

Module 1 Introduction to Care for Our Common Home

## Lesson 6

# The Lens of Catholic Social Teaching- Solidarity

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

**What is meant by the Catholic Social Teaching of preferential option for the poor and vulnerable?**

**How does worldview impact how one sees personal and community responsibility for giving a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable?**

**What is meant by advocacy and how is it important in this theme?**

**How are solidarity and preferential option for the poor and vulnerable related themes?**

## TEACHER PREPARATION

### **Download and Set Up**

the accompanying PowerPoint presentation

### **Print**

this lesson plan, so that you can follow the power point as directed herein

### **Print/Copy**

Student Guide for students to record a few of the big ideas as they move through the lesson, one copy per student.

## LESSON PLAN

### IGNITE

**Quick surfacing of thinking in the students.** Ask students to record a phrase or sentence in response to each of the following questions. The teacher verbally asks the question and gives a moment for students to record thoughts. When the five questions are done, invite student responses: 3 students for each question. Receive answers with no comment, just a gracious nod.

- What does it mean “to be poor”?

*NOTE TO TEACHER: opportunity later to discuss how we are all poor in some ways, but this theme invites us to consider those in most need of opportunities to survive and thrive.*

- What does “vulnerable” mean?
- What does it mean to say you prefer something or someone? Give an example.
- What is an “option”? Give an example.
- What do you think “preferential option for the poor and vulnerable” means?

### IMMERSE

Project the image in Slide 1.

**Ask:**

In one word or phrase, silently think about what *message* you see in this image. What *feelings* do you have in your body and in your spirit as you consider this image? Record responses on paper. *Invite responses.*

*NOTE: she could have just left the bowl of food there, but there is a personal connection here as she feeds him—the warmth of human touch. Note how she bends towards him, not afraid to be close to the poor. Note: the boy’s dignity.*

What does CST say about “Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable”?

**Go through power point slides 2-8 in this way:**

**Slide 2-** the answer to the posed question is on Notes underneath the slide

**Slide 3-** [CST 101](#) is a video (4:26) that introduces this theme in a simple and meaningful way. It was developed by Catholic Relief Services, which is the USA member of Caritas Internationalis. Development and Peace is the Caritas member in Canada. As such, Catholic Relief Services and Development and Peace are sister agencies in Caritas Internationalis.

**Slides 4, 5, 6, 7:** ask questions that come out of the video for classroom discussion.

**Slide 8** – provides the fundamental meaning of solidarity with the poor.

**Ask:**

- How would someone with the *worldview of domination* and someone with the *worldview of kinship* respond to the quotation in the slide?
- What is the *first step*, always, towards *Solidarity* with anyone? (awareness of the other, listening to the other, seeking to understand someone’s situation)
- Once you have listened and gained some understanding, *what is necessary within you*, if you were to begin a journey of solidarity? (the movement of the heart to accompany someone, the decision to give something of yourself)
- Walking in solidarity with someone usually invites one to become an *advocate*.
- *An advocate* is someone who stands up visibly and intentionally for an idea or course of action or person.



#### Video links:

[CST 101](#)

[Sanctum Care Group](#)

[Yesica and Hector](#)  
(sneak peek for Module 2)

## COALESCE

*Project Slide 9 – [Sanctum Care Group video \(4:16\)](#) shares a local example of a woman born and raised in Saskatoon who grew up like you and me, but her path took her into work with those rejected and marginalized in society primarily because of HIV. She advocated Sask Health and the Saskatoon community for a special care home for those with HIV. For more information: <http://sanctumcaregroup.com/>*

*After the view, ask:*

In this example, who are the poor and vulnerable? We do not know their backstory, but we do see that they fell through the cracks in society. What were their needs that were not met by the system? How does Sanctum demonstrate the catholic social teachings we have been talking about? Why do you think the filmmaker pays such attention to the eyes of people?

### OPTION

*In place of Sanctum as an example, one could introduce L'Arche here. [www.larche.ca/](http://www.larche.ca/)*

L'Arche are communities of friendship and belonging for those with and without intellectual disabilities. They are worldwide and provide an excellent example of the meaning of this CST.

*Project Slide 10: What do we take for granted? It wasn't always like this.* Someone (peoples) had to advocate for each of these changes in our society: inclusive education, special care for the elderly, affordable homes for families, rules around polluting emissions, reconciliation with our indigenous peoples in Canada, wheelchair access to stores, theatres, and other public places.

*Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable challenges individuals and societies to examine ethical and economic choices from the point of view of how they will affect the poor and vulnerable, not just in their locality but globally as well.*

We all have a choice about what kind of community, country, and world we want to live in. What if: no one cared about anyone else except themselves? *Our education should bring us to care about the world that we are part of.*

*Slide 11 – This is an important slide towards engaged citizenship. A major part of this suite of lesson plans is a call to action in Module 2, where we ask your class to join us as we respond to what is happening in the Amazon biome, with our campaign [For our Common Home](#). For a sneak peak, check out [Meet Yesica and Hector: speaking up For our Common Home](#) or refer to the story of Sanctum just discussed. With Sanctum the health care system did not have the capacity to give attention to some fundamental needs of those with HIV/Aids, but through the advocacy of others, the health care system did step in to provide some funding and support for the work of Sanctum. Advocacy was very important, and it was effective.*

## CREATE

Find an example within your own community or region of an agency or community action is giving preferential option to the poor and vulnerable. (Focus on the LOCAL.) Determine if this action is offering charity or is seeking to address root causes and bring change to a system.

Please consider making a donation to support our mission at Development and Peace – working with partner organizations in the Global South who promote alternatives to unfair social, political and economic structures, and educating Canadians about the causes of poverty and mobilizing towards actions for change. For more information [www.devp.org](http://www.devp.org)

## Catholic Social Teachings

In total, there are 7 themes within Catholic Social Teachings (CST). So far we have looked at “*Human Dignity*” and “*Solidarity*.”

A third theme in CST is called “*Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable*.”

**Why does God call humanity to place the needs of society’s most poor and vulnerable first?**

Simply put, their need is greater.

**“Choosing to defend poor and vulnerable people does not imply that they are more valuable. Society is called to place the needs of the poor and vulnerable first in the same way parents pay special attention to a sick child. The parents do not necessarily love the sick child more than the other children, but they make the sick child their top priority because of that child’s greater need.”** (Living Justice and Peace, p. 65, St Mary’s Press ©2008)

Jesus was born poor.

**What does this tell us about God?**

**“Whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do to me.”** (Matthew 25:40)

**A lens of (circle one) is needed!**

dominion

stewardship

kinship

**Archbishop Tagle says**

“When we encounter the poor, let us encounter them as a fellow poor person not from a place of superiority.”

This is not so much about a *lens* as it is about a *mirror*.

**What does it mean to use a *mirror* in your interaction with others?**

“We should allow what we *see* and what we *know* to really touch us.”

**Why would that make a difference?**

### HOW CAN I LIVE A PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE?

- Be charitable to the poor
- Learn to see the poor as our brothers and sisters (part of OUR community of concern)
- Encounter and come to know the poor (instead of ignoring or avoiding)
- Examine the systems and policies that keep the poor poor (help propel change)

**You have a voice. You can choose to act.**

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What does it mean to use a **mirror** in your interaction with others?

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HOW CAN I LIVE A PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE?

**You have a voice. You can choose to act.**

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