

Grade One

What does it mean to work for social justice?

It is important to realize that working for social justice takes more than simply dropping off a few canned goods at the food pantry around Christmas time. Choosing justice should be a choice to work for changes that provide long-term solutions, not just making something better for the moment. That is the difference.

Seven Principles of Social Mission

Within the Catholic understanding of justice, there are seven underlying principles that may help you recognize situations that you would like to see changed.

1. **Dignity of the human person**—All people are sacred.
2. **Call to community and participation** – The human person is a social being, one part of the human family.
3. **Rights and responsibilities** – All people have fundamental rights and responsibility to respect those rights in others.
4. **Option for the poor**—Society’s most vulnerable members must be treated with equality.
5. **Dignity of work**-- People have the right to work and earn fair wages.
6. **Solidarity**--We are one human family called to work for justice.
7. **Care for God’s creation** – We have the responsibility to care for the goods of the earth as gifts from God

Here are some grade level activities that will:

- Help raise the children’s awareness of certain social issues
 - Provide an opportunity for children to integrate a sense of God’s justice into their own lives
 - Encourage the children to participate in a process of long term change for the common good of all.
1. Invite the first graders to organize a “Litter Club.” The club could be divided into five small groups that would take turns each week spending some of their time after they have eaten their lunch or snack at recess to wander around the lunch area collecting litter and depositing it into the trash bins. Recognize their special role with a badge or a small gift or prize.
 2. Invite the children to find out more about their own heritage. Ask them to have their parents write down what countries their own families originated from. When the children have their lists, as a class, spend some time locating those countries on a world map. Invite the children to tell anything they know about their heritage or family customs. Is there some aspect of their heritage they are especially proud of? They will learn to appreciate that it takes all types of people to make the world a special place.