



Setting a Place at the Table: Living our Missionary Call

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

- HELP WANTED:** Looking for teachers and catechists willing to devote some of their first day, week, or months lesson time to implement “Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers” curriculum.
- QUALIFICATIONS:** A commitment to educating our youth on how to live their faith on a daily basis .
- COMPENSATION:** Ready made lesson plans and the comforting knowledge that you are working to build the Kingdom of God.

Greetings Catholic educators! Blessed are you!! Thank you so much for teaching in a Catholic School or Parish Religious Education Program. You have one of the most important jobs in the world. You play a huge role in building the Kingdom of God by helping each and every student entrusted to your care see themselves as brothers and sisters to all. You are in the trenches and you are valued in the here and now.

Labor Day presents educators the perfect opportunity to expose their students to Catholic Social Teaching: The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers. Students can certainly attest to the number of hours their parents or guardians spend working. Sadly, many of them also suffer from the effects that a lack of gainful employment can have on family life. The Gospel message, along with prophetic, visionary and centuries old Catholic Social Teaching, demands that all people have both the right to work, and the right to work in just and dignified conditions. These rights extend to all people around the globe—people that we are united to in solidarity as members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

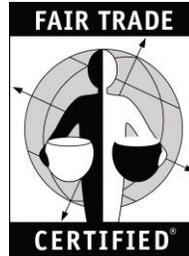
VERY QUICK SUMMARY:

Our Catholic Social teaching explicitly states that the economy must serve people, not the other way around:



Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. Employers contribute to the common good through the services or products they provide and by creating jobs that uphold the dignity and rights of workers—to productive work, to decent and just wages, to adequate benefits and security in their old age, to the choice of whether to organize and join unions, to the opportunity for legal status for immigrant workers, to private property, and to economic initiative. Workers also have responsibilities—to provide a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, to treat employers and co-workers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good. Workers, employers, and unions should not only advance their own interests, but also work together to advance economic justice and the well being of all.

Globally, as a result of exploitative economic practices and our insatiable appetite for cheap goods and services, persons from developing countries are especially victimized and abused. Exploited in grueling sweatshops, in the hugely profitable human trafficking industry, and in the growth and production of agricultural products like chocolate and coffee, woman and children especially suffer abuse around the world.



Key Terms:

Sweatshop-a shop or factory in which employees work long hours at low wages under unhealthy conditions. (Miriam-Webster Children's Edition)

Additional information:

<http://www.archmil.org/offices/world-mission/global-justice/Clean-Clothes-Campaign-Resources.htm>

Fair Trade-*Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers - especially in the South. Fair Trade Organizations, backed by consumers, are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.* (WFTO).

http://www.wfto.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1&Itemid=13

Human Trafficking and Slave Labor: As defined by the United Nations, human trafficking means "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at

a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."

<http://www.crs.org/get-involved/learn/slavery-and-human-trafficking>

A Fact for You: The International Labor Organization (ILO) has estimated that 250 million children between the ages of five and fourteen work in developing countries (61% in Asia, 32% in Africa and 7% in Latin America). Many of these children are forced to work. They are denied an education and a normal childhood. Some are confined and beaten. Some are denied the right to leave the workplace and go home to their families. Some are even abducted and forced to work.

http://www.veganpeace.com/sweatshops/sweatshops_and_child_labor.htm

Fast Facts To Share

*Number of children between 5 and 14 years old that work around the world: 150 million

*The average cost of a human slave around the world today: \$90

*The number of human slaves around the world: 27 million

[Source: Free the Slaves, 2010]

Quick and Easy Lesson Plan Idea #1:

(All Ages: Can be extremely simplified or expanded to meet the needs of any grade level.)

SCHOOLSHIRT ALERT

1.) Discuss with students the recent or upcoming celebration of Labor Day. In age appropriate terms, discuss the importance of work to everyone's family in order to live a dignified life. Discuss how work is a big part of who we are as we spend a lot of our time and effort in life working,

- 2.) Have students voluntarily read (or teachers read) the labels on each child's shirt. One student can record the different countries on a chalk/white/smart board.
- 3.) Explain to students that it is almost assured that any shirt without a Union or Fair Trade Certified Label was made in a sweatshop. At this time explain what the term "sweatshop" means. Reiterate that the odds are huge that any shirt made in a developing country is most likely the product of a sweatshop.
- 4.) Brainstorm ideas as to why American companies may manufacture their clothing so far away in developing countries. To expand the lesson, students could spend time locating developing countries and researching the economic plight of the people of these countries. Young students could simply learn that few shirts are made by union workers in the USA and it is because we, the consumer, want inexpensive shirts and companies want to considerably increase their profits.
- 5.) Students can watch one of the numerous very excellent short videos available on **YouTube** related to sweatshops. Please make sure that you watch any videos in their entirety before sharing with students to make sure they are age appropriate.
- 6.) Explain to students that this is not how God would want us to treat people. Depending on the grade level of the students, one could merely explain in terms of the Golden Rule, or one could explore the Scriptural Foundations or Church Documents that address human labor and dignity. (These are listed at the end of the lessons). One could also delve into the Catholic Church's long history of protecting the dignity of human labor. It is important that these direct connections are made and discussed, as students will not necessarily make the connections themselves. Fostering an awareness that the Church has spoken for the poor and marginalized in everyday matters is pivotal to their understanding of the Catholic Church as prophetically proclaiming the Gospel message throughout its history. PLEASE REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF #6.
- 7.) Have students memorize and learn the first of Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching: The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers. Young children can merely learn that work and workers are holy.
- 8.) Complete the lesson by brainstorming ways that the problem of sweatshops can be addressed and by praying as a class for the workers who made the student's and teacher's shirts.

Fast Facts to Share:

- *There are 5 to 6 million cocoa farmers worldwide.
- *40 to 50 million people depend on cocoa for their livelihood.
- * The current global market value of annual crop is 5.1 billion dollars.
- *The cocoa growing regions: Africa, Asia, Central America, South America (all within 20 degrees of the equator-70% come from West Africa.).
- *There are an estimated 1.8 million children at risk in the cocoa industry.
- *There are over 27 million slaves in the world today. Of them over 9 million are children.
- *Children are being trafficked in everyday to work on cocoa farms as slaves. The average cost for a child is \$250.

<http://www.slavefreechocolate.org/children-slavery-cocoa/>

Quick and Easy Lesson Plan Idea #2:

(Grade 2 and above: Can be extremely simplified or expanded to meet the needs of a particular grade level)

DO CHILDREN LOVE CHOCOLATE?

- 1.) Take an informal poll as to who likes chocolate. Find out from the students the many ways in which they enjoy chocolate in various foods and on various occasions.
- 2.) Share one or all of the "Fast Facts to Share" with your students.
- 3.) Use a map to locate some of the regions that produce the world's chocolate.
- 4.) If age appropriate, show some of the You Tube videos on child slave labor in the cocoa bean industry. Additionally, a very interesting documentary, "The Dark Side of Chocolate", is available for free online at <http://www.cultureunplugged.com/play/4809> or can be borrowed from Four Corners of the World Fair Trade Store movie lending library (www.fairtrademilwaukee.org).
- 5.) Divide students into small groups. Have students brainstorm a list of all the things that would change about their lives if they were born in a country like West Ghana and forced into being a child slave laborer harvesting cocoa. Instruct them to discuss how they would feel about these radical changes in their lifestyles.

- 6.) Then, ask them to discuss the question: Do children love chocolate?
- 7.) Next, write on the board the cost of a Hershey Chocolate Bar and a Divine Chocolate Fair Trade Bar. The ratio is about \$1 to \$2. Ask student groups to discuss whether they would be willing to pay this cost difference for a chocolate bar. Then, have them look over their previous lists from step #5 and then ask them what they would want others to decide if they were the ones who were the cocoa bean harvesters for Hershey. Finally, have students brainstorm ways they could afford to buy Fair Trade Chocolate in place of their normal chocolate purchases. Remind them that it may involve sacrifice.
- 8.) Relate step #6 to the Golden Rule. Tell them that every day decisions that seem so simple and unrelated to their faith life really are important. Remind them that God gives us opportunities to live the Gospel every single day and often they are small and simple acts like deciding to give up their need for chocolate or to buy Fair Trade Chocolate.
- 9.) Explain to students that this is not how God would want us to treat people. Depending on the grade level of the students, one could merely explain in terms of the Golden Rule, or one could explore the Scriptural Foundations or Church Documents that address human labor and dignity. (These are listed at the end of the lessons). One could also delve into the Catholic Church's long history of protecting the dignity of human labor. It is important that these direct connections are made and discussed, as students will not necessarily make the connections themselves. Fostering an awareness that the Church has spoken for the poor and marginalized in everyday matters is pivotal to their understanding of the Catholic Church as prophetically proclaiming the Gospel message throughout its history. PLEASE REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF #8.
- 10.) To take this a step further you could have students plan a Fair Trade Chocolate Sale at their school. Perhaps they could hold a "Candy Dump" where they dump their Halloween Candy into a bag to be donated to the poor and replace it with Fair Trade Divine Chocolate. To order chocolate visit: http://www.serrv.org/crs_chocolate?c=crschoc

School Wide Initiatives:

Fair Trade T-shirt Sales-Students can design or order school, athletic or club T-shirts that are fairly traded.

<http://www.nosweatapparel.com/>

<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/enough/sweat-free-t-shirts/>

<http://www.maggiesorganics.com>

Fair Trade Chocolate Sales—Students can plan to sell Fair Trade Chocolate to raise funds for their school, sport or club.

http://www.serrv.org/crs_chocolate?c=crschoc

<http://www.serrv.org/category/divine-chocolate>

Field Trip Ideas—Students could tour the various Fair Trade stores located throughout southeastern Wisconsin.

<http://www.fairtrademilwaukee.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/SEWIFairTradeDirectory-12-2011.pdf>

Speakers—Presenters can be booked through a Fair Trade speaker's bureau that will discuss how Fair Trade purchasing relates to the Catholic social teaching of the Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.

<http://www.fairtrademilwaukee.org/>

Scriptural Foundations

Human dignity finds special expression in the dignity of work and in the rights of workers. Through work we participate in creation. Workers have rights to just wages, rest and fair working conditions.

Genesis 2:2-3, (God labors and rests) <http://www.usccb.org/bible/genesis/genesis2>

Genesis 2:15 (humans cultivate earth) <http://www.usccb.org/bible/genesis/genesis2>

Sabbath gave laborers rest

Exodus 20:9-11 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/exodus/exodus20>

Exodus 23:12 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/exodus/exodus23>

Exodus 34:21 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/exodus/exodus34>

Leviticus 23:3 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/leviticus/leviticus23>

Deuteronomy 5:12-15 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/deuteronomy/deuteronomy5>

Wage justice

Leviticus 19:13 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/leviticus/leviticus19>

Deuteronomy 24:14-15 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/deuteronomy/deuteronomy24>

Sirach 34:22-27 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/sirach/sirach34>

Jeremiah 22:13 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/jeremiah/jeremiah22>

James 5:4 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/james/james5>

Isaiah 58:3 (do not drive laborers) <http://www.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/isaiah58>

Matthew 20:1-16 (Jesus uses wage law in parable)
<http://www.usccb.org/bible/matthew/matthew20>

Mark 6:3 (Jesus worked as a carpenter) <http://www.usccb.org/bible/mark/mark6>

Mark 2:27 (Sabbath is for the benefit of the people) <http://www.usccb.org/bible/mark/mark2>

Laborer deserves pay

Matthew 10: 9-10 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/matthew/matthew10>

Luke 10:7 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/luke/luke10>

1 Timothy 5:17-18 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/1timothy/1timothy5>

From USCCB complete statement & document available at -
<http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/FCStatement.pdf>

SOURCES: <http://www.usccb.org/bible> & Leader's Guide to Sharing Catholic Social Teaching, USCCB. 2001.

Papal Encyclicals and Church Documents

Rerum Novarum (On the Condition of Labor) -- Pope Leo XIII, 1891

Quadragesimo Anno (After Forty Years) -- Pope Pius XI, 1931

Mater et Magistra (Christianity and Social Progress) -- Pope John XXIII, 1961

Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) Vatican Council II, 1965

Populorum Progressio (On the Development of Peoples) -- Pope Paul VI, 1967

Octogesima Adveniens (A Call to Action) -- Pope Paul VI, 1971

Justitia in Mundo (Justice in the World) -- Synod of Bishops, 1971

Laborem Exercens (On Human Work) -- Pope John Paul II, 1981

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (On Social Concern) -- Pope John Paul II, 1987

Centesimus Annus (The Hundredth Year) -- Pope John Paul II, 1991

Deus Caritas Est (God Is Love) -- Pope Benedict XVI, 2005

Caritas in Veritate (Love in Truth) --Pope Benedict XVI, 2009