

Setting a Place at the Table: Living Our Missionary Call

Rights and Responsibilities



Very Quick Summary

Our Catholic Social Teaching states that every human being has fundamental rights that must be protected in order to promote human dignity and the common good. First and foremost is the right to life and then all of the things required for human decency: the right to food, clothing, shelter, health care, education, and employment with a living wage. Also included are social rights: freedom of conscience, worship, association, migration, and participation in society. Related to these rights are the responsibilities we all have to one another, to our families, and to the larger society as members of one human family.

Globally: Human rights, especially those of women and children, continue to be violated around the world. Whether it is through forced recruitment of young boys and girls to become child soldiers in Africa or limiting the chance for young people to attend school instead of working to support their family or even by denying many here in the U.S. access to affordable health care, members of our human family are suffering and we have a responsibility to work for justice to ensure that these rights are upheld.

"To continue in this direction [of peace and solidarity], the Church does not cease to proclaim and defend fundamental human rights, unfortunately still violated in different parts of the world, and works so that the rights of every human person will be recognized to life, food, a roof, work, health care, protection of the family, the promotion of social development, and respect of the dignity of man and woman, created in the image of God." Pope Benedict XVI, May 2005.

Fast Facts to Share

- 246 million children, one in every six children aged 5 to 17, are involved in child labor. (International Labour Organization, 2002)
- In sub-Saharan Africa 30% of primary school age children are still out of school. Worldwide, 77 million children do not go to school; 781 million adults cannot read or write, of whom two-thirds are women (New Internationalist, 2008)
- Every day, almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes. That's one child every five seconds. (Bread for the World)
- In over 20 countries around the world, an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 children are soldiers in armed conflicts - some as young as 8 years old. Many of these children are abducted or recruited by force, while others join an army out of desperation and poverty. Separated from their families and with no access to school, these children face a bleak future. (Human Rights Watch)

Quick and Easy Lesson Plan #1

Education as a Human Right

Everyone has the right to receive an education although in many places around the world, children are denied the opportunity to go to school because...

- They are made to work.
- They are recruited into armed forces (child soldiers).
- Their families do not have the means to pay for schooling.
- Discrimination and racism undermine their chance to receive an education.
- They face violence as they pursue their education.

School fees and related costs are a common barrier to education. These are a greater burden for children from poor families, and they disproportionately affect those who are racial and ethnic minorities, members of Indigenous communities and migrants. Girls are more likely to be excluded from school than boys when there isn't enough money to go around.

(Amnesty International)

Key Terms

Human rights: Are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status.



We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination.

Education: the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life.

Child soldier: According to UNICEF, a 'child soldier' is defined as any child - boy or girl - under 18 years of age, who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including, but not limited to: cooks, porters, messengers, and anyone accompanying such groups other than family members. It includes girls and boys recruited for sexual purposes and/or forced marriage. The definition, therefore, does not only refer to a child who is carrying, or has carried weapons

Universal Declaration on Human Rights: An international document that states the basic rights and fundamental freedoms to which all human beings are entitled. The Universal Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948. Motivated by the experiences of the preceding world wars, the Universal Declaration was the first time that countries agreed on a comprehensive statement of inalienable human rights. For a list of all the human rights included in the declaration, please visit:

http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-5/8_udhr-abbrev.htm

1. Have your students tell you why they think education is important. What are their favorite things to learn? What are their hopes for their future or continued education?
2. Choose one of the reasons above why many children are not able to attend school and discuss this with your students. For example, what would it be like if they had to work all day (sometimes 12 hours per day) instead of going to school? Discuss this reason in more detail. Reasons of work might be a more age appropriate topic for younger students while middle school and high school students may find learning about the concept of child soldiers impactful and eye-opening.
3. Research a specific example or instance when this right to education has been violated. An example appropriate for older students is described in more detail below with additional resources included. Modifications can be made for younger students or discussion of another violation of the right to education listed above may be better suited for a younger age.

Child Soldiers in Africa and Around the World (middle school and high school appropriate)

- UNICEF reports that today there are an estimated 300,000 children involved in more than 30 armed conflicts worldwide. (2012)
- Child soldiers are most common in African countries even though that is the only region that has a treaty against the use of children in conflicts. Countries where child soldiers have been most prevalent are in conflicts in Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Liberia, Sudan, and most recently, Somalia. These countries have experienced civil war and internal conflict in recent decades that has decimated the country and where in some cases, recovery is not yet possible. Have your students locate these countries on a map.
- Not only do children suffer physically and emotionally when recruited in to armed conflict but society as a whole suffers: these children are pulled from their families, the essential unit of productive and peaceful communities and they are denied education, therefore depriving the community of its human and economic development potential. (United Nations)
- **Activity:** Ask your students how they would feel should they be forced to fight or participate in armed conflict in some way at such a young age? If they had to leave their families and often times were forced to hurt others who may be their friends. What long term consequences would this have for the child and for his/her community?
- Why might children be easy to recruit into these conflicts?
- You may want to watch a movie about child soldiers. There is a documentary available for purchase called *Children of War* that was launched at the United Nations.
<http://childrenofwarfilm.com/home.html>
There are many good resources on this site as well.
- In what way can we make a difference?
- Other resources:
<http://www.irinnews.org/indepthmain.aspx?indepthid=94&reportid=94657>
<http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/>



WAR IS NOT FOR CHILDREN

Quick and Easy Lesson Plan #2

Shelter and Adequate Housing as a Human Right

"Catholic Social Teaching has long recognized housing as a basic human right. The Catholic community--through its parishes, diocesan structures, and Catholic Charities agencies--is one of the largest providers of shelter in the nation." (USCCB, An Affordable Housing Fund, 2006)



Around the world and in our own country, many suffer from lack of adequate and secure housing or shelter. Often times we think of these people as homeless but it can also be people who live in refugee camps and have nothing but a tarp to use as a tent, those who live in slums, or those who are forced out of their homes for urban development with no alternative place to live.

"International human rights law recognizes everyone's right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate housing. Despite the central place of this right within the global legal system, well over a billion people are not adequately housed. Millions around the world live in life- or health threatening conditions, in overcrowded slums and informal settlements, or in other conditions which do not uphold their human rights and their dignity. Further millions are forcibly evicted, or threatened with forced eviction, from their homes every year." (*The Right to Adequate Housing*, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights)

Key Terms

Adequate Housing: The right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity. According to the United Nations, adequate housing must include security from threats and evictions, availability of materials, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location, and cultural adequacy. These terms are further defined in their report on Adequate Housing.

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf

Refugee Camp: Temporary settlement for persons displaced by war or political oppression or religious beliefs. Hundreds of thousands of people may live in a single camp that is designed to meet basic needs for only a short time.

Slums: A run-down area of a city characterized by substandard housing and squalor and lacking in security. One billion people worldwide live in slums with the figure projected to increase to 2 billion by 2030. Most slums lack clean water, electricity, sanitation and other basic services.

Forced Evictions: The permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of and access to appropriate forms of legal or other protection.

1. Have students draw a picture of what their housing/shelter looks like. Ask them to label important things in their house.
2. Ask them what are needed items in their house and what are wants.
3. Show them pictures of different types of housing around the world. Ask them to describe what is or might be in these houses. How is it different from theirs?

<http://www.habitat.org/how/whatlikeintl.aspx>

4. Discuss with your students the idea that many people around the world do not even have access to adequate housing and therefore this basic human right that everyone deserves is violated. Now show them pictures where this is the case (you may google image these):

Slums of Mumbai, India

Slums of Nairobi, Kenya

Refugee Camp in Dadaab, Kenya

Refugee Camp in Afghanistan

Forced Evictions in Cambodia

5. How does this make them feel? When you cannot have adequate housing, how does this affect how you live? What things might you not be able to do if you do not have adequate housing? Answers may include: cook dinner on a stove, do you homework at a table, sleep in a bed, lock doors to prevent someone from entering your home, welcome family to spend time together inside a secure shelter. Encourage them to right these on the board or discuss in small groups.
6. Now have them return to their drawing of their own home and revisit the needs vs. wants categories. Would they change anything listed in each category? How might they change their own lifestyle to turn some of what they perceived as needs in to wants? How might the concept of solidarity (as taught in October's lesson on Solidarity!) play a part in your discussion?
What is our RESPONSIBILITY to this situation?

7. For older students, have them research one of the locations listed above (slums of Mumbai, etc). Most often, when the right to adequate housing is violated, many other human rights are as well. Have individuals or groups present in more detail issues that people face living in these conditions.

More info:

Forced Evictions in Cambodia:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/cambodia-women-hit-hard-wave-forced-evictions-2011-11-24-0>

Other ideas for lesson plans on Children's rights include:

Oxfam: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/rights/>

For materials and prayers for the current Refugee crisis, visit:

CRS Resource Center:

<http://www.crs.org/resource-center/solr-search?search=refugee>

Education for Justice:* (search term "refugee") **membership required*

<https://educationforjustice.org/>

Scriptural Foundations

Leviticus 25:35 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/leviticus/25:35>

Ruth 2: 2-23 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/ruth/2:2>

Tobit 4: 5-11 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/tobit/4:5>

Proverbs 31: 8-9 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/proverbs/31:8>

Isaiah 1: 16-17 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/1:16>

Jeremiah 22: 13-16 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/jeremiah/22:13>

Jeremiah 29: 4-7 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/jeremiah/29:4>

Matthew 25: 31-46 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/matthew/25:31>

Luke 16: 19-31 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/luke/16:19>

Acts 4: 32-35 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/acts/4:32>

2 Corinthians 9: 6-15 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/2corinthians/9:6>

James 2: 14-18 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/james/2:14>

Papal Encyclical and Church Documents

Christifideles Laici, #38(On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful) -Pope John Paul II, 1988

Pacem in Terris, #11, #30 (Peace on Earth)—Pope John XXIII, 1963

Caritas in Veritate, #43 (Charity in Truth)—Pope Benedict XVI, 2009

Mater et Magistra, #20 (Christianity and Social Progress)—Pope John XXIII, 1961

Economic Justice For All, #17, #77, #80—USCCB, 1981

Octogesima Adveniens, #23 (A Call to Action)—Pope Paul VI, 1971

Gaudium et Spes, #26 (The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World)—Second Vatican Council, 1965

Redemptor Hominis, #17 (Redeemer of Humanity)—Pope John Paul II, 1979