

LESSON
PLAN



Photo by Philip Laubner/CRS

LENGTH 1 hour – 1.5 hours

OBJECTIVES Through this activity participants will:

- ❖ Gain a greater understanding about the role of letter-writing campaigns in the overall advocacy mission.
- ❖ Work through provided guidelines to write letters to their respective senators and/or representatives about a specific issue.

SUMMARY This lesson is designed to enable participants to act on their advocacy education from *What Is Advocacy?* by researching, discussing, drafting and sending letters addressing specific issues to their senators and/or to their representatives.

- MATERIALS**
- Pens, paper, envelopes and stamps for writing and mailing letters
 - *Tips for Advocacy: Letter Writing* handout
 - Optional reference: *Advocacy Process* handout
 - Contact information for legislators to whom the letters are being written (Option: Use the *Catholics Confront Global Poverty* [zip code lookup resource](#) to identify your senators and representatives, but also consider engaging with state and local elected officials whose contact information should be easily found online.)

PREPARATION Determine ahead of time how the issues of focus are chosen and assigned. Choose a selection (number dependent upon size of class) of relevant issues either from the community or from the [Catholics Confront Global Poverty \(CCGP\) website](#), or have participants brainstorm ideas for relevant issues from the community or from independent experiences or research. Issues can then be assigned to groups, or participants can select which issues on which they would like to focus.

Option: If you choose to select the issues ahead of time, you may want to provide some relevant information to participants when assigning issues in order to streamline the research process. Visit the CCGP website and click on Action Center to find relevant topics and general contextual and applicable legislative information.

PROCESS Advocacy Process Review (optional)

Refer back to the “Advocacy Process” handout (used in the “How Does Advocacy Work?” lesson plan) to emphasize the role that letter-writing campaigns play in the advocacy process.

Picking a Group and an Issue

Break class into groups for addressing each topic; adjust the number of issues based on size of the group (the class should be divided into groups of 4-6 people with each group focusing on a different issue). Assign or identify issues for focus of letter-writing campaign.

Research

Instruct participants to research context and any political action currently addressing their chosen issue. (You may want to provide applicable background information to streamline the research portion of the activity.)

Tips for Advocacy Letter-Writing

Before writing letters, review the “*Tips for Advocacy: Letter Writing*” handout.

Writing Letters

Now participants can begin composing their letters. Allow them to discuss the content of their letters, and work together to frame their issues in the most effective way.

Once participants have completed their letters, mail them. Legislators may even write letters back—make sure to include a return address on the envelope or within the letter itself; use either a home address or the school/church address as applicable or appropriate).

Option: Use this activity as a lead-in to the Congressional Visit Workshop; keep same groups and issues in order to streamline the research process.