name of God is a blasphemy and a perversion of religion.' Do you agree with this statement? How has killing in God's name been the motivator for war throughout history?

20. Compile a general knowledge quiz on wars that are being fought right now in the world. What do you think the various warring groups' reasons are for being at war?

21. Choose ONE of these issues for a class debate. Alternatively use the TV show Q&A's format: a panel of experts to answer the questions below.

- a. When is it justified to go to war?
- b. Are we treating asylum seekers too harshly?

(a) Read the Just War Template on p. 84. Include some of these points:

- Do you agree or disagree with the legitimate reasons listed for going to war?
- When is war justified? How are wars all the same?
- What is the right way of conduct during the war? Is this followed? Give examples of wartime conflict when the rules of the Geneva Convention and the Just War Template were not in use or ignored (e.g. Nazi Germany, Kosovo).
- How has the Church been part of the solution in bringing world peace?

(b) The Church and human rights groups in Australia have protested against the harsh treatment by the government of refugees and asylum seekers who have arrived illegally by boat. Include some of these points:

- Should there be mandatory detention of asylum seekers?
- Are the self-harm and suicide acts justifiable for holding refugees for long periods of time?
- Should they be separated from their families?
- Why is off shore processing such a big political issue?
- Are religious and human right groups been sufficiently active in lobbying against this treatment?
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Some good references for further information:

Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office, <http://www.acmro.catholic.org.au>

Caritas Australia, <http://www.caritas.org.au>

St Vincent de Paul Society, <http://www.vinnies.org.au>

Aus Aid, <http://www.ausaid.gov.au>

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, <http://www.icanw.org.au>