

SOLIDARITY CIRCLE

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OBJECTIVE // To understand the relationship between distributive justice, solidarity, and human dignity

TIME // 10 – 20 minutes (depending on group size)

GROUP SIZE // Medium to large

LEADERS REQUIRED // One facilitator

ACTIVITY//

Action 1:

Ask participants to stand around the facilitator in a circle.

Ensure there is ample room for everyone to be part of the circle.

Count the number of participants in the circle.

Calculate the 1/7th of this number. (For example, if there are 21 participants, then 1/7th is 3).

Facilitator:

"Let us imagine that this circle represents the entire human family, in all of its diversity."

Question 1: *Around how many people are there in the world?*

After taking a few responses from the group reveal that there are around 7 billion people in the world. In this room, this group, represents all 7 billion people of the world.

"When God created the world, in all its diversity, He saw that it was all good.

He created short people, tall people, people who have become doctors and bakers, farmers and scientists.

He created all people, whether born here in Canada or around the world, whether they are rich or poor. We are all created in the image of God."

Question 2: *Do you think that every human being is important? Has value? Has dignity?*

Take a moment to explain "dignity", or the principle of "Human Dignity". Wait for the participants to answer the question, once the concept of "dignity" is explained, and then explain the Catholic Social Teaching principle of Human Dignity:

"The foundation of all Catholic Social Teaching is the inherent dignity of the human person, as created in the image and likeness of God. The Church, therefore, calls for Integral Human Development, which concerns the wellbeing of each person in every dimension: economic, political, social, ecological, and spiritual."

– Development and Peace, devp.org/en/cst/dignity

Ensure participants understand that dignity is not something that can be given or taken away. It does not depend on a person's productivity, status, location, etc. In our faith and that of many others, every one of us has inherent Human Dignity, from conception to death.

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Question 3: *What are some things that all human beings need to live a dignified life?*

Most participants will list air, water, food, shelter (clothing, homes), community, love.

Question 4: *Can a human being live, or live for long, without any of these basic needs of life?*

Question 5: *Do you think that we, as a human family, are interdependent? Interconnected? That what happens in one part of the world affects another part of the world?*

If necessary, use current examples in the news related to immigration, poverty, trade, depending on age group.

"Indeed, we are all interdependent, what happens in one part of the world impacts us, and what we do, impacts others. In order to demonstrate this interdependence, please link arms."

Action 2:

Ask participants to link arms with each other.

Ask them to try to be comfortable because they are about to become a little more uncomfortable.

Ask all participants if they are okay to be tapped on the shoulder.

Let them know that if you tap them on the shoulder then they are to keep their arms linked to their neighbours, but to get down on their knees.

Ask them to please be quiet even though it might be uncomfortable.

Action 3:

Tap 1 out of 7 participants on the shoulder.

For example, for a total of 21 participants, tap 3 people on the shoulder

Facilitator:

"The number of people that were tapped on the shoulder, and are now down on their knees, represent the approximate number of hungry people in the world. Approximately 1 billion people suffer from hunger in the world."

Living in hunger means never getting enough to eat. This means not getting enough calories or adequate nutrition, which slows physical and mental processes and weakens the immune system.

Action 4:

Tap another 1 out of 7 participants on the shoulder.

Make sure to space out the people that you have tapped.

For example, for a total of 21 participants, tap a different 3 people on the shoulder. This way a total of 6 people will be on their knees by the end of this "round".

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Facilitator:

"The number of people that were tapped on the shoulder, and are now down on their knees, represent the approximate number of people who are malnourished or suffer from malnutrition in the world. Approximately 1 billion people suffer from malnutrition in the world. This is on top of the number of the 1 billion people who suffer from hunger."

Malnutrition is not getting enough food or are not getting the right variety of foods to get the nutrients we need.

Action 5:

Tap another 1 out of 7 participants on the shoulder.

Make sure to space out the people that you have tapped.

For example, for a total of 21 participants, tap a different 3 to 4 people on the shoulder. This way a total of 9 or 10 people will be on their knees, by the end of this "round".

Facilitator:

"The number of people that were tapped on the shoulder, and are now down on their knees, represent the approximate number of people who suffer from diseases because of the kind of food they eat, mostly because it is contaminated or lacks enough nutrients. Approximately 1 billion people suffer from food-related sickness. This is on top of the 1 billion people who suffer from hunger, and the 1 billion people that suffer from malnutrition."

Examples of these illnesses are stunted growth and diarrhea, or obesity and Type II diabetes.
As you see, around half of the people in the world suffer, from lack of a very basic necessity: food.

Question 6: *Is this right? Is this fair?*

Allow participants time to respond.

Question 7: *Is this comfortable? Even for those standing?*

Allow participants time to respond.

"Indeed, it is not comfortable for those standing. We are all impacted when something is not right in the world. Sometimes we feel it directly and sometimes we do not feel it. The reality is that we are all impacted by it, or contribute to it."

Question 8: *How do we contribute? How are we impacted?*

Encourage participants to think about physical, social, economic, spiritual and ecological connections.

Some examples may include:

- Interconnections: 1/3 of all food is wasted here in Canada
- Political: decisions can be one-sided or ill-informed, without the perspectives of all those involved or affected by the decision.
- Economic: rising costs of health care, of healthy food, of social service costs.

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Question 9: *Is this how God created the world? Is this how He wants it to look like?*

Action 6:

Ask participants to say the 'Our Father...' out loud.

Stop them at "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven."

Question 10: *Is this how heaven looks like? Is this how earth looks like?*

"If we pray the 'Our Father', we ask God that His Will be done on Earth like it is in Heaven. We are called to collaborate with God's plan and be vessels of his love here on Earth. We are called to live in Solidarity."

Question 11: *Would you like to help your neighbor stand up? Get the food they need? Make sure food is distributed fairly? Not wastefully? And for their dignity to be reaffirmed?*

Action 7:

Ask the participants standing up, to lift up their neighbours who are on their knees.

"Solidarity is the action of acknowledging that each person has inherent Human Dignity, that we are all part of God's family, that we are connected, and that we have a responsibility to help each other out, and make sure we all live in dignity."

Explain that in 1967, the Bishops of Canada created the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, to help Canadians live in solidarity with their brothers and sisters around the world.

To learn more about what Development and Peace does, or how to get involved, visit the website at devp.org or contact your local animator. Find contact information at: devp.org/en/contactus/address.