

Sixth Grade: Lesson 18

Living Justly: Your Responsibility as a Disciple of Christ

Lesson Objective:

Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith. Its roots are in the Old Testament prophets who announced God's special love for the poor and called God's people to a covenant of love and justice. It is a teaching founded on the life and words of Jesus Christ. Catholic social teaching is built on a commitment to the poor and arises from our personal love of Christ and commitment to live as His disciples.

Learning Outcomes: Students will ...

- Review the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching and how they are carried out in our world. (USCCB: www.usccb.org, Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching).
- Tell about the lives of modern-day witnesses and their service to society.
- Reflect on living as a disciple of Jesus Christ in today's world and the call we have to evangelize (Rom 1:18-32; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Gal 5:13-26).
- Exhibit the virtue of reverence for God, his creation, and other people by treating them with respect and honor, for God is all good and his creation is a good gift.
- Help design, organize, and participate in a student-directed service project.

Materials Needed:

- Prayer space items, Bibles, pencils, sticky notes,
- Copies: St. Report activity, 2 Feet of Service and Justice Activity, Kindness Kit (Empathy and Compassion Activities – you will need to choose the activities or activity you would like to do ahead of time, since supplies are needed).

As Students Enter Class:

- Have the following prompt on the board: What do you remember about CST? (Catholic Social Teaching). This was introduced to students in 5th Grade.
- Students can write directly on board or provide sticky notes for them to use. If students do not remember or have no idea what CST is, then encourage them to think about the topic and make a prediction as to its meaning.

Beginning of Class:

- Gather around your prayer space and pray a traditional Catholic prayer of your choice.
- Provide time to review students' responses to the CST question and have a discussion.

Note to Catechists: These is a longer lesson with many videos and activities. Depending on your class time and abilities of your students, you may need to select the videos and activities you would like to do ahead of time, so that you know which ones to focus on. It is understandable that you may not be able to complete every activity. Thank you for all you do for God's children.

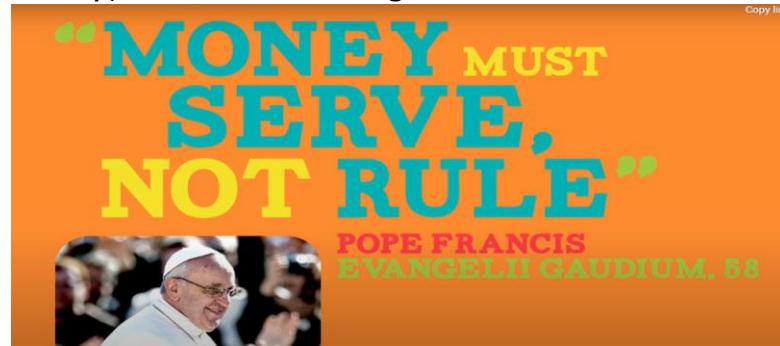
Lesson Order	Implementation Ideas
Lesson 18 Video	<p>This video is .47 in length.</p> <p>Highlights: We have been discussing how we can best live our faith and follow God's commands. Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is a central and essential element of our faith. Its roots are in the Old Testament prophets, who announced God's special love for the poor and called God's people to a covenant of love and justice.</p> <p>CST is founded on the life and words of Jesus. It is built on a commitment to the poor and arises from our personal love of Christ.</p> <p>Today you will be introduced to the 7 themes of CST and invited to think about what this means for you.</p>
<p>Catholic Social Teaching</p> <p>Helpful handout about CST:</p> <p>USCCB Catholic Social Teaching</p>	<p>SOCIAL – means issues that affect society, such as poverty, hunger, immigration, worker's rights, trade, and the environment.</p> <p>This video is 2:57 in length and is not narrated. Students will have to read quickly as the words appear on the screen. You can always stop the video to catch up and/or discuss.</p> <p>Catholic Social teachings are writings from Popes and other Catholic leaders, often called Encyclicals.</p>

=LONG 'LETTERS' WRITTEN BY POPES TO THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

CST is not boring, rather it is radical because if everyone put these words into action, it would transform the world in a very positive way.

CST reads the signs of the times considering scripture. For example, Jesus said: Give them something to eat. (Matt. 14:16). In the 1960's, Pope Paul sees poverty on his travels. His encyclical quoted St. Ambrose: The Earth belongs to everyone, not to the rich.

Today, CST still challenges the world.



The video looks at a few social issues in our world today.

OPTION FOR THE POOR

WE SHOULD 'OPT'
(CHOOSE) TO PUT THE
POOREST AND MOST
VULNERABLE PEOPLE
FIRST

THIS TURNS SOCIETY
ON ITS HEAD

POOR AND
VULNERABLE
PEOPLE

RICH AND
POWERFUL
PEOPLE

COMMON GOOD

COMMON MEANS
EVERYONE'S
INCLUDED

STOP AND DISCUSS: What are your thoughts about Catholic Social Teaching? What is good about it? Is there anything wrong or bad about it?

Life and Dignity Video

This very powerful video is 3:28 in length. It is well done and should provoke students into some deeper thinking. There are many meaningful quotes in this video. I have done my best to highlight the ones that stood out, in hopes of helping you facilitate conversation.

Highlights: Children resemble their parents so as children of God, we bear the likeness of God. Therefore, **every human being has a purpose and mission and is part of God's plan.**

	<p>At the root of our dignity is our right to life and this extends from conception until natural death. When we see people trying to justify treating people a certain way because they are so small, or not born yet, skin another color, so disabled, whenever we see people being spoken of like objects, then we know the principal of radical equality of every human person is being violated.</p> <p>When people are being spoken of as objects, then we know the radical equality of every person is being violated.</p> <p>Every human being is worthy of reverence and protection, especially the weakest. Our dignity also includes the freedom to become everything God intended us to be.</p> <p>CST urges us to operate at individual and global levels. How will you – how can you make a difference in 1:1 and in small group levels in realizing those parts of human dignity that are in short supply?</p> <p>It comes back to the question: What will fulfill life for every human as God as intended?</p> <p>STOP AND DISCUS: Using the statements in bold and questions, encourage students to share their thoughts.</p>
Care of God's Creation	<p>This video is 3:05 in length.</p> <p>Highlights: This video has beautiful pictures that will aid students with understanding the concepts presented. It is well done and students should relate well to it.</p> <p>The video opens with an analogy: Imagine I spent a great deal of time making a gift for you. I created</p>

	<p>the gift, wrapped it carefully and was happy to give it to you. And you threw it away. That's essentially the idea behind caring for creation. God has given us a beautiful gift and it is up to us to care for the Earth and to respect it.</p> <p>Care for the environment = care for the bounty of the Lord. Given to every one of us to enjoy and sustain our needs, we must care for our environment.</p> <p>The environment is the support system for human life. Food, air, water, are all items needed to sustain life. Creation is a gift from God and we are asked to keep and till the natural world.</p> <p>When creation suffers, the poorest people are hurt the most. The video then gives facts and more information about this topic.</p> <p>STOP AND DISCUSS: Please share your thoughts about this topic and video. How can you, a 6th grader, respect the environment?</p>
Option for the Poor and Vulnerable	<p>This video is 4:26 in length.</p> <p>Highlights: Before we understand Jesus's preferential option for the poor, we have to understand God's preferential option for the poor. God incarnates Himself as man (Jesus) among a poor family in a poor village. Jesus preaches among the poor and about the poor. This is who God is. God has a special love for people who are in need and He comes to their rescue.</p> <p>Matthew 25: Christ tells us: Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do unto me. This is a beautiful reminder for us that the people we serve, who are in poverty and in need are the face of Christ and because of that, they have so much to teach us.</p>

	<p>We have to remember that when we encounter the poor, we have to do so as a poor person ourselves, not with superiority or arrogance.</p> <p>Who are the poor in our society? They are people who are marginalized, the most vulnerable, or forgotten. This could be due to a series of unfortunate events in a person's life, mental illness, a poor family life, etc...</p> <p>Even though we are Americans, we have to remember to help all people who suffer, even those from other countries. Therefore, we are called to look at immediate needs of the poor, and systemic problems, meaning what patterns do we see amongst the poor that we can help. What are the larger issues that causes this poverty and how can we address them.</p> <p>If students are becoming inattentive, you can stop the video at this point (2:33). If they are interested, please finish the video.</p> <p>QUESTION: Use the sentences in bold as discussion prompts.</p>
Call to the Family, Community, and Participation	<p>This video is 3:44 in length.</p> <p>Highlights: God created us to be sacred and to workshop Him, but also to be social beings, to love and to live in communities and care for one another.</p> <p>The family is really the first school of communication. It is the first place we learn about loving and giving of ourselves so we can go out into a community and serve other people. The family role is central to the life of society.</p> <p>If a marriage and/or family is broken, if our relationships that are at the most basic level are broken, then society cannot fully function as it should at the service, love, and compassion for others.</p>

	<p>God is the core of our universe and therefore is a relationship. So, it makes perfect sense that we are made to live in relationships.</p> <p>As parishes, we are called to be active in our communities, not passive by-standers.</p> <p>The word subsidiarity means to help. It allows the different levels of society to do the job for which they were made. We need to be involved with different levels, responding to different needs. We are all neighbors and should be helping one another.</p> <p>REFLECTION: Share your thoughts as to what you heard about family being very important in our development of relationships.</p>
St. Theresa's Prayer in Song	<p>This prayer in song touches on ways we are called to serve. It is 2:38 in length.</p> <p>Encourage students to think how about the ways the words in this prayer relate to what we learned in today's videos. Then provide time at the end for students to share their ideas.</p>
A Visit to a Leprosy Colony	<p>This video is 3:44 in length.</p> <p>Narrated by the young woman who went to this Leprosy Colony, this video takes our students outside of the US and into current day India. It is powerful in its message.</p> <p>However, if you have run out of time, you can skip this video.</p>
Saint Report: A Saint Who Modeled Social Justice	<p>To help facilitate this activity, the link below has information about St. Katharine Drexel.</p> <p>St. Katharine Drexel</p> <p>If your class time isn't long enough for students to complete this activity, then you can shorten it by giving each student a copy of the handout to read.</p>

	Then, students can share their thoughts about how St. Katharine Drexel was a model for social justice.
2 Feet of Service or Justice	This activity encourages students to think about current social justice issues and find ways in which they can help.
Kindness Kit (Poverty and Empathy) Activities	Look over the activities and decide which one or ones you would like to do.

WHO IS SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL?



Did you know that Saint Katharine Drexel was a social justice warrior?! This makes this late 1800s saint so relevant for us to learn about now. Here are some quick facts about this fascinating female saint.

- Second American born saint
- Born in Philadelphia on November 26, 1858, to a wealthy banker
- Katharine's mother died a few weeks after she was born
- She, along with her two other sisters, grew up wealthy and was able to have the best education and travel.
- During her travels, she was exposed to the social injustice of Native Americans and black people, which eventually lead to her taking her first vows as a religious and dedicating herself to serve the American and Native American communities in February 1891.
- Katharine used her hefty inheritance to build many schools and donated to several different organizations.
- She established the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored. Now just called [Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament](#).

- Katharine established 145 missions, 50 schools for African Americans, and 12 schools for Native Americans. One school is the only historically black Catholic college, Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana.
- She faced many challenges from those who were against her visions of racial justice and equality and even had one of her schools burned down.

Object Lesson #1: Privilege Basketball Game

In this activity, you will use simple everyday objects at home to demonstrate the concept of privilege, fairness and the cycle of poverty in a concrete way that makes it easier for young minds to process.

- ***Set-up:***

- Give each child and adult in your family several sheets of scrap paper or junk mail.
- Place an empty recycling bin near the front of the room.
- Set up chairs (an equal number to the number of kids and adults participating in the activity) in the room at various distances from the bin, maybe even placing one directly behind another so the view of the wastebasket is blocked.
- Assign seats to the children and adults in your family. Make sure that the children are placed in seats further away from the bin to emphasize the point of this activity.

- ***Activity:***

- After your family members are in their assigned seats, tell them that you are going to play a game.
- First, have everyone crumple up a piece of paper and then tell them, “Everyone has the ability to win more points and become wealthier. All you have to do is make a basket with your paper. If you miss you can try again. The more baskets you make, the more points you get and the wealthier you become.”
- Immediately you should start to hear comments from the kids about “fairness.” It’s not as fair for the kids sitting farther away from the wastebasket. It’s impossible to win if they can’t be as close as others.

- ***Discussion:***

- After you've played the game for a couple of rounds use the following as a guide to teach them about privilege and the cycle of poverty. Here are some suggestions:
 - The closer you were to the recycling bin, the better your chances of making a basket. This is what privilege looks like. The more advantages you have from the beginning of your life (parents with stable jobs, enough money to buy food and own a home, educated parents, etc.), the easier it is for you to keep getting ahead (to keep making the baskets).
 - Did you notice that you had an advantage over everyone else? Did you notice that the people in the back started with a hardship that you didn't?
 - The cycle of poverty looks a lot like this situation. If you start life without the things you need, it is often very very difficult to break out of that position in life without some outside help. In our case it would be someone helping the child move their seat forward. In the real world, people sometimes need help to get an education, get a new job, find stable housing, etc. Without that help people can sometimes remain poor all of their lives.



MAIN TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS OBJECT LESSON:

- Our job is to be aware of our privilege. And use this privilege to do our best to achieve great things, while at the same time advocating for, supporting, and/or helping the people in the “chairs” behind us. In other words, help those less fortunate when you see that their situation will be difficult for them to break out of.

