

Kindergarten

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. To help instill a sense of appreciation of God’s creation, ask the children to make “friends” with a tree in their yard, neighborhood or on the school grounds. Invite them to collect a leaf or two from the tree, put it in a plastic bag, and bring it to class. Gather some books on leaves and trees and see if the children can find their tree. Give the children a large piece of drawing paper. Have them fold it into four sections. Keep the papers throughout the year and ask the children to draw their tree at different seasons.
 1. Celebrate St. Francis of Assisi’s feast day with the children (October 4) by talking about respect for God’s creation. *The Heifer Project* raises money and buys farm animals for poor families in agricultural villages throughout the world. Your students could raise money for the Heifer Project through recycling. Does your school have a program that recycles aluminum cans or plastic water or juice bottles? Any money collected can be sent to the Heifer Project International, P.O. Box 8058, Little Rock, AR 72203 (800) 422-0474.