

Grade Five

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. Fifth graders could organize a multicultural sack lunch trade day. This involves each student in the classroom (or school), with the help of their parents, making a special sack lunch with ethnic food(s) from their own culture or heritage. These lunches are then gathered and exchanged between the students. Those who trade could sit side by side during lunch time and explain the foods and a bit about their own heritage.
 2. Does your school recycle paper? The fifth graders could be responsible for boxes provided in each classroom in which students and teachers alike could deposit paper that they would normally have thrown away. Ask a parent volunteer from each class to be responsible for taking that paper to a recycling station in the neighborhood. The process could be for a month or for the whole year.