

## Grade Four

### What does it mean to work for social justice?

It is important to realize that working for social justice takes more than simply dropping off a few canned goods at the food pantry around Christmas time. Choosing justice should be a choice to work for changes that provide long-term solutions, not just making something better for the moment. That is the difference.

### Seven Principles of Social Mission

Within the Catholic understanding of justice, there are seven underlying principles that may help you recognize situations that you would like to see changed.

1. **Dignity of the human person**—All people are sacred.
2. **Call to community and participation** – The human person is a social being, one part of the human family.
3. **Rights and responsibilities** – All people have fundamental rights and responsibility to respect those rights in others.
4. **Option for the poor**—Society’s most vulnerable members must be treated with equality.
5. **Dignity of work**-- People have the right to work and earn fair wages.
6. **Solidarity**--We are one human family called to work for justice.
7. **Care for God’s creation** – We have the responsibility to care for the goods of the earth as gifts from God

Here are some grade level activities that will:

- Help raise the children’s awareness of certain social issues
  - Provide an opportunity for children to integrate a sense of God’s justice into their own lives
  - Encourage the children to participate in a process of long term change for the common good of all.
1. Invite the students to make a list of the things they think they definitely need in order to stay alive in the world. Then ask them to make a list of things that they might want. Help them to distinguish between their wants and their needs. We all need food, but do we need potato chips and fruit gel snacks? We all need shoes, but do we need roller blades? Try to come up with as many of these examples as you can and then invite the students to try.
  2. Start a “Caught Doing Good” Campaign. Each time any one of the students finds another of their classmates doing something good for someone else, they could bring it to your attention and then the “good” student would be rewarded with the “Caught Doing Good” award. This award could take the form of a bookmark. These could be kept in a basket and passed out when someone is “caught.” It might even be you who gets “caught”!