Lesson Plan

Why Do We Advocate?

Objectives:
Through this activity participants will:
• Gain a greater understanding of concepts surrounding advocacy.
• Understand why we as Catholics are called to be advocates for those whose voices aren’t being heard in the halls of power.

Summary:
Participants will examine the theology behind advocacy in groups in order to understand better why advocacy is a part of Catholic social teaching.

Materials:
• Why Do We Advocate? handout of quotes and principles
• Scissors

Process:
1. Cut out the quotes and principles found on the Why Do We Advocate? handout.
2. Split up the class into small groups, and provide each group with one quote / principle from the handout.
3. Have one group member read the quote aloud to the rest of their group. Each group should discuss their quote using the questions provided below, and should prepare to present their quote to the class along with a few sentences on how it relates to advocacy.
4. After 10 minutes of group work, have each group present their quote to the class.

Discussion Questions:
1. How does this principle or quote call us to advocacy?
2. What specific actions can you think of that would connect this quote or principle to advocacy?
3. Can you think of any stories or situations from Scripture, the life of a saint, or from your community that demonstrate this principle or quote being lived out?
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This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader can govern.”
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“Speak up for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Defend the rights of the poor and needy.”
- Proverbs 31:8-9

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“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.”
- Isaiah 58:6-10

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“He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God.”
- Proverbs 14:31

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“For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, ‘You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.’”
- Deuteronomy 15:11

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CST Principle: Solidarity
We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic and ideological differences. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in an interdependent world.

CST Principle: Rights and Responsibilities
People have a fundamental right to life and those things that make life truly human: food, clothing, housing, health care, education and security. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

CST Principle: Call to Family, Community, and Participation
We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others. The first community is the family, where we learn and act on our values. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all.

CST Principle: Life and Dignity of the Human Person
The human person is the clearest reflection of God among us. Each person possesses a basic dignity because he or she is made in the image of God. The sacredness and dignity of the human person is the foundation of our vision for society.

CST Principle: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
A basic moral test of our society is how our most vulnerable members are treated. We are called to put the needs of those who are poor and vulnerable first.

CST Principle: The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
Work is an expression of our human dignity. It is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. The economy must serve people, not the other way around.

CST Principle: Care for God's Creation
We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation.

Principles adapted from USCCB’s Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching and CRS Lesson Plan: “Catholic Social Teaching, Up Close!”