

## **Catholic Social Teaching with High School Students**

### **Life and Dignity of the Human Person**

- Students watch a professional sport on T.V. and note how frequently players loose their tempers, fans get excited, officials correct a player, and players affirm one another. In class discussion students share how these actions affirmed or devalued the dignity of the human person. Why are sports so important in American society?
- Have the class read the *Bill of Rights* and discuss why it was included in the U.S. *Constitution*. Make a list of the rights some people in Alabama do not possess. What can be done to change this?
- Students explore the causes of youth violence in their school community by interviewing five (5) friends. Record the responses and come to class prepared to analyze and discuss their interview responses.

### **Call to Family, Community and Participation**

- Students do some online investigations of the manufacturers of some of their favorite clothing labels. Determine their compliance with labor laws. Take these findings a step beyond- write letters to local retailers and manufacturers asking them to confirm their labor standards.
- Invite students to share their ideas and make a collage about 'homes' and then have an informal discussion about the difference between 'having shelter' and 'having a home.'
- Research the importance of citizens being involved in the legislative process. Invite students to choose an issue of interest or concern (i.e., corporate fraud, environmental issues, medical ethics and life issues, etc.) and write a letter to one state and one national legislator urging change or action.

### **Rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person**

- Students keep a record of their expenses for a week. Evaluate what this says (to them) about their choices and how this affects others. What changes could they make?
- Students brainstorm a list of ways they could simplify their life today, two (2) years from now, ten (10) years from now.
- When do the needs of others become more important than what an individual wants? Be creative and write a paragraph to be shared and discussed with the class.

### **Option for Poor and Vulnerable**

- Research rental listings and find housing that costs less than one-third (1/3) of the poverty level monthly income. Where would a family four (4) with an income below the poverty level, live in their community? Would they be willing to live in the housing they found? Why or why not?
- Have students sacrifice their favorite foods for a week and then write a reflection on how their hunger for that food affected them.

### **Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**

- Students reflect on their part-time job and then characterize it as ‘good work’ or as ‘toil.’ Have them use specific events to back their claim.
- Students locate/research poor counties in Alabama, and discuss why some people are not able to find employment. What can be done to alleviate the situation?
- Ask students to think of one worker who has affected them this week. Write a paragraph reflecting on how this person’s work affected their life and dignity, and how it seemed to affect the life and dignity of the worker.

### **Solidarity of the Human Family**

- Compile a list of the short-term and long-term affects (psychological, social, intellectual, spiritual, and physical) that homelessness has on families.
- Ask the class for some music suggestions that speak of peace and ask volunteers to share their music. Use this musical inspiration to have students create their own symbol of peace to share with the class.

### **Care for God’s Creation**

- Have students pick 10 items in the classroom and explain how each item is or is not ‘earth-friendly.’
- Money, resources, and cooperation are no obstacle: Have students ask themselves, “What would God want for the human and the natural world in our local area? Challenge them to be as creative as possible.