

1% CONTROLS 50%

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OBJECTIVE //

Raise critical awareness about the concentration of control and distribution of the world's wealth

TIME // 15-20 minutes

GROUP SIZE // Any

MATERIALS //

- 1 blank mailing label/ name tag per every two participants (or fewer)
- Enough pens or markers for participants to share
- Painter's tape (Note: If the room is large, section off a portion of the floor in a square or rectangle to limit the 'resource' of space. Then further divide this space in half with the tape.)
- Computer and projector

ACTIVITY GUIDE

1. Ask the group: "How many people do we share this planet with?" (The answer is about 7 billion people – seven billion children, created in the image and likeness of God.) But there is little sharing in God's family right now: Just 1% of the world's population controls about 50% of the wealth. Now, let's try to depict that unfair situation concretely right here and now within our group.
2. The task is to write your name on a name tag and put it on. What resources do we need to do this? (Writing utensils, name tags and space)
3. Ask the group: "If we were to divide the 'resources' here according to the real world division of wealth, how many people in our group would represent the 1% of the world population?"
4. Invite to the front the person with the right answer (or the closest to it) or someone whose birthday is the nearest to the date. If more than one person is needed to represent 1% of the group, have the winner select others to form the 1% group. Congratulate them on being the lucky winner(s) of the birth lottery! They are the 1% of the world's population that controls 50% of the world's wealth. (e.g. For a group of 100 people, 1 person 'owns' 50 chairs, half of the space, half of the name tags and half of the pens.)
5. Inform everyone in the half of the room (or in half of the allotted space) where the winner was sitting that they are trespassing on the property of the 1%, and must move to the other half of the room. Be energetic and insistent until they completely vacate their chairs or space. Then give them half of the pens and name tags.
6. Distribute the remaining half of the pens and name tags to the other 99%, and instruct everyone that they have just 45 seconds (or less) to write their names neatly on a name tag and put it on.

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7. There may be much confusion during this time. People may be sharing, 'stealing,' scrounging for or giving away resources. When the 45 seconds is up, you might comment on this, and on how beautifully the 1% was able to carry out this task compared to the 99%.
8. Invite the group to settle in their respective halves of the room (or space), saying, "Look around . . . This is how we, as a family of God, are sharing the Earth's wealth right now." Invite them to join you in praying the Lord's Prayer.
9. After a moment of quiet, slowly repeat the line, "Thy kingdom come/ Thy will be done/ on Earth as it is in Heaven." Ask the following questions:
 - Do you think this is God's will?
 - Do you think this is what God's Kingdom looks like?
10. Explain that this line not only expresses our hope for God's Kingdom when we reach heaven, but is equally our call to work to build God's kingdom - here on Earth, today!

Share some or all of the following information on the global division of wealth:

 - Wealth, both nationally and globally, is becoming increasingly concentrated.
 - 0.7% of the world's population controls 45.2% of the world's wealth.
 - The world's wealthiest 10% control 88% of the world's wealth.
 - The poorest half of the world's population hold less than 1% of global wealth.
 - 1 in 9 people, 805 million, live in chronic hunger.
11. Reflect with the group about the lessons to be drawn from this exercise. Think: Do you feel any differently about the statistic, 1% of the population holds 50% of the world's wealth? Invite the group to think-pair-share their reactions to this exercise with a neighbour using the following questions to stimulate the conversation or for a whole group discussion:
 - How did it feel to be forced out of your chair and into a crowded space? Or, how did you feel when you were left all alone?
 - How did it feel when you didn't have the resources necessary to carry out the task?
 - How does God intend the world's wealth to be distributed?
12. Project the definition of the Catholic Social Teaching principle, the Common Good, for the participants, found at <https://www.devp.org/en/cst/common-good>. Invite them to think-pair-share how they might put the principle of the Common Good into action to tackle the problem of inequality and work towards building God's kingdom here on earth.

¹Shorrocks, Anthony; Davies, Jim; Lluberas, Rodrigo. "Global Wealth Databook, 2015." (Zürich, Switzerland: Credit Suisse Research Institute, 2015). 99.

FAO, IFAD and WFP. 2015. The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015. Meeting the 2015 international hunger targets: taking stock of uneven progress. Rome, FAO.