



Lesson Plan

Avenues to Advocacy: Community Awareness Events

Length:

1 hour

Objectives:

Through this activity participants will:

- Learn how events like hosting documentary screenings or speakers can be effective tools for raising awareness within their school or parish community and contribute to larger advocacy goals.
- Plan a model event according to guidelines.

Materials:

- *Avenues to Advocacy: Planning Your Own Community Event* handout

Process:

While we often talk about social media as a method of raising awareness, it's also useful to personally reach out to members of your parish or school community to educate and mobilize around an issue. One of the best ways to do this is by bringing people together to learn about a specific problem and the solution proposed. This might include hosting a speaker who shares a story of personal struggle caused by a social injustice, a documentary screening and discussion or a fun fundraising event like a sports tournament or dance-a-thon that educates people about a problem while raising money.

Ask participants to think about events they've attended that inspired them to take action to address a particular social injustice.

Distribute the *Avenues to Advocacy: Planning Your Own Community Event* handout, and have participants complete it in groups of 3-5.

Have participants summarize their events—and how they planned their events—for the class.

Discussion

As a class, present the proposed events, and discuss:

1. What were some challenges in planning your event?
2. Consider your target audience and what you know about them. What do you expect them to already know about the topic?
3. Would you put this plan into action? Why or why not?
4. Do you think one type of event (documentary, speaker) is more effective than others?
5. Depending on the social justice issue addressed, event goals can vary in how quickly they can be accomplished. What are some advantages and disadvantages to events which are focused on immediate actions/results versus those which take a longer time and require more effort before results can be seen?





Handout

Avenues to Advocacy: Planning Your Own Community Event

In this activity, you will plan an event that you can host in your school or parish to raise awareness about a specific issue and advocate for a solution. Hosting a speaker or screening a documentary are both great ways to educate your community about an issue and mobilize them for action.

Step 1: Choose the planning team.

Team members:	
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Step 2: Choose a social justice topic and type of event.

- Research or brainstorm social justice topics that you're passionate about. Pick an issue with an actionable response.
- Brainstorm the best type of event to host: do you know of a community leader or someone who could get your message across well? Is there a documentary or other learning resource related to your topic? Consider ways to include all four aspects suggested by the CRS Global High School program for engaging in the Catholic social mission—prayer, learning, action, and giving.
- Estimate the approximate budget you think will be necessary to host an event of this scope and size.

Social Justice Topic (issue and response for which you will advocate!)	
Event Type (documentary, prayer night, speaker, etc.)	

Step 3: Proposal and Budget

Obtain approval from school or parish administrators; summarize why you want to host the event, what it will entail, and choose multiple potential dates for administrators to choose from. Discuss the possibility of school or parish funding for the event. If you cannot secure external funding, begin working on a fundraising plan to reach the budgeted goal.

Step 4: Goal Setting

If the end goal of the event is to raise awareness around a social justice issue and advocate for a solution, how will you tell if you've succeeded? Whether it's how much money you raise, how many people from a certain audience you attract, or some other factor, determine one quantitative way to measure the success of your advocacy event.

Goals:

Step 5: Event Planning

Date	
Location	(make sure the space is big enough to accommodate your target audience and meet fire code requirements!)
Supply List	
Roles for Volunteers	
Speaker Coordinator	(if applicable)

Step 6: Advertising and Promoting Your Event

How will you advertise your event? Some ideas to consider:

- Make a flyer or video
- Contact diocesan or local newspaper
- Invite family and friends
- Write homeroom announcements
- Send invites through school e-mail or bulletin
- Engage local community leaders
- Work with clubs or organizations at your school

List three ways you plan to advertise your event.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 7 : Host and Document Your Event!

- Take pictures during your event, and consider asking people what they like about the event to get some quotes.
- Post a thank you with pictures to any school bulletin or Facebook page.
- Send pictures, as well as a brief summary of the event, to GlobalHighSchool@crs.org.

What's Next?

By taking just a couple more steps, your event can be recognized as a school-wide event through the CRS Global High School program! Check out ghs.crs.org and ghs.crs.org/events.

1. Obtain administration's approval and support; consider inviting a representative from administration to join your planning team.
2. Create a realistic budget. Explore whether administration will consider contributing to the budget; otherwise, explore creative ways of fundraising.
3. Make sure your event's focus includes global solidarity/global social justice issues.
4. Incorporate resources (prayer services, lesson plans, research, videos, advocacy, Action Alerts) available on the CRS website.
5. Finally, your event should include opportunities to learn, pray, act, and give.

Want to plan around a specific issue? Here are some helpful dates to keep in mind!

- World Day of Peace (January 1)
- National Migration Week (first week of January)
- World Day of the Sick (February 11)
- World Day of Social Justice (February 20)
- International Women's Day (March 8)
- World Water Day (March 22)
- Earth Day (April 22)
- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (October 17)
- World AIDS Day (December 1)
- International Migrants Day (December 18)