



Sample Program on Rights and Responsibilities (This is a good intro to Social Justice) by Kelly Power

Scripture reference:

Proverbs 38:8-9
James 1:22-27
Matthew 26-28

Movie Clip: *Black Hawk Down*

Theme: We have a moral responsibility to defend the oppressed.

Scripture: Proverbs 31:8-9

Clip Location: 00:00 through 3:00

Synopsis: Images from the starvation-stricken, war-ravaged nation of Somalia

Music: “We Are Called” “Anthem”

Activity: This is a reflection activity. The young people should break into small groups to discuss and write answers to the questions listed below. Skits or presentations could be created by the small groups to further illustrate these concepts.

Catholic Social Teaching: Every human being has basic human rights and responsibilities. They have the right to life, food, shelter, health care, education, employment, and human decency in all these things. All humans also share a responsibility to take care of one another, to protect each other, and to preserve these rights for one another. This is a clear teaching of the Gospel message to “love one another as yourself”... a responsibility of justice to all human beings.

Small Group Reflection Questions:

1. How do we take care of each other?
2. How do we take care of those in the greater world?
3. What can you do to protect human rights?
4. What kind of challenge does Jesus give us?
5. What does this responsibility mean for our community?

Closing Prayer: Lord of Wisdom; awaken us to our duty to care for the basic needs of all people. Strengthen with hope those people who are denied their human rights and freedoms. Provide us all with the voice to cry out for justice for poor and oppressed individuals. Amen.

Other Resources: [CCC](#) (2459)
[The Dignity and Rights of Workers](#) (U.S. Bishops)
[Laborem Exercens](#) (Pope John Paul II)



Sample Program on Human Dignity

by Kelly Power

Scripture References: Genesis 1:26, Psalm 8, Luke 10: 27

Movie Clip:

Sea Biscuit... The horse trainer is speaking to the owner while they are sitting down at a camp fire. The trainer stopped this horse from being killed and has taken it as his own. He goes on to say, “You don’t just throw a life away because it is banged up a little.” Later in the movie this horse is the only thing that will calm Sea Biscuit.

Lord of the Rings... Scene where Gandalf is talking to Frodo about Gollum. Frodo is appalled by the creature and does not believe that it should be allowed to live. Gandalf tells Frodo that all life is precious and deserves to live no matter what.

Music: “Only Natural” by Steven Curtis Chapman

“You Say” by Lauren Daigle

Activity: Break the young people into groups and have them act out a skit on the life of the following people: Mother Teresa, Pope John Paul II, Osama bin Laden, Taylor Swift, Martin Luther King Jr., or President Obama. Have the rest of the group try to guess who the individual is that is being acted out. The skits should demonstrate that there are people that society sees as both “good” and “bad.” After the skits are completed and the personalities have been guessed, present the question: “What do all of these people have in common?”

Let the young people guess for a while. Then explain that each of these people possess human dignity because of the very fact that they are human.

Catholic Social Teaching: The church holds the principle of human dignity as the foundation of all Catholic social teaching. All humans possess an equal dignity that is **not** based upon what they do, but who they are. This dignity gives all humans the right to life from conception to natural death. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that, “Created in the Image of the one God and equally endowed with rational souls, all... have the same nature and same origin. Redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, all are called to participate in the same divine beatitude: all therefore enjoy an equal dignity” (CCC, 1934).

Small Group Reflection Questions:

1. How can we treat everyone with dignity?
2. What will you change in your daily life to treat yourself and others with more dignity?
3. How does human dignity impact our beliefs on abortion, death penalty, and euthanasia? What can you do personally about these issues?
4. Describe a time in your life where you experienced being treated with or without dignity.
5. Who are the people that you find most difficult to think about or treat with dignity?

Closing Prayer: Go around the group and have each person pray either out loud or silently for a person who they feel is difficult to treat with dignity... if they want to pass just have them squeeze the hand of the person next to them or indicate in another way they are passing.

Other Resources:

[*Pacem In Terris*](#) (Papal Encyclical)

You are Special by Max Lucado (A children’s book, but good for all!)

[*Evangelium Vitae*](#), (Papal Encyclical)



Sample Program on Solidarity

by Kelly Power

Scripture References: Philippians 4:10-14, Acts 2:42-47, Prov 22:9, Ephesians 4:2

Movie Clip: *Freaky Friday*... This movie illustrates sharing an experience with someone. When they experienced life in the others shoes, they became better because of it, and they have a deeper awareness and connection with one another. (I suggest previewing the movie and picking a scene that you see fit, showing the movie in its entirety would be the ideal though.)

Music: “Servant Song”

Activity: ABC Diversity - This activity illustrates the connection we all have with each other as a global society and that not all start out with the same advantages. First you pass out the letters of the alphabet, giving out more consonants than vowels. Then you give the whole group the instruction that they must create words with the other people in the group, all having to come together to be part of a word. If all goes as it should, the vowels will have a much easier time making words, the Q’s will be completely dependent on the U’s, and the less commonly used letters, like Z and W, will find it very hard to complete the task. This is meant to represent the way in which our world is set up. Some people have it much easier than others and being born with easier circumstances due to geographic location, economics, or health. In the end, to reach our highest potential we need all the letters, because we are all interconnected and dependent upon one another. The vowels have it easier, but still need the consonants, and the Q can’t do anything without the U. We all must make sacrifices to be in solidarity with one another which will ultimately bring peace.

Catholic Social Teaching: The Church talks about solidarity in terms of realizing that all humans have dignity and all are a part of God’s family. Many documents state that, “the phrase ‘loving thy neighbor’, has global implications.” The way that we live affects the way that others live, even in far places. Solidarity is about looking at each other with respect and seeing the common good for all, rather than what’s good for me. Solidarity usually requires some kind of sacrifice, humbling of self to raise another up, or simply living like them and recognizing their experience.

Small Group Reflection Questions:

1. What does it mean to be dependent upon another person?
2. What can you do in your daily life to live in solidarity with the poor and or vulnerable?
3. What should you change or sacrifice in your life to live as the Church teaches?
4. Is there a time in your life where you felt as though you had walked in the shoes of the poor or experienced something with them?
5. What is something we can do as a big group to live in solidarity?

Closing Prayer: Almighty and Ever-Living God, empower your one human family to join hands. On our journey of faith send us your spirit of hope, so that we may work to alleviate human suffering and foster charity and justice in our world. Amen

Other Resources: [Bread for the World Hunger Statistics](#)
[CCC \(2438\)](#)



Sample Program on Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

by Kelly Power

Scripture References: Psalm 72, Luke 16:19-31, Jeremiah 22:16

Movie Clip: *Drumline*: One morning before sunrise, the band's incoming freshmen are lined up on the football field like army recruits. Returning band members observe from the sidelines. The freshmen all wear white T-shirts except Devon. Dr. Lee addresses them like a boot camp sergeant. When a few stragglers arrive tardy, the director asks one of them to identify his roommate. The embarrassed latecomer points to Devon. Dr. Lee asks Devon why his roommate was late. He responds that his roommate likely overslept. When the band director inquires why he didn't wake him, Devon flippantly answers, "I'm not his mother." Put off by Devon's smart mouth, Dr. Lee repeats the dialogue loud enough for the entire band to hear. Then he barks out, "Section leaders. What is our concept?" The veteran band members shout out, "One band, one sound!" Dr. Lee repeats the slogan: "One band, one sound! When one of us is late, we are all late. When one of us looks or sounds bad, we all look and sound bad." Staring at the freshmen, he asks, "So, what's the concept?" "One band, one sound," the freshmen call out loudly. Dr. Lee continues, "Now I want ten laps from all those who are 'not their roommate's mama'." This illustrates that we always need to be thinking about the poor or weakest when making decisions for the common good, and not just consider our own good.

Music: "Let the River Flow"
"Come to the Water"

Activity: When young people come in the room you will give them either a red, white, or yellow strip of paper. Red= third world, White=middle class, and Yellow=first world. The red group is sent to a section of the floor with some newspapers, a snack table with a little water, and rice cakes or something simple. The white group is sent to a section where there are chairs and regular snacks like chips, cookies, and soda. The yellow group is sent to a section of the room that has tables with tablecloths, and a meal for them to eat (McDonalds, Subway, something nicer if you want.) Then just let them eat and play out for 10-15 minutes or until the first class is done eating. This demonstrates the division among the poor and rich and the feelings that people have from both sides. Fact: 34 million Americans live below the federal poverty line in 2019.

Catholic Social Teaching: Our Church follows the example of Christ, always putting the poor first; we are called to be always thinking about how the poorest and most vulnerable will be affected by our actions and the way we live our lives. Pope John Paul II states in *A Place at the Table*, that "There is a special presence of Christ in the poor and vulnerable, and that is why we are to have a preferential option for the poor." In the Old Testament a community was judged on how well it treated its weakest members. We are not to serve the poor and then go home and forget about the experience. We are called to continue to think and pursue justice for all, especially the most vulnerable.

Reflection Questions:

1. What are your thoughts on what the Pope says about the poor?
2. Have you ever been a voice for someone else, stood up for them?
3. Have you ever been in the position of feeling vulnerable, or weak?
4. How did that make you feel?
5. How can you as a young person change your life to live the way that Jesus is calling us to live?

Closing Prayer: By virtue of her own evangelical duty the Church feels called to take her stand beside the poor, to discern the justice of their requests, and to help satisfy them without losing sight of the good of groups in the context of the common good.

One of the greatest injustices in the contemporary world consists precisely in this: that the ones who possess much are relatively few and those who possess almost nothing are many. This is the injustice of the poor distribution of the goods and services originally intended for all.

Response to the reading from Psalm 72 (to be read in side-to-side fashion)

Left: O God, give your judgment to the king: your justice to the son of kings;
That he may govern your people with justice, your oppressed with right judgment.

Right: That the mountains may yield their bounty for the people, and the hills great abundance. That he may defend the oppressed among the people, save the poor and crush the oppressor.

Left: May he live as long as the sun endures, like the moon through all the generations. May he be like rain coming down upon the fields, like showers watering the earth.

Right: That abundance may flourish in his days, great bounty till the moon be no more.
May all kings bow before him, all nations serve him.

Left: For he rescues the poor when they cry out, the oppressed who have no one to help.
He shows pity to the needy and the poor and saves the lives of the poor.

(close with intentions) AMEN

Other Resources: [Catholic Relief Services](#)
[Bread for the World](#)



Sample Program on Care for God's Creation

by Kelly Power

Scripture Reference: Genesis 2:15, Psalm 8:6-9

Movie Clip: *Erin Brockovich*

This movie deals with the effects of a company not taking care of the environment and the injustices that surround the community that is affected. It illustrates the spread of large corporations to smaller towns and the corruption which can occur when this happens. It puts a real face on this issue of justice that the Church is trying to address. In order to show a clip from this movie, one that explains the effects, you must give somewhat of a history, or context, for the audience to understand the whole purpose. Given its "R" rating, it's important to be very selective in which clip to show.

Music: "Earth and Skies"

"All the Ends of the Earth"

Activity: Because this is one of the more difficult teachings to illustrate, skits allow the young people the opportunity to process the issue in their minds and determine a just solution. Give your young people a couple of scenarios of environmental issues and have them debate a solution.

Catholic Social Teaching: Care for God's creation is a Church teaching which oftentimes is left out as a main principle of social justice. However, there are many injustices which occur to people due to our society's lack of care for creation. This teaching calls us each to care for all of God's creation, including the environment that HE created! As Catholics, we need to be aware of the policies and actions that we make and how they affect God's creation and the impact they have on others.

Small Group Reflection Questions:

1. What did the movie illustrate about the environment and the importance of cooperation?
2. Who is most affected by the lack of caring for God's creation?
3. What do you see as the biggest problem in the environment? Why?
4. How was Jesus someone who exemplified caring for God's creation?
5. What can you do in your daily life to care for God's creation?

Closing Prayer: Loving God, You are the creator of all good things. Keep us mindful that you provide abundant resources for the good of all people. You give us every good and necessary gift, freely and without regard for social status or economic condition. Stir within us a desire to preserve and share the earth's resources so as to satisfy the physical and spiritual needs of all human persons, particularly the poor and vulnerable. Amen.

Other Resources: [CCC](#) (339)

[Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action](#) (U.S. Bishops)



Sample Program on “Call to Family, Community and Participation”

by Kelly Power

Scripture References: Corinthians 12:12, 1 Timothy 5:7-8, John 13:34-35

Movie Clip: *Hope Floats*

In the second half of the movie there is a scene where the grandma is tucking the granddaughter in at night. This child lost her father and her family seems broken as a result. Her mom is not there for her. The girl (Beatrice) is growing bitter and thinking of giving up. In this scene the grandma tells a story about how her brother once crushed an anthill, destroying the ant’s home. She then talks about how the ants immediately started working to repair the home. They were just little ants, but working together as a "family" they could rebuild their house.

You can deal with it as it’s presented, in the context of a family sticking together through difficulty. But it also had implications for the body of Christ that you can discuss.

Lilo and Stitch: The girls soon realize their blue pup is no ordinary canine. When they take him to dinner at a restaurant, Stitch attempts to swallow another patron. Afterward, at their home, he attacks and nearly destroys the kitchen, spewing the contents from the blender all over the walls. Just as Lilo's sister is ready to toss Stitch out, Lilo invokes a sacred word handed down to them by their father.

"What about *ohana*?!" Lilo says.

"He hasn't been here that long," the older sister replies.

"I haven't either!" Lilo protests. "*Ohana* means 'family,' and in family no one gets left behind—or forgotten."

The sister, sulking, says, "I hate it when you pull *ohana* on me."

They keep Stitch.

Music: “We Are One Body”

Activity: Break the young people up into small groups of four or five, and then give them a specific task of creating something with different colored paper and whatever other supplies you have. However, don’t give them all their supplies at first -- give them to another group and vice versa. Not until the group realizes that they have to work as a bigger community will they be able to accomplish their task. You can also give disadvantages to certain individuals in each group, like muting them, taking away the use of their hands, or other things. Afterwards discuss the activity, and the feelings of specific individuals.

Catholic Social Teaching: This teaching in our Catholic faith is fundamental to who we are and everything we do. Each human person is sacred and special. “In community we realize the fulfillment of our dignity and rights in relationship with and to others.” God calls us to participate in our family and community, where we are to use our gifts that God has given us. For Catholics, community is where we experience the body of Christ in a very special way. Pope John Paul II said at World Youth Day XII that “Christ is found in our brothers and sisters with whom we share our daily existence.” It is in community and family that we grow and are challenged to become more like the people God wants us to be.

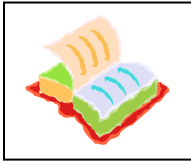
Reflection Questions:

1. What are some qualities of your family and/or communities?
2. What are the gifts that you bring to these communities?

3. Is there something that you feel you could participate in more fully in these to create a better community?
4. How does all this apply to the greater church, or family of God?
5. What do you feel that God sees as your purpose or place in community?

Closing Prayer: In their small groups, have each person pray for the person next to them, out loud. Close with an Our Father.

Other Resources: [CCC](#) (1908)
The Holy Longing by Ronald Rolheiser (Community Chapter)



Sources for All Programs:

A Catholic Call to Justice: An Activity Book for Raising Awareness of Social Justice Issues
Catholic Campaign for Human Development: Publication No. 5-239

Being Neighbor: The Catechism and Social Justice
Catholic Campaign for Human Development: Publication No. 5-261

The Source for Youth Ministry
<https://thesource4ym.com/movie-clip-discussions/>

Bread for the World
<http://www.bread.org/>

Kelly Power has been involved in youth ministry for over 20 years, helping with retreats, workcamps, and small groups at the high school and middle school level. Currently she volunteers running middle school ministry at her home parish of St. Joseph. She was the Coordinator of Youth Ministry at St. Thomas a Becket in Reston and worked as a Campus Minister at Marymount University before becoming a full time mom. She is married and has 5 beautiful children.