

Session for Teens

Introduction

In *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI describes the “unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbor” (no. 16). The experience of God’s love, he says, should move us to love our neighbors, in whom God is present.

Who are our neighbors? In the Gospels, Jesus answers the question with the parable of the Good Samaritan—the beaten man on the road who had no one else to care for him. Pope Benedict XVI tells us that the “extraordinary force” of love should propel us, as disciples of Christ, to action on behalf of such neighbors (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 1). In the same way, Pope Francis notes: “A prayer that does not lead you to practical action for your brother—the poor, the sick, those in need of help, a brother in difficulty—is a sterile and incomplete prayer” (Angelus, 7/21/13).

What should our loving action look like? The Catholic tradition recognizes two types of necessary responses that we call the Two Feet of Love in Action.

This facilitator’s guide can help you as you lead a group of high school age participants to learn about and reflect on living out the call to discipleship through these two distinct, but complementary, ways of responding in love to the needs of our neighbors. If there are participants with disabilities in your group, be sure to consult “Tips to Adapt Activities for Participants with Disabilities” on pages 42-43 before you begin.

Materials Needed

Italicized items are for non-classroom settings, such as a youth group.

- Dry erase board, flipchart, or chalkboard
- Markers or chalk
- Icebreaker quotes, copied and cut apart (pp. 12-17) and construction paper and glue OR materials for relay race (p. 3), including these items for each group: full cup of water; toy building blocks; Band-aids; and math worksheet (p. 18)
- Untied shoe (To make things harder you could have shoes with knots in the laces that the participants must untie, put on, then retie)
- 3 decks of cards (for the “Stack of the Deck” Game, pp. 22-27)

Session Outline (90 minutes)

- I. Icebreaker Game** – 15 min.
- II. Opening Prayer** – 5 min.
- III. Stack of the Deck Game** – 15 min.
- IV. Introduction to the Two Feet of Love in Action** – 15 min.
- V. Discussion** – 15 min.
- VI. Walking the Path of Love**– 15 min.
- VII. Sending** – 10 min.
- VIII. Closing Prayer** – 2 min.

- One copy of handouts per participant*:
 - Opening and Closing prayer (p. 19)
 - Two feet worksheets (pp. 20-21)
 - Poverty Statistics (p. 27)
 - Sending (p. 36)
 - Quotes page (pp. 37-38)
 - Resources handout (pp. 39-41)
- 1 “foot” per participant from the Walking the Path of Love activity (pp. 28-34)
- Writing utensils
- Masking tape

*Note: To save paper, consider copying handouts back to back. Or, consider projecting the Opening and Closing Prayer, Poverty Statistics, and Two Feet worksheets as PowerPoint slides instead of printing them.

I. Icebreaker Game

There are two introductory game options in this lesson plan. The first is intended for a quieter, space-restricted setting while the second is a noisier, sillier game which might fit better in a setting where noise or space may not be as much an issue. If your group includes participants with disabilities, please consult the “Tips to Adapt Activities for Participants with Disabilities” on pages 42-43 before you begin.

Option 1: Quote Game (use in quieter, space-restricted setting)

Before the session, estimate your expected group size and then copy the quotes on pages **12-13**, or pages **14 -17**, depending on the size of your group. Cut on the dotted lines so that the parts of the quotes will be on small slips of paper. (Optional: If you think that the quotes may be too difficult for your group, you can provide “clues” by writing “Scripture,” “Catechism,” “Compendium,” “Pope Benedict XVI,” or “Pope Francis” in small letters on the slips of paper.) Mix up or shuffle the pieces of paper to make sure they are not in order.

Give each participant one of the slips of paper. Explain to participants that they have only part of a quote and that they need to find the other person or persons in the room who have the other part(s). Participants must introduce themselves to one another as they try to complete their quotes.

Remember, if you have more than 36 participants, you can feel free to repeat quotes. Also, if you are handing out slips of paper as people arrive and do not know the exact number of participants who will attend your session, you can avoid having some participants end up with partial quotes by doing the following: make a conservative estimate of the number of participants you expect and cut up quotes for only that number of people. If you are uncertain of the exact number of people you are expecting, consider having a back-up batch of additional slips of paper to hand out only after the initial batch is depleted.

Distribute the back-up slips only a few quotes at a time to avoid a situation in which someone has a partial quote that doesn't match anyone else's.

When a group of participants believes it has completed a quote, check to make sure the quote is correct. (You may want to have pages 12-13 or 14-17 handy so you can easily check the quotes. Or, you can instead print out the take-home quotes page from pages 37-38 to use as your answer key.) If the quote is correct, ask the participants to glue the full quote to a piece of construction paper. Explain to the group that the quotes help to introduce the topic for our session today: how we can respond to Christ's call for us to love our neighbors. Ask each group to read their quote out loud to the group and then tape it on the wall of the room.

Option 2: Relay race (use in noisier, more spacious setting)

Preparation:

In this game, teams of five will participate in a relay race. Divide the number of participants by five and set up one table or desk per team at one end of the room, and use one long piece of tape as a starting line on the other end. Make sure that there is a lot of open space between the starting line and the tables, as the participants will be running back and forth.

Place the following materials on each team's table (each group should have all of these materials):

- Full cup of water (Note: if you are doing the relay on hard floor that could be slippery if wet, you can substitute the water for something else non-liquid such as feathers or pencils that are taller than the cup and tough to keep inside.)
- Toy building blocks – enough to build a house (at least 14 long blocks and 2 square blocks) or some other material (such as Legos, cardboard pieces, toilet paper rolls, and tape) that could be used to construct a house.
- Box of Band-Aids
- Math worksheet (found on page 18)
- Untied shoe – Ask one person from each team who is wearing tennis shoes or another type of shoe with laces to remove one shoe from his or her foot, retie it with a double knot, and place it on the table for his or her team on the other side of the room. (To make things harder you could also instruct the person to make several knots in the laces.)

Have each group stand at the starting line opposite each table and then explain the rules:

- All activities must be completed using *one leg only*.
- Every group member must wait for the person before him or her to be *completely* finished with his or her task before crossing the start line.



The Two Feet of Love *in Action*

- The first person must hop down to the other side of the room, grab the cup of water and hop back holding the cup with one hand only. (If using feathers or pencils, you may want to instruct that the person must stop and pick up any items that fall out.)
- The next person must hop, grab the box of Band-Aids, hop back, and put one Band-Aid on every single team member.
- The next person must hop, correctly complete the math worksheet, and hop back with the worksheet, which the team members must check over.
- The next person must hop to the end of the room, grab all of the toy building blocks, and hop back. If he or she drops any, pick them up. The team members then must start building a house with four walls and a roof from the materials as fast as they can.
- The last person must hop to the end, untie the shoe, put it on, retie it and hop back. Thus, the person whose shoe is on the table should be the *last* person in the team's line.
- The first team done wins a prize! (food, free bowling passes, etc.) The team must have finished the relay and all of the tasks, which include successfully transporting the water cup, putting Band-Aids on every team member, completing the math worksheet correctly, building a house (four walls and a roof), putting on the shoe.

At the end of the game, ask the participants if having to hop on one foot made the game more difficult. Tell them we'll return to that theme later on in the session!

II. Opening Prayer

Pass out (or project) the opening prayer (page 18) and pray together:

Prayer for Peace and Justice

God, source of all light,
we are surrounded by the darkness of
the injustices experienced by your people,
the poor who are hungry and who search for shelter,
the sick who seek relief,
and the downtrodden who seek help in their hopelessness.

Surround us and fill us with your Spirit who is Light.
Lead us in your way to be light to your people.
Help us, [insert group name] to be salt for our community
as we share your love with those caught in the struggles of life.

We desire to be your presence to the least among us
and to know your presence in them as we work through you
to bring justice and peace to this world in desperate need.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your son, who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Source: *Communities of Salt and Light* Parish Resource Manual

III. The Stack of the Deck Game:

To help participants understand the problems of poverty today you can play the “Stack of the Deck Game”. See page 22 for instructions on how to run this game. The game illustrates how the advantages or disadvantages into which a person is born and his or her choices in life can influence his or her well-being and opportunities. As Christians, we are all part of one Body of Christ, whether we are born into riches or poverty. We are called as Christ’s disciples to work together to ensure that all people can live with dignity and develop as children of God.

Optional: Show participants the Catholic Campaign for Human Development’s Web of Poverty video. (www.povertyusa.org/multimedia/web-poverty)

After the game and/or video, project the statistics from page 26 on a PowerPoint slide, or distribute them as a handout.

Have participants break up into small groups for discussion, designating one person to be the recorder, and another to report back on the group’s discussion. Have groups spend about five minutes discussing the question below.

Question: Does everyone have a fair start in life?

Ask the participants to reflect on the question in light of the Stack of the Deck Game that they just played. Another way of asking the question is “Was there a level playing field for both of the people in the game, or did one of them have an advantage? Why or why not?” The participants can also consider the statistics, which reflect some of the problems faced by the worse-off person in the game, to inform their answer to the question.

IV. Introduction to the Two Feet of Love in Action

Before explaining the Two Feet of Love in Action, see how participants respond to a scenario. Tell the participants that because of the “deck” that the worse-off person ended up with, that person has found that he or she doesn’t have enough money to pay his or her rent because his or her job pays a very low wage. He or she has been evicted from his or her apartment, along with his or her two children. In recent years, there have increasingly been many other families in the same boat. How would you help them? Most likely, the participants’ responses will be Charitable Works responses, although they won’t know that



term yet. Have participants offer ideas of how, as people of faith, we could respond. Write the responses on the board. Save these for later, as you will return to this scenario at the end.

After the group has given its responses, explain that as disciples of Christ, who showed special concern and love for those in need, we are called to be concerned about issues that affect poor, vulnerable, and marginalized persons. Our concern for those in need and our desire to help flows from our love for God and neighbor. In the Gospels, Jesus told us that love for God and neighbor are the most important commandments, and that because God loves us and all people, we should also love our neighbors. Pope Benedict XVI explains in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, 'Love of God and love of neighbor are thus inseparable, they form a single commandment. But both flow from the love of God who has loved us first...a love which by its very nature must then be shared with others' (no. 18).

Explain to the participants that we are able to love because God has first loved us. Upon experiencing God's love through prayer and the sacraments, we should want to imitate it. We should want to love all whom he loves.

Assign a participant to read the following quote, making sure the participant knows to read slowly while emphasizing the bolded words from Jesus' parable about the sheep and goats:

"Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you **hungry** and **feed** you, or **thirsty** and give you **drink**?
When did we see you a **stranger** and **welcome** you, or **naked** and **clothe** you?
When did we see you **ill** or in **prison**, and **visit** you?'
And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, **you did for me.**'"

-Matthew 25:37-40

In response to God's great love for us, we love our neighbor. By loving our neighbor, we honor God, who loves us and all people. By loving our neighbors, we live out the call to discipleship that we are given through our Baptism. But how can we put love into action?

Distribute (or project) the Two Feet of Love in Action handouts (pages 20-21). Explain to participants as they view the handout that there are two different, but complimentary, ways that we act in response to God's love. We call these the Two Feet of Love in Action. These two "feet", Social Justice and Charitable Works, allow us to walk the path of *caritas*, or love.

The two feet are:

"Foot" # 1: Social Justice

Explain that the first "foot" is called **Social Justice**. This means praying and working for long-term solutions to the *root causes* of problems in our community and the world. We step with the Social Justice foot through changing laws and public policies. We step with

this foot by helping low-income people to not only survive, but also to escape poverty. We also step with this foot when we support the efforts of low-income persons to transform their communities.

Stepping with the Social Justice means we are working to help transform the human community so that it better reflects the image of Christ, the most perfect example of love (*Catechism*, no. 1877).

Word Study

Sometimes it can be helpful to break down the definition of “social justice” so that it is clearer for participants what this term means:

“**Social**” – Has to do with other people or relating to society. We are not isolated individuals; we live and exist with others, in community.

“**Justice**” – Is “the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor” (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1807). Justice prompts us to distribute to God and all people what belongs to them.

“Social justice” is ensuring that those in society, our neighbors, can fulfill their basic needs. Church teaching tells us that all people, no matter who they are or where they come from, have a *right* to what is required for human decency, such as “food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, social services, and security in cases of sickness, inability to work, widowhood, old age, or unemployment” (John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, no. 11; *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 26)

Pope Francis tells us that making sure that everyone has access to what they need to live happy and healthy lives is a matter of *justice*. He writes: “A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to *satisfy the demands of justice, fairness, and respect* for every human being.” (Address, 6/20/13).

“Foot” # 2: Charitable Works

Charitable Works are when you give direct help to people or families to help meet their immediate needs. We step with our charitable works foot when we provide food, clothing, shelter or monetary assistance to those in need. Pope Benedict XVI describes our charitable works as “the simple response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc.” (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 31). He is of course referencing the teaching of Jesus himself about the works of mercy in Matthew 25:31-46.

Likewise, Pope Francis describes this foot when he urges us to perform works of mercy for our “wounded brother, because he is hungry, because he is thirsty, because he is naked, because [he] is humiliated, because he is a slave, because he’s in jail, because he is in the hospital” (Homily, 7/3/13).

Word Study

Again, studying the background of a term can be helpful for understanding the idea as a whole:

The word “charitable” comes from the word charity.

- Charity is the “virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1882). Charity has to do with *love* for both God and neighbor. In the Gospels, Jesus answers the question “Who is my neighbor” with the parable of the Good Samaritan who helped the beaten man on the road who had no one else to care for him. The virtue of charity calls us to have compassion for our neighbors, or those around us who are poor and vulnerable.
- The suffix “-able” means “in accordance with”.

Thus, Charitable Works are actions that are in response to our love for God and neighbor, in accordance with direct generosity or compassion towards those who are most in need of help.

Walking with Both Feet

Use the following case study and reflection to show participants the Two Feet of Love in Action:

Parishioners at **St. Camillus parish** in Silver Spring, MD were concerned about violence erupting over control of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and they felt that it was their baptismal call and their duty as disciples of Christ to put their faith in action. They decided to **walk with both feet**. Parishioners organized a trip to Congress to share their concerns, engaging the **social justice foot**. This advocacy by St. Camillus parishioners and many other Catholics played an important role in passing new legislation in requiring companies to take steps to ensure that the minerals used in their products are not supporting violence in the eastern Congo. Back at the parish, parishioners stepped with the **charitable works foot** by praying for the victims of violence in the DRS and by holding a craft sale to benefit Catholic Relief Services programs that assist victims of war in the DRC. These actions helped the parishioners to truly respond to the command given to each of one of them at dismissal from Mass to “glorify the Lord by your life.”

Reflection:

As a large group, have participants answer these questions:

- How did St. Camillus walk with the Social Justice foot?
- How did they walk with the Charitable Works foot?
- Do you have any other ideas of how they could have walked with either the Social Justice or the Charitable Works foot? [Make sure that participants mention example for both feet, not just one.]

Critical Thinking:

Return now to the example of the worse-off person in the Stack of the Deck game. Now that the participants have a better understanding of the two ways to respond, return to the scenario where the person who was less fortunate has found that he or she doesn't have enough money to pay his or her rent because his job pays a very low wage. He or she has been evicted from his or her apartment, along with his or her two children. This is happening to other families as well. How would the participants help them? Look at the ideas they brainstormed earlier and ask which category (Social Justice or Charitable Works) each idea falls into.

Then ask participants to brainstorm some additional ideas for the "weaker" foot (the foot for which they brainstormed fewer ideas). Some responses may include:

Charitable Works:

- Help support the person financially by paying for rent
- Act as a spiritual guide and mentor/friend for the person by praying with him or her and accompanying and assisting him or her as he or she applies for new jobs
- Offer temporary housing for families who become homeless
- Offer to watch the person's children so more money can go towards rent

Social Justice:

- Urge the city council to pass a law to ensure workers are paid fair wages
- Work with the city to get more affordable housing for low-wage earners
- Offer job training programs to help low-wage workers get higher paying jobs

Explain that as disciples of Christ, we are called to walk with *both* feet, not just one. One creative way to illustrate this is to invite two volunteers to the front of the room and tell them they are going to have a race from where they are standing to the wall. However, one person is only allowed to use one foot, while the other can use both feet. After the race, ask: "Was it easier to run with both feet, or just one?" The same is also true for our work as children of God to address issues that face our communities.

V. Discussion

Have participants break up into small groups, designating one person to be the recorder, and another person who will present what the group discusses. Ask the groups to discuss

the following questions:

- **Do you step more heavily with one foot than the other?**
- **Which one?**
- **How can we “level the playing field” so that disadvantaged people have the same opportunities as everyone else?**
- **What do we do next?**

After about ten minutes, or earlier if it seems groups are finished discussing, have each presenter summarize his or her group’s answers. Take note if any participants seem to have missed the concept so that you can focus on any problem areas as you discuss the answers.

VI. Walking the Path of Love

Now that participants have a better understanding of what the two feet of love are, help participants understand how they can walk with the two feet of love. Remind them that doing so is a response to our baptismal call to discipleship and our response to Christ’s command to love our neighbors. Walking the Path of Love is a fun game where teams of participants are challenged to be creative and work together to think of social justice and charitable works responses to a wide range of issues in society. Instructions for the game can be found on page 28. If your group includes participants with disabilities, be sure to consult “Tips to Adapt Activities for Participants with Disabilities” on pages 42-43 before you begin.

VII. Sending

As the session wraps up, allow time for the participants to think about how they will become involved in responding to issues in their community. A handout with reflection questions can be found on page 36.

Explain to participants that as disciples of Christ who are sent on mission through our Baptism and Confirmation, we are called to continually pray and reflect about how we are called to put two feet of love in action. Hand out the quotes on pages 37-38 and suggest that participants reflect on these quotes during their prayer time and ask God how he is calling them to respond.

Give each small group a list of organizations in their community that put the Two Feet of Love into Action. It is important that there are resources for both “Charitable Works” organizations and “Social Justice” organizations. Several great ideas are provided in the Additional Resources section on pages 39-41. You may also wish to contact your diocesan contacts for Social Ministry, Pro-Life, or Catholic Campaign for Human Development for ideas.

Have participants look over the various groups and individually reflect on these questions (found on the handout on page 36):

- Think of the gifts, talents and strengths that God has given you. What are you good at? What are your skills?
- Imagine a cause or issue you care about. It could be something described today, or it could be something you think of yourself. What do you currently do to address that issue?
- Imagine strengthening your weaker foot by doing both Social Justice and Charitable Works to address that issue. What would it look like? How would you use your skills?
- Now write down one thing you can picture yourself doing in the next month to work towards that cause.

Encourage participants to commit to doing something concrete to respond to an issue they care about.

The facilitator may wish to play a contemporary song in the background as participants complete the handout or to use the song as a discussion prompt. Several examples of contemporary songs related to the issue of poverty and our response are:

"If We are the Body" (Casting Crowns); "Give Me Your Eyes" (Brandon Heath); "Rich Young Ruler" (Derek Webb); "Beautiful Stranger" (Rebecca St. James); "Friend of the Poor" (Andy Park & Leeland Mooring); "Tears of the Saints" (Leeland); "Wealth & Poverty" (Tim Be Told); "Yours" (Steven Curtis Chapman); "Always Enough" (Casting Crowns); "Hold Us Together" (Matt Maher); "Something Beautiful for God" (Bryan Sirchio); "Poor Man's House" (Patty Griffin); "World Poverty" (Hannah Montana); "Hands" (Jewel).

VIII. Closing Prayer (Found on Page 19)

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord make me an instrument of your peace

Where there is hatred,
Let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is error, truth;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, Joy.

O Divine Master grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love.



The **Two Feet** of Love *in Action*

For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Icebreaker Quotes for Groups of 16 or Less

"Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'

And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:37-40)

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives

and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

"The *Eucharist commits us to the poor*. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us,

we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1397)

"A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied

with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness and respect for every human being." (Pope Francis, Address to the Food and Agricultural Organization, 6/20/13)

"The demands of the common good are dependent on the social conditions of each historical period and are strictly connected to respect for and the integral promotion of the person and his fundamental rights. These demands concern above all the commitment to peace, the organization of the State's powers,

a sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights: food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care, the freedom of communication and expression, and the protection of religious freedom.” (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 166)

“Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs.

The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity.” (St. John Chrysostom, quoted in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2446)

“The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practice this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the *pólis*. This is the institutional path

— we might also call it the political path — of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbor directly, outside the institutional mediation of the *pólis*.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate [Charity in Truth]*, no. 7)

“To love is to give, to offer what is ‘mine’ to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is ‘his’, what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting. I cannot ‘give’ what is mine to the other,

without first giving him what pertains to him in justice.... Not only is justice not extraneous to charity, not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity: justice is inseparable from charity, and intrinsic to it.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate [Charity in Truth]*, no. 6)

Icebreaker Quotes for Groups of 15 or More

"Is this the manner of fasting I wish, of keeping a day of penance: That a man bow his head like a reed, and lie in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?"

This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke;

Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own." (Isaiah 58:5-7)

"Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'

And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:37-40)

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives

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“A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied

with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness and respect for every human being.” (Pope Francis, Address to the Food and Agricultural Organization, 6/20/13)

“A prayer that does not lead you to practical action for your brother — the poor, the sick, those in need of help, a brother in difficulty — is a sterile and incomplete prayer.

But, in the same way . . . When time is not set aside for dialogue with him in prayer, we risk serving ourselves and not God present in our needy brother and sister.” (Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 7/21/13)

“The demands of the common good are dependent on the social conditions of each historical period and are strictly connected to respect for and the integral promotion of the person and his fundamental rights.

These demands concern above all the commitment to peace, the organization of the State's powers, a sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights:

food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care, the freedom of communication and expression, and the protection of religious freedom.” (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 166)

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“The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to

practice this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the [city]. This is the institutional path — we might also call it

the political path — of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbor directly.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate [Charity in Truth]*, no. 7)

“To love is to give, to offer what is ‘mine’ to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is ‘his’, what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting.

I cannot ‘give’ what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice.... Not only is justice not extraneous to charity,

not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity: justice is inseparable from charity, and intrinsic to it.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate [Charity in Truth]*, no. 6)

“The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society. . . is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens of the State,

they are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity. So they cannot relinquish their participation ‘in

the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural areas, which are intended to promote organically and institutionally the common good.’.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est [God is Love]*, 29)

“Following the example given in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christian charity is first of all the simple response

to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est [God is Love]*, 29 and 31)

“When God sends the prophet Jeremiah, he gives him the power to “pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant” (1:10). It is the same for you. Bringing the Gospel is bringing God’s power to pluck up and break down

evil and violence, to destroy and overthrow the barriers of selfishness, intolerance and hatred, so as to build a new world.” (Pope Francis, Homily on the Occasion of XXVIII World Youth Day, 7/28/13)

“A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice

of love is intrinsically fragmented.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est [God is Love]*, 14)

“The Church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the Sacraments and the Word. . . .

Those who are able make offerings in accordance with their means . . . to support orphans, widows, the sick and those who for other reasons find themselves in need, such as prisoners and foreigners.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est [God is Love]*, no. 22)

Team Name: _____

$$\begin{array}{r} 12 \\ + 7 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 10 \\ + 6 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 20 \\ - 16 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 11 \\ - 11 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ - 2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 13 \\ - 6 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 14 \\ + 4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 6 \\ + 4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ + 4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Opening Prayer

Prayer for Peace and Justice

God, source of all light,
we are surrounded by the darkness of
the injustices experienced by your people,
the poor who are hungry and who search for shelter,
the sick who seek relief,
and the downtrodden who seek help in their hopelessness.

Surround us and fill us with your Spirit who is Light.
Lead us in your way to be light to your people.
Help us, [insert group name] to be salt for our community
as we share your love with those caught in the struggles of life.

We desire to be your presence to the least among us
and to know your presence in them as we work through you
to bring justice and peace to this world in desperate need.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your son, who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Source: Communities of Salt and Light Parish Resource Manual

Closing Prayer

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred,
Let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is error, truth;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, Joy.
O Divine Master grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love.

The Two Feet of Love *in Action*

“The conscience is called by this social teaching to recognize and fulfill the obligations of **justice** and **charity** in society.”

—*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the eternal Church, no. 83*

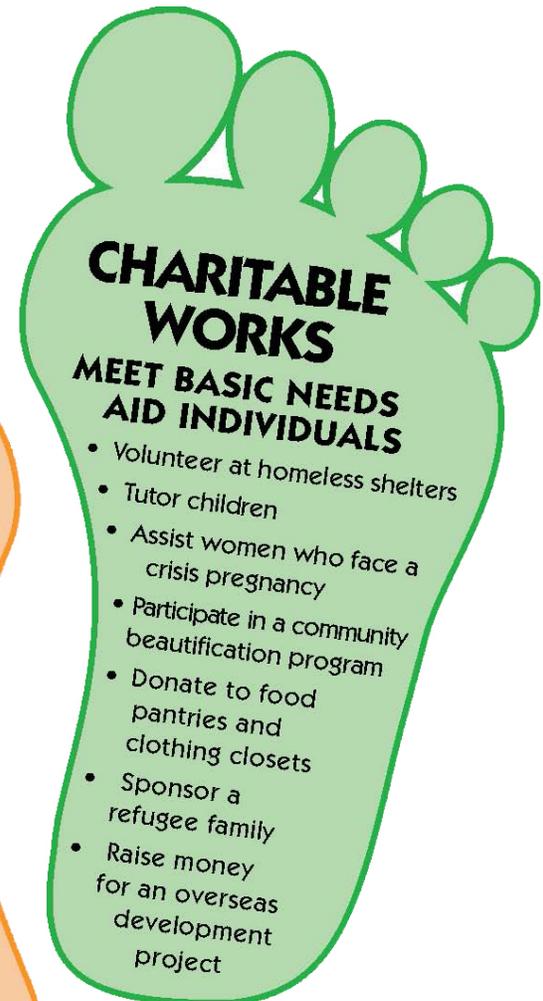
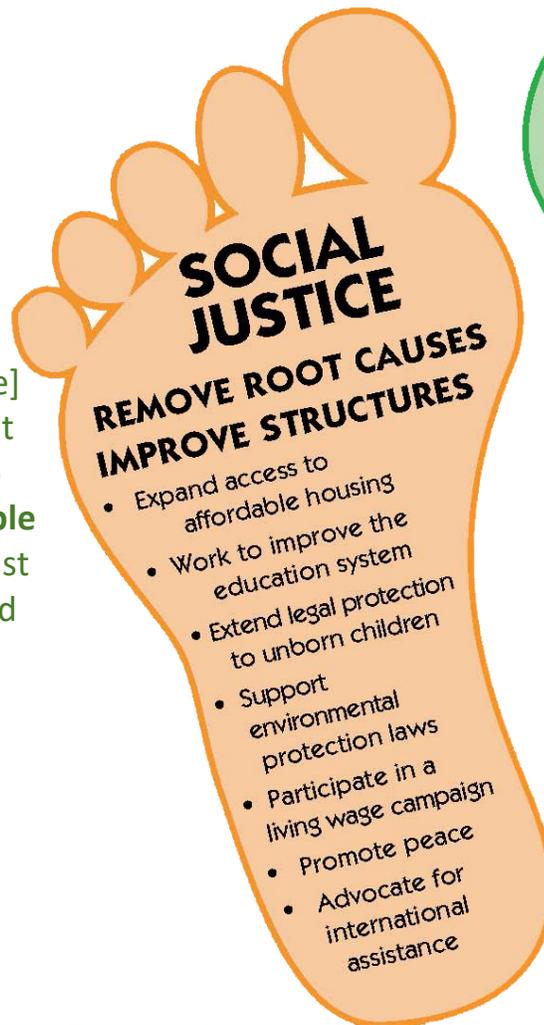
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to life.

“**Social justice**. . . concerns the social, political, and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions.”

—*Compendium, no. 201*

“To [those who lack what they need to live a dignified life] are proclaimed glad tidings that God loves them...and comes to visit them through the **charitable works** that the disciples of Christ do in his name... As we can read in Matthew 25, we shall all be judged on this.”

—*Pope Francis, Address to Pastoral Convention, 6/17/13*





There are two different, but complimentary, ways that we can act in response to God's love. We call these the "Two Feet of Love in Action." These two feet, "Social Justice" and "Charitable Works," allow us to walk the path of love, or *caritas*.

This pilgrimage of love is an ongoing, lifelong journey of growth. Just as our faith leads to action, our loving actions lead to new spiritual growth. This action is not taken alone, but together with others. In this way, we work to make God's kingdom present on earth.

The Two Feet of Love in Action

The first "foot" is called Social Justice.

Pope Benedict XVI calls this the "primary way of charity," or love, because: "If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them" (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 6).

We walk with the Social Justice foot by fostering peace and justice and seeking long-term change in local and global communities. We step with this foot when we work to remove the root causes of problems, when we support the efforts of low-income persons to transform their communities, when we advocate for just public policies, and when we help change the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice at home and around the world.

When step with Social Justice we are working to help transform the human community so that it better reflects the image of Christ (*Catechism*, no. 1877).

The second "foot" is called Charitable Works.

Pope Francis describes this foot when he emphasizes carrying out works of mercy to help our brothers or sisters who are wounded, hungry, thirsty, naked, or in prison (Homily, 7/3/13).

We step with this foot when we work to aid or assist others both locally and globally to the meet their immediate, short-term needs. Examples include engaging in direct service or providing food, clothing, shelter, or monetary assistance to help those in need.

When we step with the Charitable Works foot, we are imitating Christ's love through the works of mercy (*Catechism*, no. 2447).

“Stack of the Deck” Game

Overview:

This is an example of an educational activity that uses two volunteers and a series of guided exchanges of playing cards to illustrate how a person’s background, experiences, and choices can impact his or her opportunities and economic status.

Materials Needed:

- 3 decks of cards
- dry erase board or flipchart
- markers

Instructions:

Choose two volunteers from the group and invite them to stand at the front of the room facing the group.

Give each of the volunteers a deck of cards. Keep the third deck of cards for yourself.

Share with the volunteers and the entire group that what is contained in each person’s deck represents his or her earning potential, which is affected by his or her background, experiences, choices, and opportunities in life.

Explain that one of the volunteers (Person 1 in the text below) has been born into a low-income, working class family in a poor neighborhood. The other volunteer (Person 2 in the text below) has been born into an affluent, white-collar family in a nice, suburban neighborhood.

Explain that we will now accompany our two volunteers as they go through life, with various factors that affect them symbolized by exchanges of playing cards from each of their decks.

Exchange 1

Say to Person 1:

“Children who born in poverty are more likely to have two working parents or a single working parent, and because the children do not get as much one-on-one time with other people, they learn language more slowly. When you were little your parents were still together, but they both worked minimum-wage jobs to make ends meet, so you learned how to speak later than other children. This is the first in a long line of events that made you and children like you fall behind in school. As a child in poverty, you are less likely to attend preschool, less likely to read at home and learn basic skills, and more likely to enter the educational system behind other participants. **Please give me two Aces and two Jacks and I will give you back two Fives and two Fours.**”

Exchange the specified cards with Person 1.

To Person 2:

“You grew up with both parents around, and your father made enough money that your mother could stay at home, so you learned to speak at an early age. You started pre-school at the age of

three and you picked up numbers and the alphabet really fast. Your parents also practiced with you at home. You enter grade school one step ahead. **Please trade in two Fives and two Fours and I will give you two Aces.**"

Exchange the specified cards with Person 2.

Exchange 2

Say to Person 1:

"Your family struggles to get by on a minimum wage income and is on and off of food stamps. However, food stamps don't always last until the end of the month and you sometimes are forced to come to school hungry. It is difficult to concentrate on school when you are hungry. **Please give me two Queens and two Tens and I will give you back two Fours and two Threes.**"

Exchange the specified cards with Person 1.

To Person 2:

"You always have three meals a day, usually with nutritious snacks in between, and you always know where the next meal will come from. **Please give me two Fours and two Threes and I'll give you a Queen and two Tens.**

Exchange the specified cards with Person 2.

Exchange 3

Say to Person 1:

"You go to a poor, inner-city school that has large class-sizes and not enough books or materials. In addition, your parents didn't graduate from high school and they aren't able to offer you much help with your school work. **Please give me one Ace and 3 Kings and I'll give you four two's.**"

Exchange the specified cards with Person 1.

Say to Person 2:

"The public school in your town is well-funded through local taxes. It's a wealthy area, so a lot of money comes in to support the school system, which has good teachers. Your parents both have college educations and have good office jobs. If you ever need help with your homework, mom or dad can usually help. **Give me all of your two's and I'll give you 3 Kings and an Ace.**"

Exchange the specified cards with Person 2.

Exchange 4

Say to Person 1:

"Your parents become separated and your dad disappears from the scene for a while. Finances become really difficult. Child support is required by law, but your mom isn't sure how to navigate the system to try to force your dad to pay it. Besides, you aren't even sure where dad is living. Since on average, women's earnings tend to lag behind men, and almost 43 percent of single mothers live below the poverty line, you take a 30 hour per week job at a fast food restaurant to help out, which takes up many of your week nights and weekends, and unfortunately, doesn't leave a lot of extra time for studying. **Please give me a Jack and two Tens and I'll give you a Six and two Fives.**"

Exchange the specified cards with Person 1.

Say to Person 2:

"Your parents also become separated for a time, but luckily, there's never a question as to whether you will always have access to financial resources from both of them. **Keep your deck the same.**"

But in high school, you get a job during the summer so you can have spending money during the year. Your parents taught you good spending habits growing up, so you put some away for the future. You always have time to study during the school year. **Please give me a Six and two Fives and I will give you 3 Nines.**"

Exchange the specified cards with Person 2.

Exchange 5

Say to Person 1:

"You want to attend college, and there is some financial aid offered for low-income participants. But even with that, college is really, really expensive and you feel like you are far behind other participants coming from better schools. You decide to go full-time at the job you've had through high school, which is at a fast food restaurant. You enroll for a class at a community college on the side, but you reason that the number of years it will take to get through college one class at a time will be much longer than it will take for you to work your way up to a management position at the fast food restaurant. So, you think, you will make your job the priority. **Please give me your last Ace, last King, and one Queen, and I will give you three sixes.**"

Exchange the specified cards with Person 1.

To Person 2:

"It has always been assumed that you will go to college, as will almost everyone in your high school. You take a SAT-prep course and are enrolled in AP classes in the hopes of starting off with some extra credits. Deciding where to go to college is a tough decision; you apply to your favorite places, get in to some of them, make college visits, and finally, you choose one that feels like the best fit for you. **Please give me all of your sixes and I'll give you an Ace, King, and Queen.**"

Exchange the specified cards with Person 2.

Exchange 6

Say to Person 1:

"We haven't mentioned your race yet. It turns out that minority groups are twice as likely to live in poverty as Caucasians. For instance, the poverty rate among African Americans is almost 25 percent--that's nearly one out of every four African Americans who live in poverty. For Hispanics, the poverty rate is over twenty-three percent. Part of the reason for this is that poverty is cyclical and passed down through generations. But segregation, discrimination and other racial injustices also play a role. You happen to be African American. And you unfortunately didn't get that promotion to management at the fast food restaurant. Your colleague did. You suspect that race might have something to do with it—you've overheard some of your coworkers say some racist things, but they've never been directed at you and you don't think you could prove anything. **You lose 1 Queen for your race and 1 Jack because you didn't get the promotion to management. You get back 2 threes.**"

Exchange the specified cards with Person 1.

To Person 2:

"You were born to a Caucasian family. You can't deny that your race has allowed you many privileges. **Take two eights and give me two threes.**"

Exchange the specified cards with Person 2.

Exchange 7

Say:

"So far, one of you has not been so lucky, but this time, your decks are both stacked well.

Say to Person 1:

"Your family might be poor, but that hasn't dampened your mother's strong faith. Even when times have been hard, your mother has been an example of steadfast faith. Ever since you can remember, you've had Sunday school, and later on, your church youth group's basketball nights, which have kept you out of all sorts of late night trouble. You've often sat in on—and really enjoyed—your mother's Bible study group at the house, and your family is close with the parish pastor. Faith is definitely a part of your life and you feel it makes you strong."

Say to Person 2:

"Faith has also been an important part of your life. Through youth group, your prayer time has become more meaningful and you've also made a lot of great friends. You've gone on several mission trips to other cities and even abroad, and just recently, you were asked if you would like to become a cantor at Mass. You love it so far."

Both of you: choose any two cards from your decks, and tell me which two you want back.

Exchange the specified cards with Persons 1 and 2.

* * *

Explain to the group that the exchanges of cards are finished. Ask the group: "How do you think that the contents of the 'deck' of each of our volunteers compare to one another?"

After allowing some responses, explain that we're going to see what effect each person's background, experiences, choices, and opportunities in life had on the earning potential of each of the volunteers.

Go over to Person 1 and shuffle his or her deck. Ask him or her to take the top four cards from the deck and lay them face-up on the desk.

Then go over to Person 2 and do the same. Shuffle his or her deck and then ask him or her to take the top four cards from the deck and lay them face-up on the desk. Explain that part of the results in someone's life just has to do with coincidences or lucky breaks, so you're shuffling to make it random. Ask both to calculate their earning potential by adding the numbers on the cards. Use the chart below to indicate how much the cards are worth.

This Card...	Is worth...
Number card	The number on the card
Jack	10
Queen	15

King	20
Ace	25

Here are some examples to illustrate how the calculation works:

- If Person 1 chooses a 3, 5, 2, and 6, his/her total is 16.
- If Person 2 chooses a Jack, 2 Queens, and a 10, his/her total is 50.

Then add three zeroes to the end of each total. Using the examples above, Person 1's total becomes 16,000 while Person 2's total becomes 50,000. Explain that this is the amount that we will use as each person's annual income. Mention that the median income for someone who graduates college is more than \$20,000 higher than someone who does not.

Explain that there is some flexibility in these numbers and that this calculus can change due to the choices that a person makes as an individual. Deciding to stay in school is a personal choice that can affect a person's future well-being. However, it should be clear that the "deck is stacked against" Person 1 and in favor of Person 2, based on many factors he or she cannot control. We sometimes hear about "rags-to-riches" stories where a person escapes from dire poverty to become the CEO of a company, but we should recognize that these cases are too rare. For many people, the factors we described related to poverty really can impact a person's opportunities.

The 2023 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia	
Persons in family	Poverty guideline
1	\$14,580
2	19,720
3	24,860
4	30,000
5	35,140
6	40,280
7	45,420
8	50,560

For families with more than 8 persons, add \$5,140 for each additional person.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
<https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>

Remind the participants that the point of the game was to illustrate how the advantages or disadvantages into which a person is born and his or her choices in life can influence his or her well-being and opportunities.

The game is not intended to foster tension or guilt, but rather to point out that the playing field is not level and that, as part of one Body in Christ, we are all called as Christ's disciples to work together to ensure that all people can live with dignity and develop as children of God.

Poverty Statistics

- 37.9 million people were living in poverty in the U.S. in 2022, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's official poverty measure.
- According to the Supplemental Poverty Measure, the child poverty rate in 2022 was 12.4%.
- The percentage of working-age people with disabilities who are not in the labor force is more than double that of those without disabilities (79% vs. 35%).
- Healthy, fresh food is generally more expensive and harder to find in poor areas.
- Many families living in poverty work minimum wage or part time jobs, which may not include benefits such as health insurance coverage.
- Family and institutions are tightly bound together. Pope John Paul II called family the foundation of society (*Familiaris Consortio*, no. 42). Just as broken families contribute to systemic poverty, and healthy families to a strong society, broken or failing institutions can create poverty and affect families.
- The median cost for a family of four with two parents and two children varies by location in the U.S. Even in more affordable locations, the cost to cover basic housing, utilities, transportation, food, health care, and child care is more than \$70,000 annually. An adult who works 40 hours a week at federal minimum wage, which is \$7.25/hour, will make only \$15,080 annually.
- Children who have access to full-time pre-school are much more likely to have higher incomes, education levels, and socioeconomic status and are less likely to abuse drugs, be involved in criminal activities, and lack healthcare—25 years later. However, childcare, including preschool, is unaffordable for many low-income families. Childcare costs range from \$5,357 for school-age home-based care in small counties to \$17,171 for infant center-based care in very large counties.

Sources:

[Poverty in the United States: 2022](#) (Sept. 12, 2023)

[Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics](#) (Feb. 23, 2023)

[Family Budget Calculator](#) and [Budget Map](#) (2022)

[Federal Minimum Wage and State Minimum Wages](#) (2023)

[New Childcare Data Shows Prices are Untenable for Families](#) (Jan. 24, 2023)

Walking the Path of Love

Goal: Challenge every participant to think of original responses to social issues while creating and walking the "path of love". On the path of love, we are walking toward the horizon, which is the kingdom of God. As Catholics, we believe that the kingdom of God is both a future goal and in our

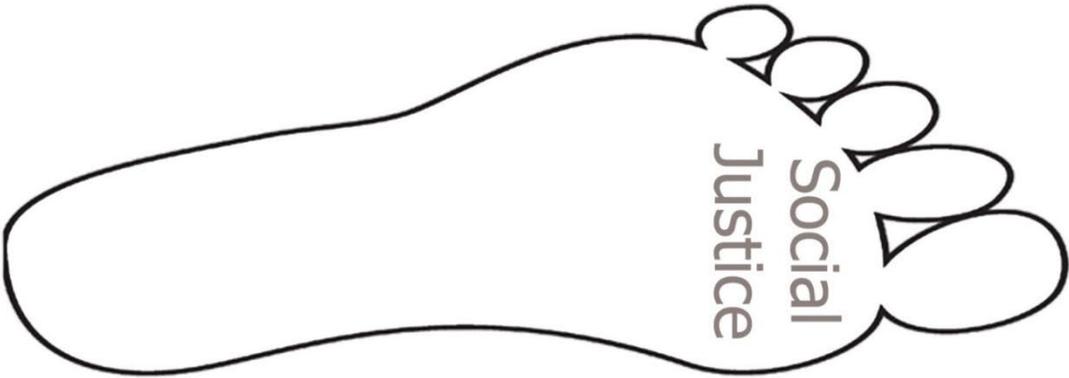
midst now. We are called to follow in Christ's footsteps and assist God's work to make the kingdom present on earth through social justice and charitable works.

Preparation: Clear the room so that there is a large space for two teams to compete against each other. Place a strip of masking tape across one end of the room as the "start" of the path. Place two long strips of tape, about ten feet apart from each other, perpendicular to the start line. These will be the two "sides" of a wide path. Where the path ends (opposite side of the room from the start line), put a sign or prize to represent the "Kingdom of God." Copy and cut the following pages with the pairs of feet to make a pile of feet pairs for each team. It is important that each team has *pairs* of feet (not a single foot) for each "issue." For example, each team should have a pair of feet for "abortion," with one of them reading "charitable works" and the other "social justice. "). Mix up the order of the feet in each team's pile so that the members of the pairs will no longer be in order. Have two additional roles of masking tape available for use during the game. Have writing utensils available for each person. Assign a different adult leader to be the facilitator/judge for each of teams, and explain the game to them beforehand.

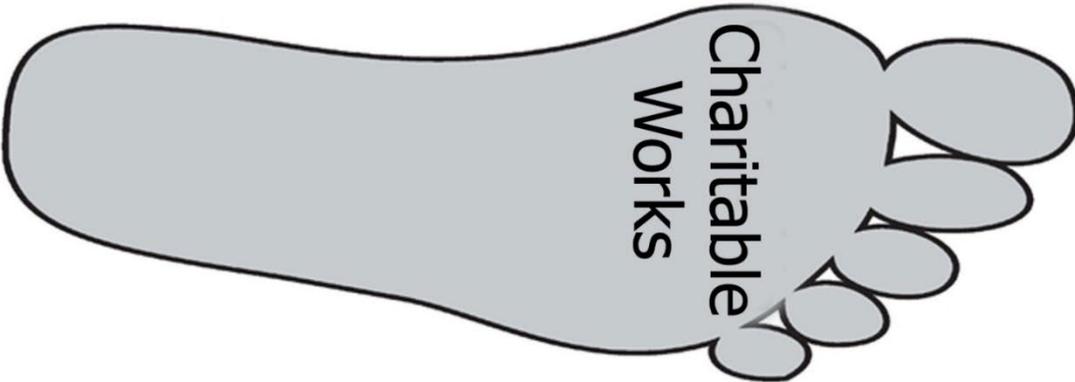
Directions: Split the group into two teams and explain the directions for the game. Then pass out a writing utensil to each participant. Have the adult facilitators hand out one foot to each team member *face down* so that they do not know what issue they have or if it is a social justice or charitable works foot. Have the participants flip over their "foot". Each individual participant must think of a response to the issue on the foot that is consistent with the type of foot he or she has been given. For example, if one participant has a charitable works foot and the issue is hunger, he or she could write: "Work at a soup kitchen to feed people who are without food". Each participant must then hop on one foot until he or she can find a participant from his or her own team who has a response that will complement his or her own foot. Using the first example, the first participant would look for someone on his or her team who wrote a social justice response such as "Advocate for just distribution of food." After a few minutes, the adult facilitator should name one of the issues, such as hunger. The pair from each team must then go up to the front with their responses and read them to their team. If the team and adult facilitator agree that the participants have matched a social justice and charitable works response correctly then they can take one step past the start line and then tape their feet to the ground before returning to stand at the start line with the rest of their group. (Each subsequent pair will be allowed to step on footsteps that have already been taped to the ground by previous team members, and then take one additional step, so that the taped "footprints" are moving along the path and closer to the finish line at every turn.)

If the team disagrees or the participants have incorrectly matched up the two feet, such as two charitable works or two social justice responses, then that participant must stand on one leg (or some other penalty such as hopping around the room) until he or she revises the response so that there is a complementary pair. Repeat this for every pair until each individual participant has presented his or her foot. After every pair has successfully taped its feet onto the path, the entire team must walk the path in pairs (or, for a fun twist, have each pair link arms, or walk with one of each of their legs tied together) to the Kingdom of God by stepping on each foot that has been taped on the path until they reach the Kingdom of God. The first team to the Kingdom of God wins!

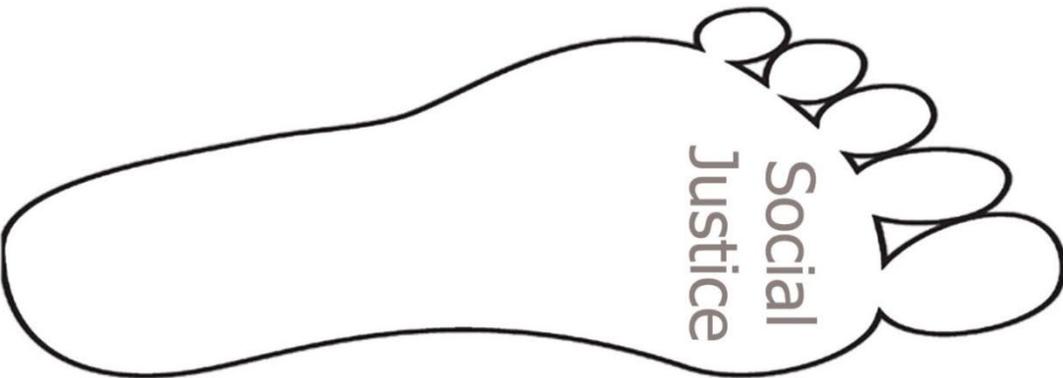
Abortion



Abortion



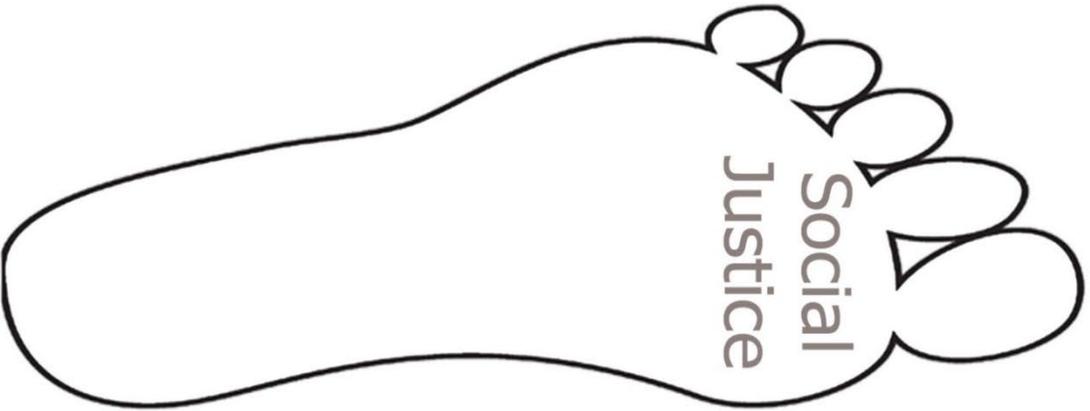
A family can't
afford housing



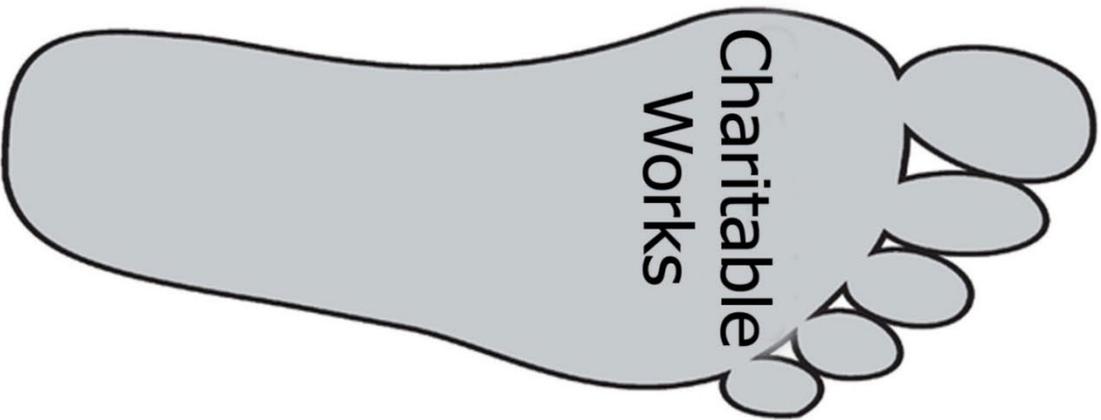
A family can't
afford housing



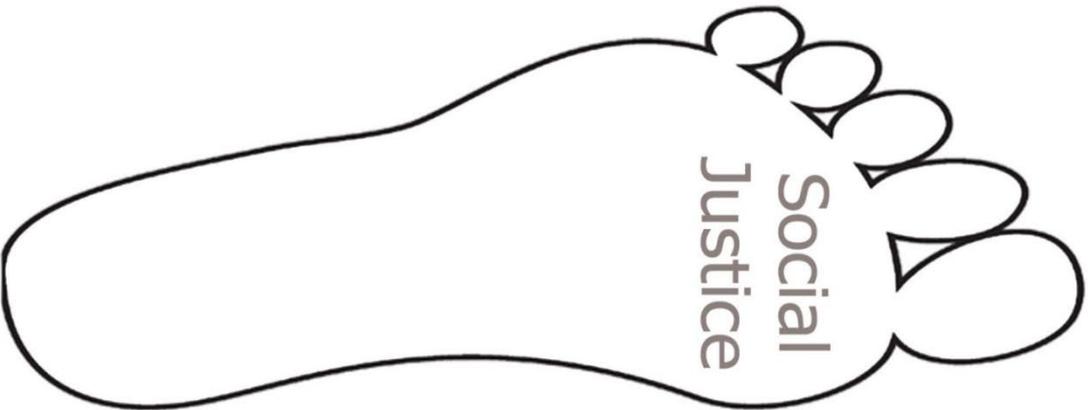
A person is homeless
due to mental illness



A person is homeless
due to mental illness



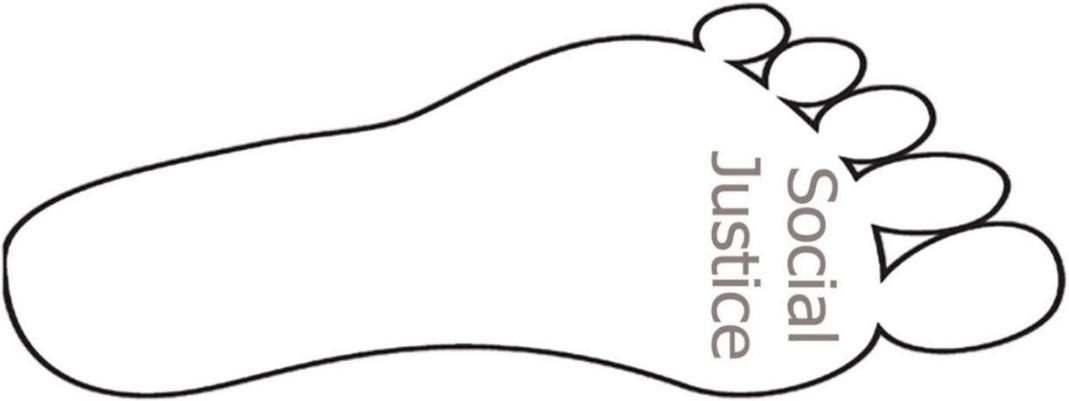
Students in a high
school suffer at
the hands of bullies



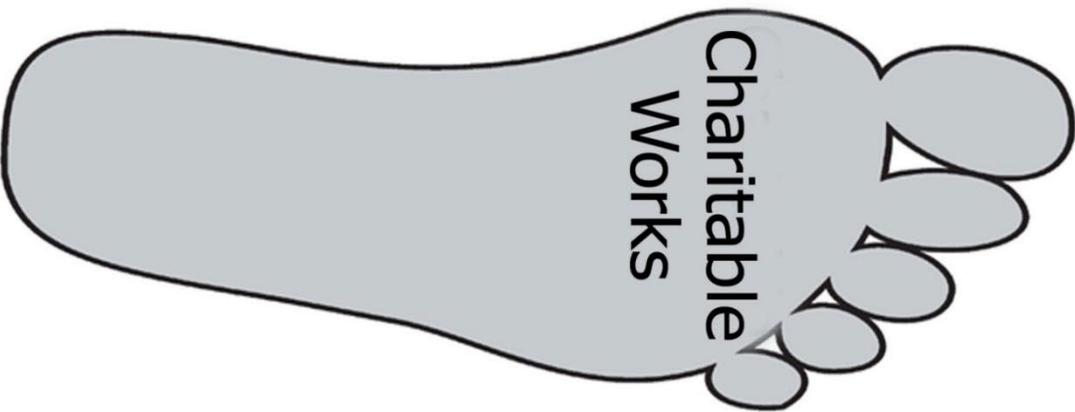
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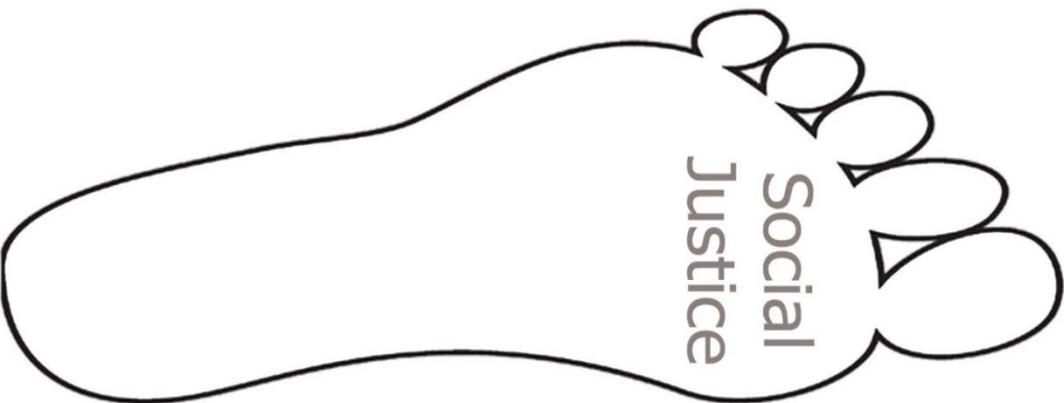
High percentage of students not graduating high school



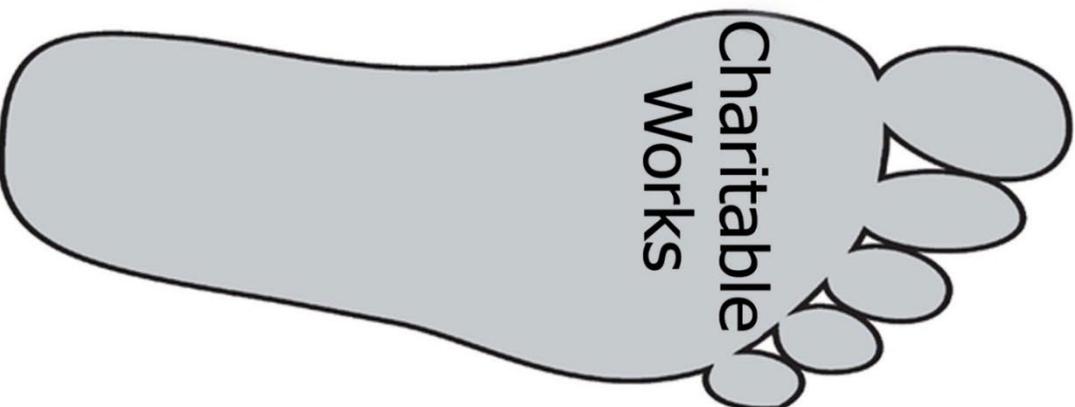
High percentage of students not graduating high school



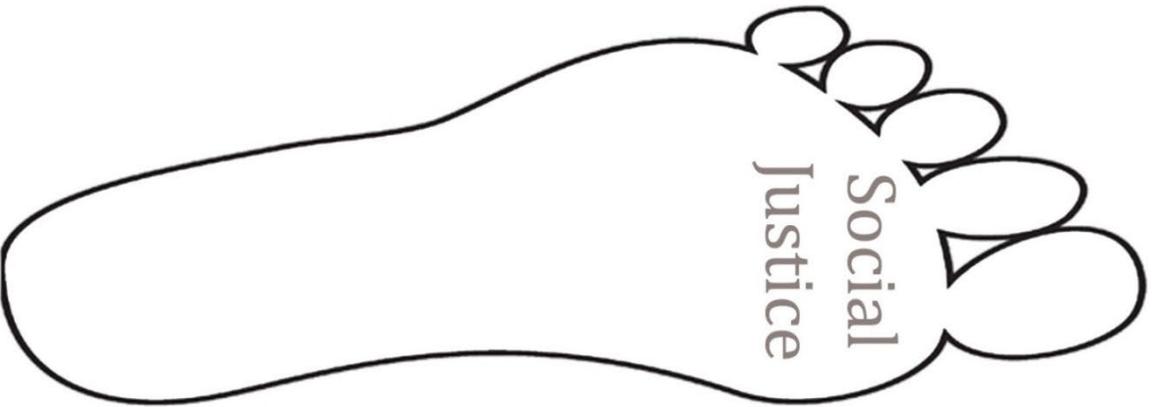
A river nearby is polluted and now unsafe



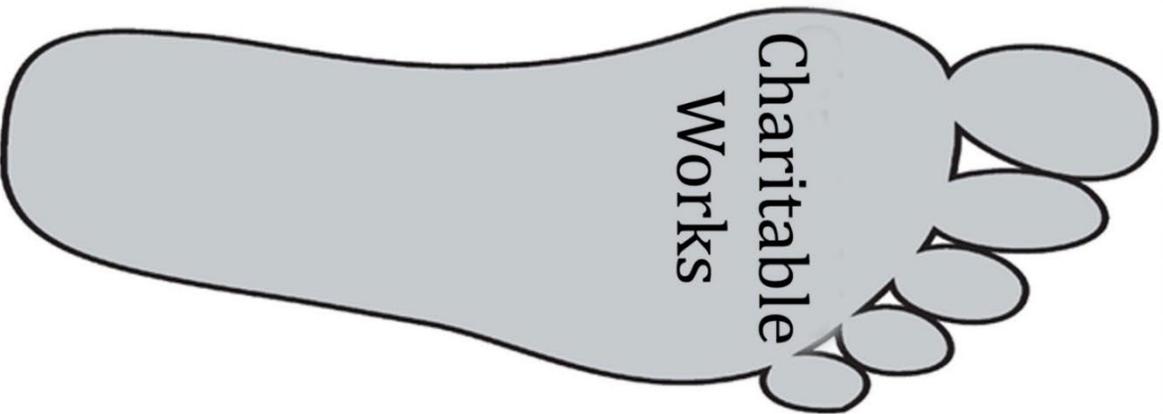
A river nearby is polluted and now unsafe



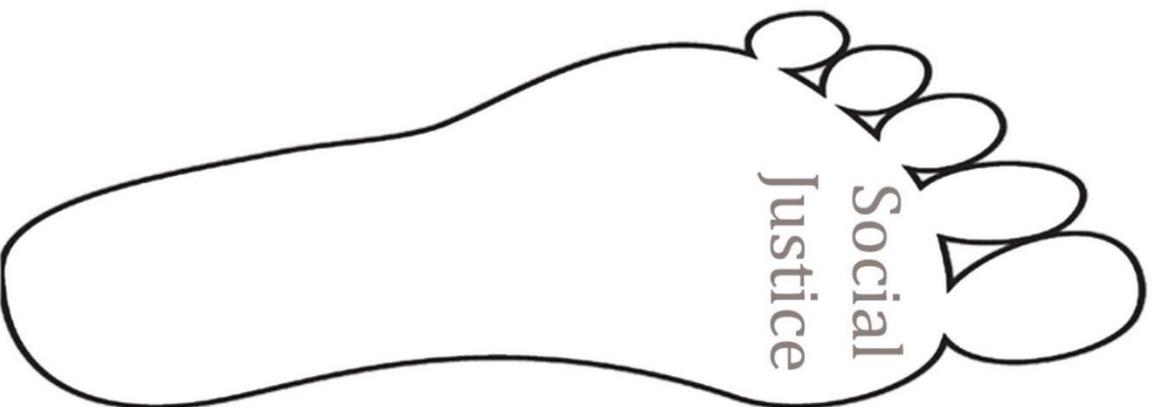
A person needs medical attention but doesn't have health care



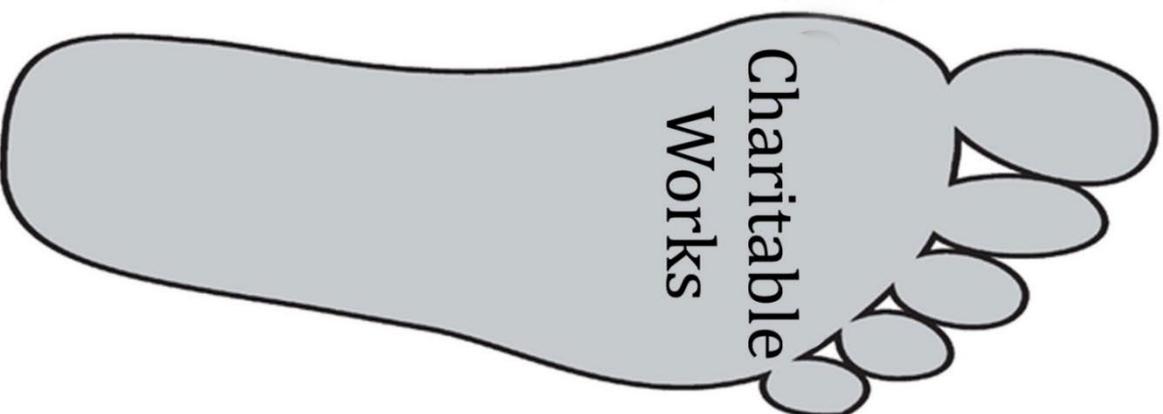
A person needs medical attention but doesn't have health care



A family doesn't have access to healthy food



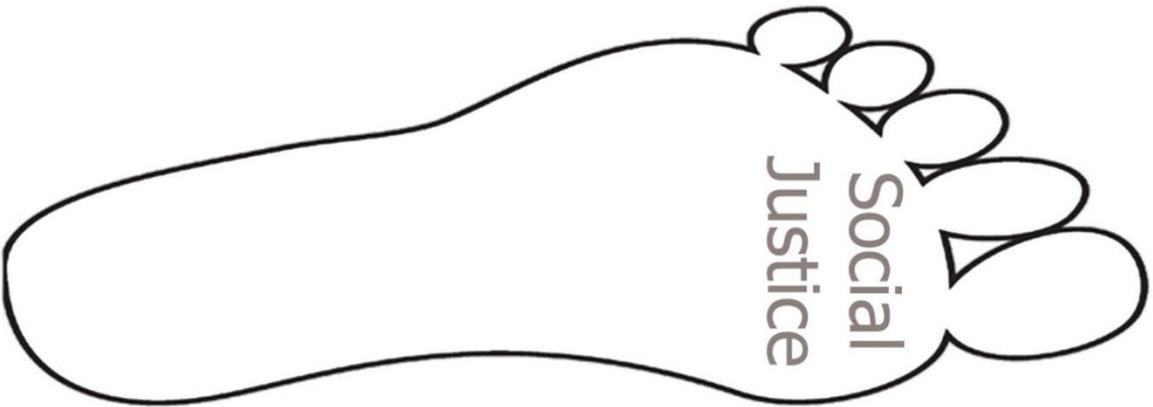
A family doesn't have access to healthy food



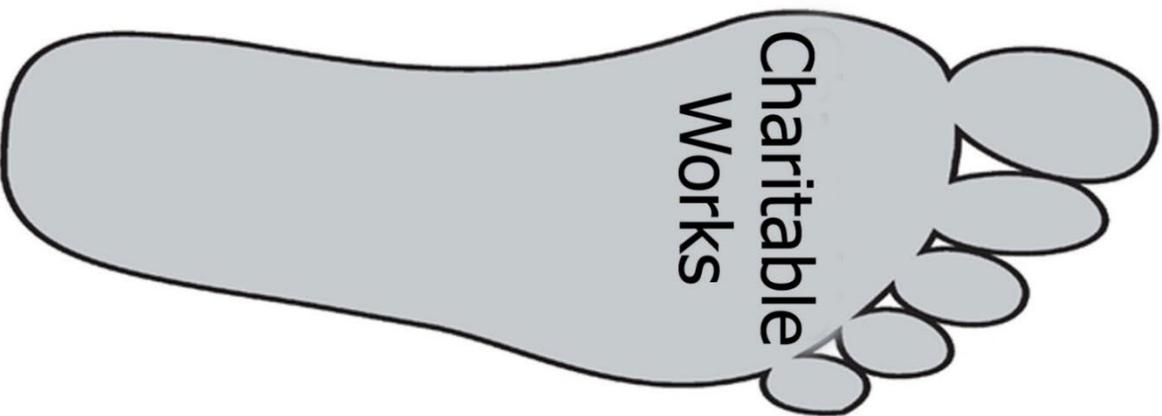


The Two Feet of Love *in Action*

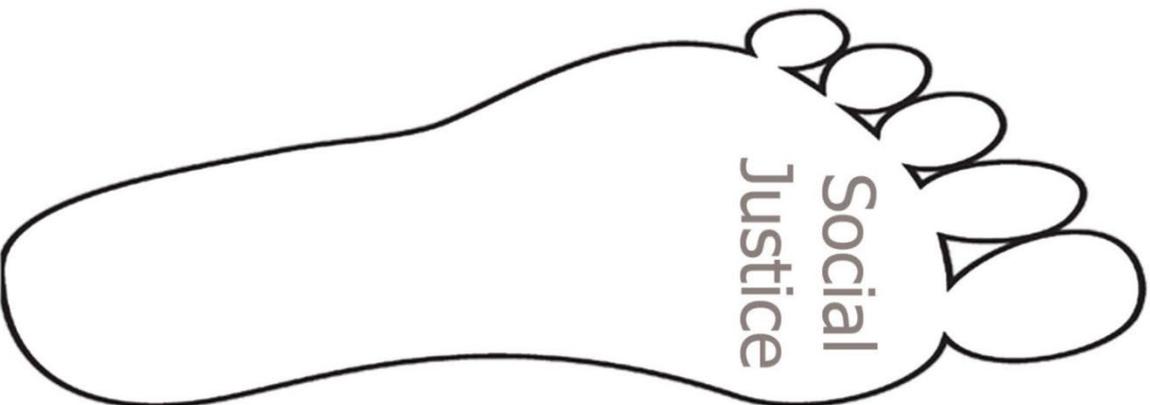
A local company
underpays employees



A local company
underpays employees



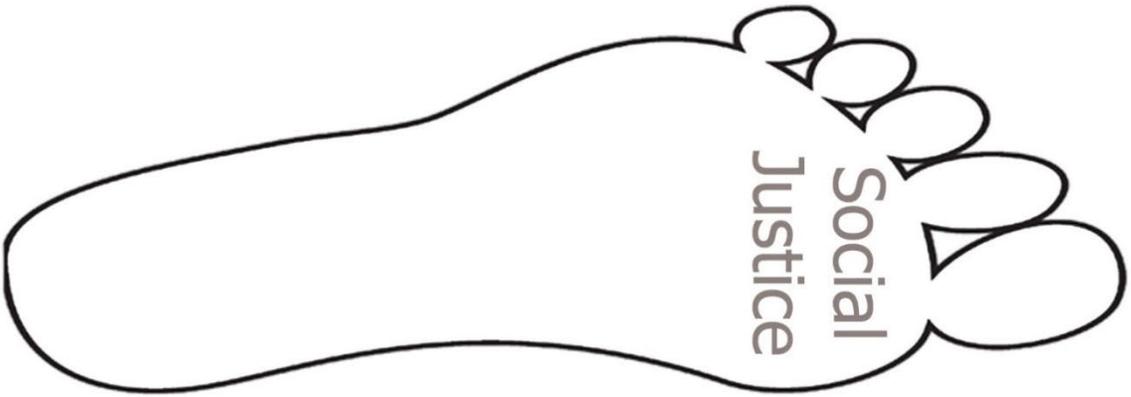
A foreign nation
isn't producing
enough food
to feed its people



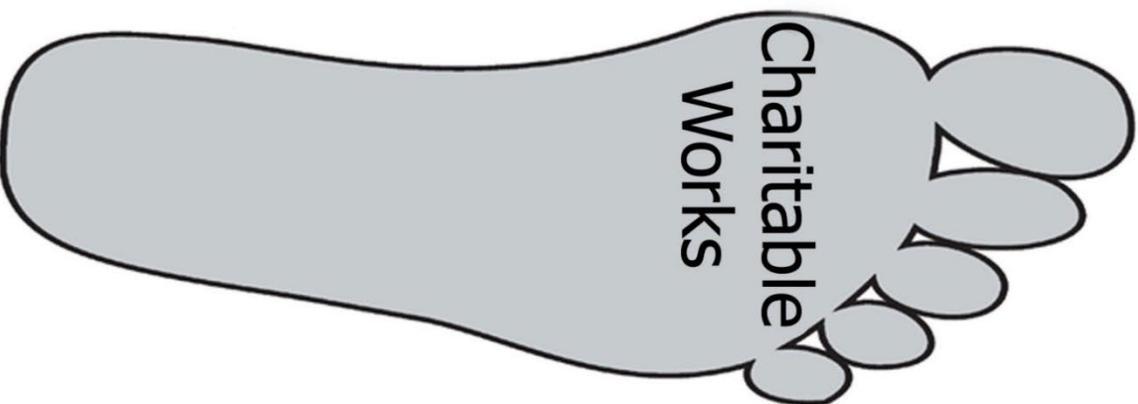
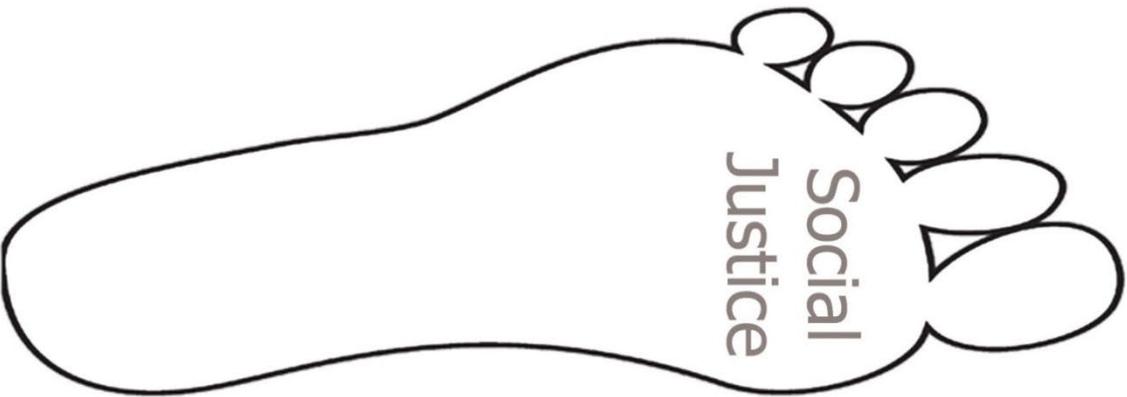
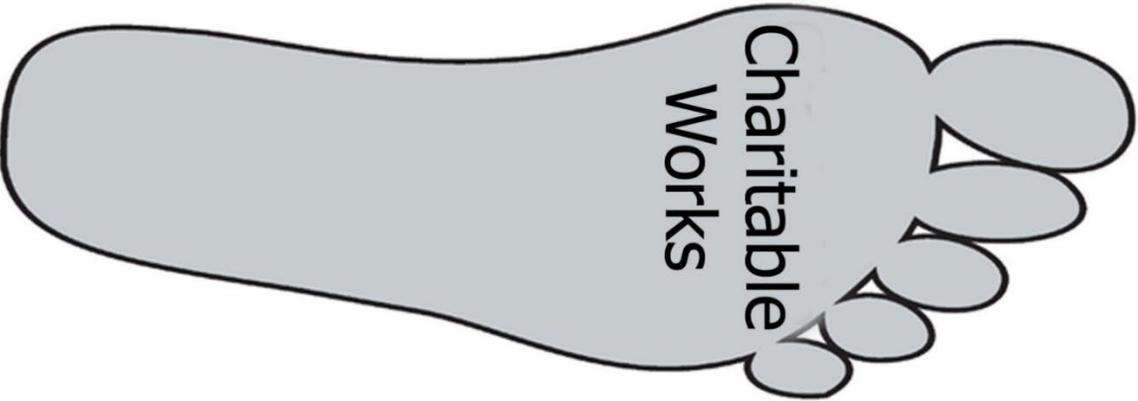
A foreign nation
isn't producing
enough food
to feed its people



A person doesn't
have access
to dental care



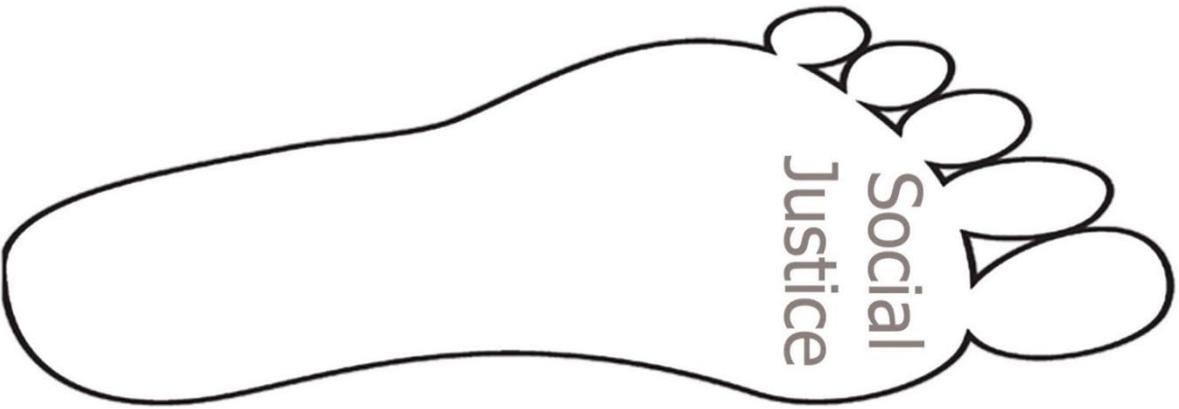
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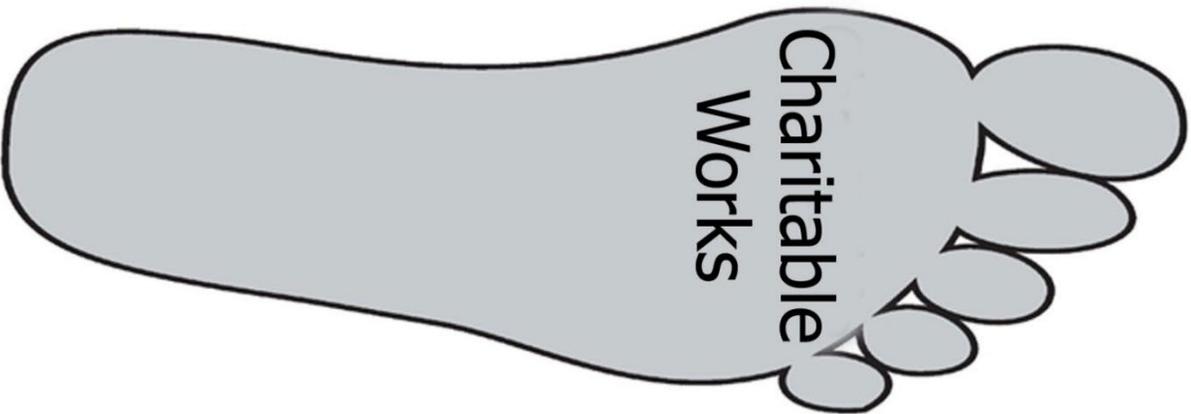


The Two Feet of Love *in Action*

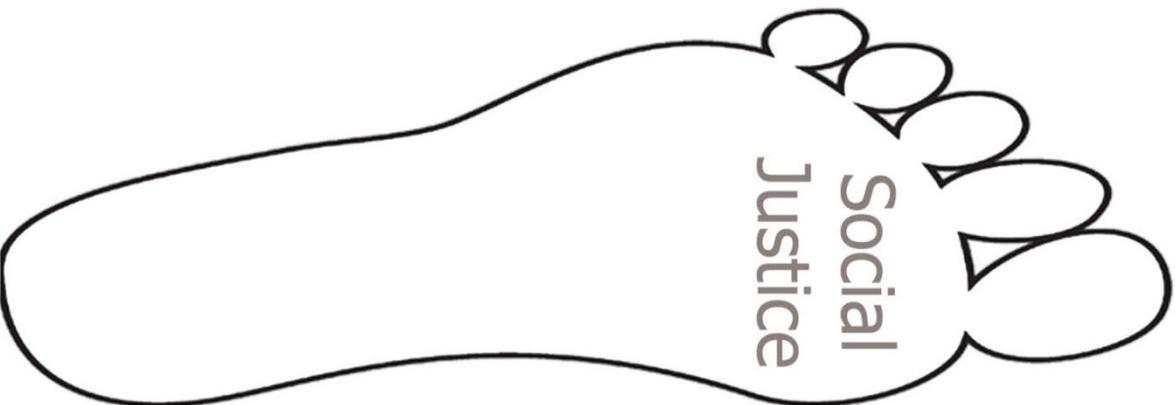
A person doesn't have a way to get to work



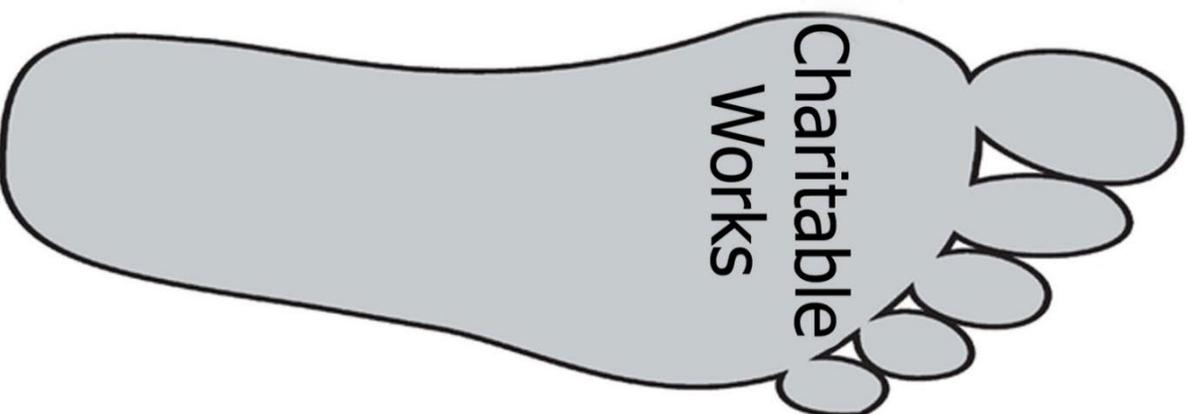
A person doesn't have a way to get to work



An immigrant worker faces discrimination when job searching



An immigrant worker faces discrimination when job searching



Your Name _____

Sending

- With what gifts, talents, and strengths has God gifted you? What are you good at? What are your skills?

- Imagine a cause or issue you care about. It could be something described today, or it could be something you think of yourself. What do you currently do to address that issue?

- Imagine strengthening your weaker foot and doing both Social Justice and Charitable Works to address that cause or issue. What would it look like? How would you use your skills?

- Now write down one thing you can picture yourself doing in the next month to work towards that cause.

Now find another participant with similar interests and pair up so that you can pray for and encourage each other to walk together with two feet down the path of love. Write his or her name down so you won't forget.

Your Friend's Name _____

Quotes for Further Prayer and Reflection

Isaiah 58:5-7

“Is this the manner of fasting I wish, of keeping a day of penance: That a man bow his head like a reed, and lie in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.”

Matthew 25:37-40

“Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'”

Luke 4:18-19

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.” (Luke 4:18-19)

Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1397

“The *Eucharist commits us to the poor*. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren.”

Pope Francis, *Angelus*, July 21, 2013

“A prayer that does not lead you to practical action for your brother—the poor, the sick, those in need of help, a brother in difficulty—is a sterile and incomplete prayer.”

Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est (God is Love)*, no. 14

“A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented.”

St. John Chrysostom, quoted in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2446

“Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs. The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity.”

Pope Francis, Address to the Food and Agricultural Organization, June 20, 2013

"A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness and respect for every human being." (Pope Francis, Address to the Food and Agricultural Organization, 6/20/13)

Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth)*, no. 6

"To love is to give, to offer what is 'mine' to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is 'his', what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting. I cannot 'give' what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice.... Not only is justice not extraneous to charity, not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity: justice is inseparable from charity, and intrinsic to it."

Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est (God is Love)*, no. 29

"The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society. . . is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens of the State, they are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity. So they cannot relinquish their participation 'in the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural areas, which are intended to promote organically and institutionally the common good.'"

Pope Francis, Address to Pastoral Convention, June 17, 2013

"To [those who lack what they need to live a dignified life] are proclaimed glad tidings that God loves them...and comes to visit them through the charitable works that the disciples of Christ do in his name... As we can read in Matthew 25, we shall all be judged on this."

Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est (God is Love)*, no. 22

"The Church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the Sacraments and the Word. . . . Those who are able make offerings in accordance with their means . . . to support orphans, widows, the sick and those who for other reasons find themselves in need, such as prisoners and foreigners."

Websites, Ideas and Resources to Help You

Organizations/Offices (not an exhaustive list!)

Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) (www.usccb.org/cchd) is the domestic anti-poverty program of the U.S. Catholic bishops. CCHD provides funding to community organizations working to address the causes of poverty and also educates Catholics about poverty in the U.S.

USCCB Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development (www.usccb.org/jphd) **engages Catholics in prayer, reflection and action to protect the lives and dignity of the human family at home and around the world.**

Justice for Immigrants (www.justiceforimmigrants.org) is a campaign of the U.S. Catholic bishops that educates about Church teaching on migration, works to create political will for positive, comprehensive immigration reform, and organizes Catholic networks to assist qualified immigrants.

USCCB Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church (www.usccb.org/about/cultural-diversity-in-the-church/) pursues the goal of making diversity and its implications more recognized and understood among church leaders—clergy, religious, and laity.

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities (www.usccb.org/prolife) works to teach respect for all human life from conception to natural death, and organize for its protection through educational materials, campaigns, publications, and public policy.

Catholic Charities (www.catholiccharitiesusa.org) agencies provide social services to assist persons in poverty around the United States. Catholic Charities also provides programs and resources for advocacy, networking, training, leadership, and disaster response.

Catholic Climate Covenant (www.catholicclimatecovenant.org) inspires and equips people and institutions to care for creation and the poor.

Catholic Mobilizing Network (www.catholicmobilizing.org) is a national organization that mobilizes Catholics and all people of goodwill to value life over death, to end the use of the death penalty, to transform the U.S. criminal justice system from punitive to restorative, and to build capacity in U.S. society to engage in restorative practices.

Catholic Relief Services (www.crs.org) is the international aid agency of the Catholic bishops in the United States and assists poor and disadvantaged persons in over 100 countries. CRS also engages Catholics in the U.S. in education and advocacy and has five U.S. regional offices.

National Catholic Partnership on Disability (www.ncpd.org) **works** to ensure meaningful participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of the life of the Church and society.

National Catholic Rural Life Conference (<http://www.ncrlc.com/>) works to apply the teachings of Jesus Christ for the social, economic, and spiritual development of rural America with responsibility for the care of God's creation.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (<http://www.svdpusa.org/>) offers tangible assistance to those in need on a person-to-person basis. It also advocates on behalf of those who are defenseless or voiceless.

Catholic Volunteer Network RESPONSE Directory (www.catholicvolunteernetwork.org) Search this database to identify an organization you can partner with for service opportunities in the United States or internationally lasting anywhere from several weeks to several years.

Learning Resources

Communities of Salt and Light (www.usccb.org/communities-salt-light) is a webpage of the USCCB Dept. of Justice, Peace and Human Development that includes resources to help faith communities be salt and light, success stories, an assessment tool, and more.

PovertyUSA.org and **PobrezaUSA.org** are websites sponsored by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development with facts and figures about poverty in the United States and what can be done to address it. The PovertyTour video is an educational tool to help viewers understand the challenges of trying to live at the Poverty Line.

Poverty Education (www.usccb.org/cchd under "Poverty Education") includes many materials to engage youth in understanding the causes of poverty. Includes links to the **Creating on the Margins Contest** (www.usccb.org/youthcontest and www.usccb.org/concurso-juvenil), **Poverty Awareness Month**, the **Journey to Justice Day**, and **Learning Activities**.

Sacraments and Mission: Living the Gospel, Being Disciples shows how our sacramental practice as Catholics leads us to mission in the world. Available in [Spanish](#).

Two Feet of Love in Action Facilitators Guide for Adults (<http://www.usccb.org/twofeet>) is an adult formation guide on the two distinct, but complementary, ways that we can put love in action: Social Justice and Charitable Works.

Racial Justice Resource Page (www.usccb.org/racism) offers prayer, study, and action resources for building peace, fighting racism, and working for racial justice.

Laudato Si' Care for Creation resources (www.usccb.org/environment) help Catholics reflect on Pope Francis' encyclical on care for our common home. Also included are resources from the U.S. Catholic bishops.

Faithful Citizenship (www.faithfulcitizenship.org and www.ciudadanosfieles.org) provides materials and resources to prepare Catholics to bring their faith to public life and to live as faithful citizens.

Learn How to Visit, Call, or Write to an Elected Official

(www.votervoices.net/USCCB/campaigns) Get tips on how to make a phone call, write a letter, or visit your elected officials, and participate in action alerts so that you can make your voice heard!

CRS Education (<http://education.crs.org/>) is a website with great learning resources about international issues from Catholic Relief Services.

Tips to Adapt Activities for Participants with Disabilities

The following tips and suggestions were provided by the National Catholic Partnership on Disability.

Icebreaker Relay Race Game:

Students with certain disabilities may not be able to perform these tasks by themselves. Ask the student with a disability if he or she prefers to work with a partner. If a partner is preferred, set up teams for everyone to participate in the tasks with a partner. Not only is this a respectful adaptation which does not single out the student, it adds a positive dimension in meeting the Icebreaker games goal of facilitating participant interaction.

Adaptation tips:

1. Student who is blind or uses a wheelchair: Ask him or her how they wish to participate—they may be able to self propel or might like to work with a partner.
2. Student who is blind or has a visual impairment: Identify partners for each team, one blindfolded and one not. Hop together.
3. Student with Intellectual and Developmental Disability: Instead of hopping, have everyone crawl on hands and knees, roll, walk backward, or any physical motor activity that this student is capable of doing in order to level the playing field. Make sure this student gets the band aid task.
4. Deaf student: Provide an interpreter if requested by the student.
5. Student with Aspergers or milder form of Autism: No adaptation may be necessary.
6. Student with poor dexterity: An activity choice that can be offered to all the students could be to sing a short song (i.e., Happy Birthday to You) in lieu of some of the activities which require dexterity.

Opening Prayer:

Adaptation tips:

1. Provide in Braille or large print if needed
2. Invite a Deaf participant to teach some signs for a portion of the prayer
3. Provide a sign language interpreter if requested by the student

Walking the Path of Love:

Adaptation tips:

1. Student(s) with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Pair up members of each team and give them the social justice and charitable feet for an issue. The pair works together.
2. Wheel chair user: No adaptation may be necessary

3. Student who is blind or has a visual impairment: Pair up members of each team and give them the social justice and charitable feet for an issue. The pair works together.
4. Student with Aspergers or milder form of Autism: no adaptation may be necessary.
5. Deaf student: Provide an interpreter if requested by the student.

The tips provided above are for adapting the games for students with varying disabilities. There may be some students with disabilities so significant that it would be difficult for them to participate without adaptations to the agenda and environment. For example, students on the severe end of the autism spectrum would likely find these activities too chaotic and involving too much sensory stimulation.

In these circumstances, the student may require a modified setting and goals, which can be developed with the child's catechist and/or parent. A parallel activity with a catechist or small group can be set up. Based on their needs, when possible and appropriate, the student may be invited to join the larger group, perhaps for quieter portions of the session (prayer, etc).

“Evangelization and catechesis for individuals with disabilities must be geared in content and method to their particular situation. Specialized catechists should help them interpret the meaning of their lives and should give witness to Christ's presence in the local community in ways they can understand and appreciate. We hasten to add, however, that great care should be taken to avoid further isolation of people through these programs, which as far as possible, should be integrated with the normal catechetical activities of the parish.”

- Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops
on People with Disabilities (no. 25)