

Archdiocese of Los Angeles Respect Life Curriculum
Office of Life, Peace and Justice

Teacher Resources Day Four	
Title/Theme	How Does This Affect Me? An Exploration of Poverty
Grade/Subject	6 th – 8 th , 9 th – 12 th Mathematics
Length of Unit/Timeframe	One day with optional follow-up service-learning activities
Overview	Day 4 of a 5 day Respect Life Curriculum for Respect Life Week Sept. 30-Oct. 4, 2013
Day 4: Mathematics	Teachers and students are invited to explore the ideas of poverty, charity v. justice, and authentic development. See below and student handout for recommendations.
Essential Questions:	
What is meant by preferential option for the poor?	
What is our personal and cultural responsibility toward the poor and poverty?	
How does our definition of who constitutes “the poor” shape our ideas for solutions to poverty?	
Resources	
<p>Teacher background</p> <p>Pope Francis: “Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons. Poverty today is a cry. We all have to think if we can become a little poorer, all of us have to do this. How can I become a little poorer in order to be more like Jesus, who was the poor Teacher? ...</p> <p>“First of all I want to tell you something, tell all you young persons: don't let yourselves be robbed of hope. Please, don't let it be stolen from you. The worldly spirit, wealth, the spirit of vanity, arrogance, and pride ... all these things steal hope. Where do I find hope? In the poor Jesus, Jesus who made himself poor for us. And you spoke of poverty. Poverty calls us to sow hope. This seems a bit difficult to understand. I remember Fr. Arrupe [Father General of the Jesuits from 1965-1983] wrote a letter to the Society's centers for social research.</p> <p>“Look, you can't speak of poverty without having experience with the poor. You can't speak of poverty in the abstract: that doesn't exist. Poverty is the flesh of the poor Jesus, in that child who is hungry, in the one who is sick, in those unjust social structures. Go forward; look there upon the flesh of Jesus. But don't let well being rob you of hope, that spirit of well being that, in the end, leads you to becoming a nothing in life. Young persons should bet on their high ideals, that's my advice. But where do I find hope? In the flesh of</p>	

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Jesus who suffers and in true poverty. There is a connection between the two.”

Caritas in Veritate:

Authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension. Without the perspective of eternal life, human progress in this world is denied breathing-space. Enclosed within history, it runs the risk of being reduced to the mere accumulation of wealth; humanity thus loses the courage to be at the service of higher goods, at the service of the great and disinterested initiatives called forth by universal charity.

Integral human development presupposes the responsible freedom of the individual and of peoples. Besides requiring freedom, integral human development as a vocation also demands respect for its truth. The truth of development consists in its completeness: if it does not involve the whole man and every man, it is not true development.

An articulated vision of development indicates the goal of rescuing peoples, first and foremost, from hunger, deprivation, endemic diseases and illiteracy. From the economic point of view, this meant their active participation, on equal terms, in the international economic process; from the social point of view, it meant their evolution into educated societies marked by solidarity; from the political point of view, it meant the consolidation of democratic regimes capable of ensuring freedom and peace.

The elimination of world hunger has also, in the global era, become a requirement for safeguarding the peace and stability of the planet. Hunger is not so much dependent on lack of material things as on shortage of social resources, the most important of which are institutional. What is missing, in other words, is a network of economic institutions capable of guaranteeing regular access to sufficient food and water for nutritional needs, and also capable of addressing the primary needs and necessities ensuing from genuine food crises, whether due to natural causes or political irresponsibility, nationally and internationally. The problem of food insecurity needs to be addressed within a long-term perspective, eliminating the structural causes that give rise to it and promoting the agricultural development of poorer countries.

Not only does the situation of poverty still provoke high rates of infant mortality in many regions, but some parts of the world still experience practices of demographic control, on the part of governments that often promote contraception and even go so far as to impose abortion. In economically developed countries, legislation contrary to life is very widespread, and it has already shaped moral attitudes and praxis, contributing to the spread of an anti-birth mentality; frequent attempts are made to export this mentality to other States as if it were a form of cultural progress.

Some non-governmental Organizations work actively to spread abortion, at times promoting the practice of sterilization in poor countries, in some cases not even informing the women concerned. Moreover, there is reason to suspect that development aid is sometimes linked to specific health-care policies, which *de facto* involve the imposition of strong birth control measures. Further grounds for concern are laws permitting euthanasia as well as pressure from lobby groups, nationally and internationally, in favor of its juridical recognition.

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Openness to life is at the centre of true development. When a society moves towards the denial or suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man's true good. If personal and social sensitivity towards the acceptance of a new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away. The acceptance of life strengthens moral fiber and makes people capable of mutual help. By cultivating openness to life, wealthy peoples can better understand the needs of poor ones, they can avoid employing huge economic and intellectual resources to satisfy the selfish desires of their own citizens, and instead, they can promote virtuous action within the perspective of production that is morally sound and marked by solidarity, respecting the fundamental right to life of every people and every individual.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

IV. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

2426 The development of economic activity and growth in production are meant to provide for the needs of human beings. Economic life is not meant solely to multiply goods produced and increase profit or power; it is ordered first of all to the service of persons, of the whole man, and of the entire human community. Economic activity, conducted according to its own proper methods, is to be exercised within the limits of the moral order, in keeping with social justice so as to correspond to God's plan for man.²⁰⁹

2427 *Human work* proceeds directly from persons created in the image of God and called to prolong the work of creation by subduing the earth, both with and for one another.²¹⁰ Hence work is a duty: "If any one will not work, let him not eat."²¹¹ Work honors the Creator's gifts and the talents received from him. It can also be redemptive. By enduring the hardship of work²¹² in union with Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth and the one crucified on Calvary, man collaborates in a certain fashion with the Son of God in his redemptive work. He shows himself to be a disciple of Christ by carrying the cross, daily, in the work he is called to accomplish.²¹³ Work can be a means of sanctification and a way of animating earthly realities with the Spirit of Christ.

2428 In work, the person exercises and fulfills in part the potential inscribed in his nature. The primordial value of labor stems from man himself, its author and its beneficiary. Work is for man, not man for work.²¹⁴

Everyone should be able to draw from work the means of providing for his life and that of his family, and of serving the human community.

2429 Everyone has the *right of economic initiative*; everyone should make legitimate use of his talents to contribute to the abundance that will benefit all and to harvest the just fruits of his labor. He should seek to observe regulations issued by legitimate authority for the sake of the common good.²¹⁵

2430 *Economic life* brings into play different interests, often opposed to one another. This explains why the conflicts that characterize it arise.²¹⁶ Efforts should be made to reduce these conflicts by negotiation that respects the rights and duties of each social partner: those responsible for business enterprises, representatives of wage-earners (for example, trade unions), and public authorities when appropriate.

2431 *The responsibility of the state.* "Economic activity, especially the activity of a market economy, cannot

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be conducted in an institutional, juridical, or political vacuum. On the contrary, it presupposes sure guarantees of individual freedom and private property, as well as a stable currency and efficient public services. Hence the principal task of the state is to guarantee this security, so that those who work and produce can enjoy the fruits of their labors and thus feel encouraged to work efficiently and honestly. . . . Another task of the state is that of overseeing and directing the exercise of human rights in the economic sector. However, primary responsibility in this area belongs not to the state but to individuals and to the various groups and associations which make up society."²¹⁷

2432 Those *responsible for business enterprises* are responsible to society for the economic and ecological effects of their operations.²¹⁸ They have an obligation to consider the good of persons and not only the increase of profits. Profits are necessary, however. They make possible the investments that ensure the future of a business and they guarantee employment.

2433 *Access to employment* and to professions must be open to all without unjust discrimination: men and women, healthy and disabled, natives and immigrants.²¹⁹ For its part society should, according to circumstances, help citizens find work and employment.²²⁰

2434 A *just wage* is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice.²²¹ In determining fair pay both the needs and the contributions of each person must be taken into account. "Remuneration for work should guarantee man the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and his family on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level, taking into account the role and the productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good."²²² Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages.

Quick Write Overview for teachers

http://nrhs.nred.org/www/nred_nrhs/site/hosting/Literacy%20Website/Literacy%20Strategy%20Templates/Quick_Write_description.pdf

Facebook mock-ups <http://techtoolsforschools.blogspot.com/2010/01/facebook-project-template.html>

Facebook template <http://www.teachonezone.com/teaching-with-technology/facebook-templatefor-education/>

Links

On-line version of the Catechism of the Catholic Church <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/epub/index.cfm>

Benedict XVI *Caritas in Veritate*

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html

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United States Conference of Catholic Bishops *“Within the community of believers there can never be room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life.”*

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/poverty/index.cfm><https://educationforjustice.org/free-files/HumanDignity09.pdf>

Poverty USA teaching resources

<http://www.povertyusa.org/poverty-resources/>

Dig Deep Water: <http://digdeepwater.org>

Excellent follow-up project for classroom use. <http://4liters.org> Students pledge to live on only 4 liters of water each day for a week—for drinking, cooking, washing, everything! They blog about their experiences, helping to cement their understanding of people living without reliable access to clean water. They learn what changes a community undergoes when water all of a sudden becomes available. Entire lesson plans, curriculum package, everything you need ready to go.