

Food Security and Catholic Social Teaching

Objectives

Through this activity participants will:

- Understand the concept of food security.
- Learn how food security relates to the Catholic faith through Catholic social teaching.

Materials/Setup

- A copy of the *Food Security and Catholic Social Teaching* handout for each student.
- Paper or whiteboard.
- Writing tools, as necessary.

Activity

1. Begin this activity by discussing the questions below to review the concept of food security. Note responses on a large piece of paper or whiteboard so that you can return to them later.
 - a. Where did the food you last ate come from? Was it a domestic or imported product? What route did it take to get to you? Do you know the answers to these questions?
 - b. What is food security?

2. Post this definition of food security where students can see it:

“All people at all times having access to sufficient safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” —World Health Organization

3. Help your students dissect the statement:
 - a. “All people at all times ...”: no one is excluded from this need.
 - b. “... having access ...”: if food is available, but it is unsafe for someone to reach the food; if food is at too great a distance; if food is unaffordable based on a person’s wages; or if someone who is differently-abled can’t get to the food, that food is not accessible to all people.
 - c. “... sufficient safe, nutritious food ...”: the food available to people must be enough to fulfill caloric need; it must be safe to consume, and it must be nutritiously complete—meaning people do not have “food security” if the only food they can afford or access is unhealthy food.
 - d. “... to maintain a healthy and active life.”: the food available to people must support a healthy life, meaning that it should not negatively impact health or well-being.
4. Ask your students the following question after they have had time to discuss the definition of food security: How does food security relate to our Catholic faith?

5. Write down students' answers—for example, we are taught in the Gospel to feed the hungry—and then ask them if they know any of the principles of Catholic social teaching. If students can name any of the principles, write them where the students can see and then supplement their answers with the remaining principles. If explanations are needed for any of the principles, utilize the definitions below that are also listed on the *Food Security and Catholic Social Teaching* handout.
 - a. **Life and Dignity of the Human Person:** The human person is the clearest reflection of God among us. Each person possesses a basic dignity that comes directly from our creation in the image of God. Through our actions, we must express that each person is precious, and the lives and welfare of all people are priorities. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of Catholic social teaching.
 - b. **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.
 - c. **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 our duties and responsibilities to one another, to our families and to the larger society.
 - d. **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:** A basic moral test of our society is how our most vulnerable members are treated. Those with the greatest needs require the greatest response.
 - e. **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. Work must lead to decent and fair wages for the basic rights of workers to be protected.
 - f. **Solidarity:** We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic or ideological differences. Learning to practice the virtue of solidarity means learning that loving our neighbor has global dimensions in an interdependent world.
 - g. **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.
6. Explain to your students that these principles are the foundation of our call as Catholics to serve our sisters and brothers who are most in need and to work for social justice.
7. Distribute the *Food Security and Catholic Social Teaching* handout and ask students to reflect on what they just learned to determine how food security plays a part in each Catholic social teaching principle.

8. Students can work individually or in groups. Allow time at the end to discuss or present answers and reflections as a class. Consider the following ideas for how students can present answers to the class or school community:
 - a. Discuss as a class the ways that students have related the principles of Catholic social teaching to food security.
 - b. Divide students into seven groups, give each group a principle, then ask each group to construct a poster representing how food security relates to that principle. Posters can then be displayed around the classroom or school.
 - c. Allow each student to choose a principle and ask them to write a short essay regarding the relationship between the principle and building food security. Ask students to identify one way the principle they selected could be acted upon to improve food security somewhere in the world.
 - d. Be creative! If you have more time to dedicate to this activity, have students create videos, skits or school-wide announcements concerning the topic of food security and how it influences living out the principles of Catholic social teaching.

Food Security and Catholic Social Teaching

The principles of Catholic social teaching are the foundation of our call as Catholics to serve our sisters and brothers who are most in need and to work for social justice.

Reflect on what you have learned about food security and the seven Catholic social teaching principles to determine how food security is connected to each principle. Record your answers below. An explanation of each principle is provided.

Remember, food security is defined as: “All people at all times having access to sufficient safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” —World Health Organization

Life and Dignity of the Human Person:

The human person is the clearest reflection of God among us. Each person possesses a basic dignity that comes directly from our creation in the image of God. Through our actions, we must express that each person is precious, and the lives and welfare of all people are priorities. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.

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.

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 our duties and responsibilities to one another, to our families and to the larger society.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:

A basic moral test of our society is how our most vulnerable members are treated. Those with the greatest needs require the greatest response.

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. Work must lead to decent and fair wages in order for the basic rights of workers to be protected.

Solidarity:

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic or ideological differences. Learning to practice the virtue of solidarity means learning that loving our neighbor has global dimensions in an interdependent world.

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.