



Lesson Plan

How Does Advocacy Work?

Objectives:

Through this activity participants will:

- Understand how advocacy works at many different levels of government and non-government engagement.
- Engage with interactive tools that demonstrate how individual advocacy actions can result in large-scale change.
- Begin preparation for *Avenues to Advocacy* with an overview of the traditional and nontraditional advocacy tools that they will practice in the following lesson(s).

Summary:

This lesson builds on preceding lessons that present answers to the questions of what is advocacy and why are Catholics called to advocate and gives the participants an overview of the tools that they will use in later lessons, and in their futures as active Catholic citizens in order to effectively engage in advocacy.

Materials:

- Whiteboard or blackboard for writing student responses
- Copies of *Advocacy Process* handout
- Copies of *How Can We Advocate?* handout
- Copies of *Advocacy Case Study: Girls Count Act* handout

Preparation:

Print and review CRS handouts

Option: Preview activities in Avenues to Advocacy Lesson Plan in order to present the activities that your participants will take part in during that section.

Process:

Briefly review previous lessons *What Is Advocacy?* and *Why Do We Advocate?*

Opening Activity

Ask participants to think of some issues that they feel passionate about, or that they think are worth advocating for (e.g., poverty and homelessness, pro-life movement, climate change, etc.).

Allow participants to call out answers as they come up with them. Write down their suggestions on a whiteboard or chalkboard. Encourage participants to discuss why they feel passionate about specific issues.

Transition into the “how” side of advocacy by reminding participants that there are ways to make their voices heard regarding some of the issues that they care about and may come into contact with in their daily lives.

How Can We Advocate?

Distribute *How Can We Advocate?* handout. Read through the handout with participants or allow them to read it on their own.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you traditionally think of when you hear the word “advocacy” (if you think anything at all), and how does this chart either confirm or challenge that line of thinking?

Sample Answer: I think of advocacy as something that only professional lobbyists do, but we can use social media and community events to advocate at a local level.

Sample Answer: I have only heard of advocacy as being about writing letters or making phone calls to elected representatives, but there are actually lots of other ways to advocate.

2. In what cases do you think certain types of advocacy might be more helpful than other types?

Sample Answer: There is legislation up for debate in Congress about an issue that I feel strongly about, and I'm not sure how my representative is going to vote, so I should try to write a letter to him/her or try to make a visit to his/her office (either at the local office or in DC).

Sample Answer: I am passionate about an issue that directly affects my home community, but I don't think that many people are aware of the things that they can do to change it, so I might want to work with a group from my school or church to host a community event for the purpose of raising awareness and taking action.

How Advocacy Works

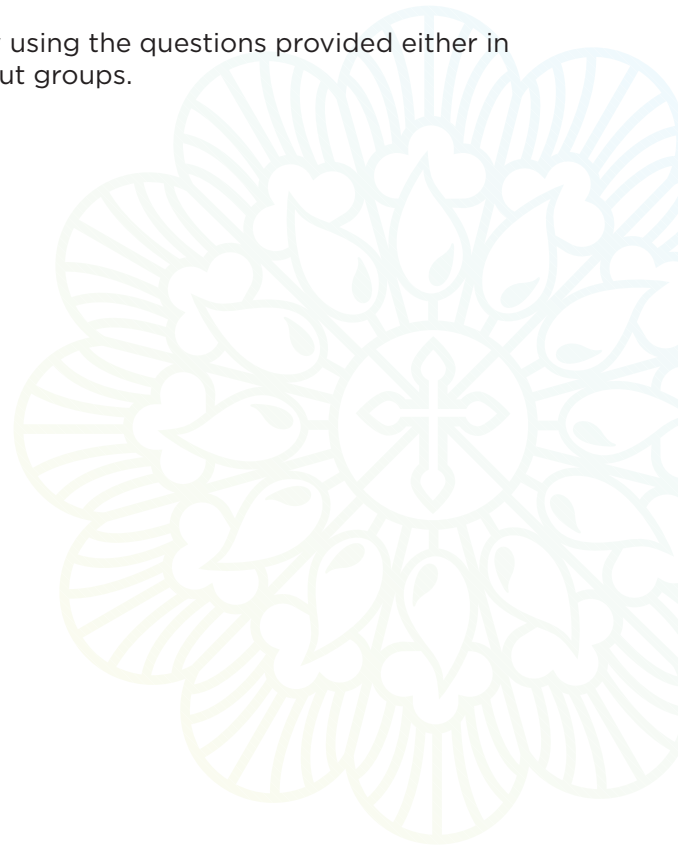
Distribute the Advocacy Process handout. Walk through the steps presented in the flowchart. Refer back to the previously given suggestions about causes that your participants would like to advocate for and discuss how that would flow through the *Avenues to Advocacy* process.

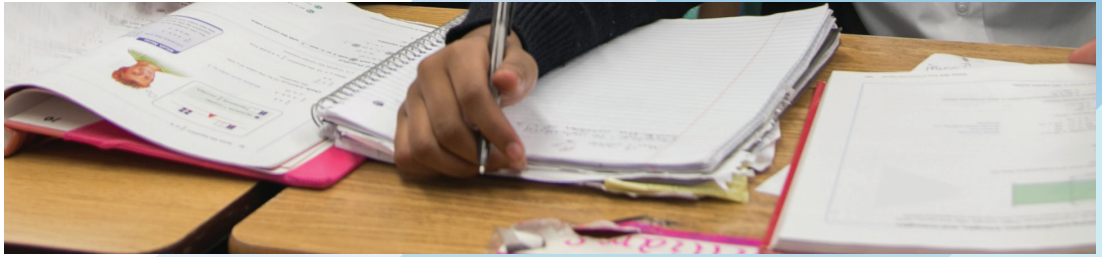
Optional: If applicable and if time allows, you may want to begin discussing with participants the advocacy “training” activities that they will work on in Avenues of Advocacy. Make sure to review these activities ahead of time if you plan on discussing them.

Advocacy Case Study

Distribute the *Advocacy Case Study: Girls Count Act* handout and read it with the participants.

Have participants discuss the case study using the questions provided either in one large group or in a few small breakout groups.



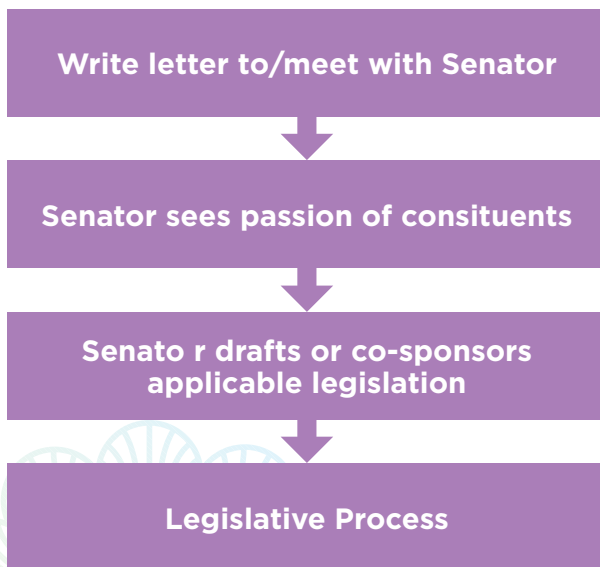


Handout

ADVOCACY PROCESS:



**GOVERNMENTAL/
TRADITIONAL ACTION:**



**NON-TRADITIONAL
ACTION:**





Handout

How Can We Advocate?



Government/ Traditional Advocacy

- Letter-writing campaigns
- Meetings with senators/ representatives
- Can be done at local, state, and national levels

[Social] Media

- Twitter hashtag campaign
- Online “challenges”
Designed to reach large audiences
- Create momentum regardless of distance

Community Events

- Designed to increase community awareness for a particular issue
- Can be used to encourage others to engage in/learn about advocacy

Coalitions/ Cooperation

- Working with organizations who already engage in advocacy
- Community/ coalition groups present a united front, and can be more effective than individual efforts
- See “Advocacy Resources” handout

“Grasstops”

- Advocacy undertaken by particularly influential individuals
- Important, but can be limited in effectiveness because individuals may not be constituents