Course: Grade 10 Religion -- Christ and Culture

Date/Lesson Number: Lesson 10

Unit: Christian Moral Development

Lesson Topic: Principals of Catholic Social Teachings – Preferential Option for the Poor

Focus Question:

The purpose of this lesson is to help students understand the eighth Principal of Catholic Social Teachings - Preferential Option for the Poor and also to help students understand the Church’s teaching on Social Justice Issues, including their sources rooted in the Old and New Testaments plus Papal and Episcopal documents.

Instructional Objective(s):

1) Students will understand the eight Principals of Catholic Social Teachings Preferential Option for the Poor.
2) Students will read scripture passages and grow in an understanding of the Scriptural roots of the Church’s social teaching.
3) Students will discuss case studies and critique modern societal values in the light of Gospel values.
4) Students will watch a movie and reflect on how to respond to these issues using principles of moral decision-making.

New Evangelization Essential Element(s):

Key Element III: Morality: How We Live
Key Element V: Education for Living in the Christian Community: How We Live in the Community, the Church
Key Element VI: Evangelization and Apostolic Life: How We, as Individuals and Community, Live in Service to the World

Key Vocabulary:

Preferential Option for the Poor

Key Scriptural Passage(s):
Key Catechism Reference(s):

Key People:

Internet Link(s):

www.cchdbaltimore.org  
www.oakdiocese.org  
www.usccb.org  
www.catholiccharitiesdlc.org  
www.op.org  
www.hbgdiocese.org  
www.catholicsocialteaching.org

Prayer learned or reviewed:

Whatsoever you do to set your brother free  
Whatsoever you do to end his misery  
Whatsoever you do to give him liberty  
Whatsoever you do, you do it unto me.

Materials required:

1) Handout 1

Step by Step Procedures:

Task 1: Distribute Handout 1 and the student worksheet 1.

Explain the handout and give the students some time to complete the worksheet.

Handout 1

Explanation

Preferential Option for the Poor

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.
Quotes

In teaching us charity, the Gospel instructs us in the preferential respect due to the poor and the special situation they have in society: the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others. A Call to Action (Octogesima Adveniens, . . . , #23)

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING PODCASTS

Option for the Poor


Scripture Guide

Preferential Option for the Poor

The morality of society is judged by how well our most vulnerable members are faring. Just as a parent gives more care and resources to a sick child, in order that the child might become healthy, so we as Christians are called to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. Those with the greatest need require the greatest response. In a society marked by the deepening divide between rich and poor, the gospel calls us to radical and self-giving love—to meet the needs of the poor and vulnerable and to oppose the structures that perpetuate poverty and abuse the vulnerable.

Exodus 22:20-26 You shall not oppress the poor or vulnerable. God will hear their cry.

Job 34:20 The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

Proverbs 31:8-9 Speak out in defense of the poor.

Sirach 4:1-10 Don’t delay giving to those in need.

Isaiah 25:4-5 God is a refuge for the poor.

Isaiah 58:5-7 True worship is to work for justice and care for the poor and oppressed.


Luke 6:20-23 Blessed are the poor, theirs is the kingdom of God.

1 John 3:17-18 How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s good and sees one in need and refuses to help?

Worksheet 1

Reflection Questions

Question
Are we collectively responsible for the conditions of poverty both locally and globally? What can you do both directly and indirectly to work for change?

Movies

 Preferential Option for the Poor

• The Motorcycle Diaries — A young Ernesto “Che” Guevara is a 23-year-old medical student in 1952 traveling across South America on a motorcycle with his friend Alberto Granado. As they embark on their journey, both young men come of age and find their individual world views broadened as they see poverty, disrespect for human dignity and suffering in greater ways than they ever expected.

• Kes — British movie set in a small, drab Yorkshire coal mining town tells the story of a lonely, sullen boy (David Bradley) whose life is momentarily given meaning by his experience in raising and training a baby kestrel, a European falcon. Directed by Ken Loach, the movie is a compassionate study of the blighted conditions and brutalizing life of this youth which in its final scenes indicates the possibility of his rising above his environment.

• The Bicycle Thief — Antonio, an unemployed man, finds a coveted job that requires a bicycle. When it is stolen on his first day of work, Antonio and his young son Bruno begin a frantic search, learning valuable lessons along the way. The movie focuses on both the relationship between the father and the son and the larger framework of poverty and unemployment in postwar Italy.

http://www.msjc.net/MoreInfo/PDF%20Files/Films%20w.%20social%20just.%20themes.pdf

Questions.

Option for the Poor and the Vulnerable

As long as serious inequities exist in allocation of power and resources, Christians are called to particular care for those who have less.

a. How does the film present people in poverty?

b. Are the characters affected in any way by economic poverty? How do the characters respond to people in poverty?

C. Does the film in any way give us a deeper understanding of poverty?

http://www.msjc.net/MoreInfo/PDF%20Files/Films%20w.%20social%20just.%20themes.pdf
On Thursday, 23 September, the Holy Father received the organizers and supporters of the "Jubilee 2000 Debt Campaign", who are working to reduce the crushing debt of the poorest countries of the world. Before giving them his written Message, the Pope said: "I am especially happy to welcome you here today and to commend what you are doing to secure justice for the poorest peoples of the world. In a world of wealth, poverty remains a great scandal, and what better time could there be to lift the crushing burden of debt than the Year of Jubilee? As a sign of the Church's desire to support the efforts of the 'Jubilee 2000 Debt Campaign', I offer you this morning a message of gratitude and encouragement. With this message goes my prayer that your work will bear fruit in the lives of the poorest and that you will be rewarded richly for all that you are doing on their behalf. May the God of all mercies bless you and your loved ones". Here is the text of the Holy Father's Message, which was Written in English and dated 23 September.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Just 100 days before the beginning of the year 2000, I am happy to extend warm greetings to the leaders and major supporters of the "Jubilee 2000" Debt Campaign. I am particularly grateful for your presence during these days at a series of meetings, in the context of the forthcoming Great Jubilee, on the heavy debt burdens of the poorest countries.

In the Bible, the Jubilee was a time in which the entire community was called to make efforts to restore to human relations the original harmony which God had given to his creation and which human sinfulness had damaged. It was a time to remember that the world we share is not ours, but is a gift of God's love. As human beings, we are only the stewards of God's plan. During the Jubilee, the burdens which oppressed and excluded the weakest members of society were to be removed, so that all could share the hope of a new beginning in harmony, according to God's design.

Today's world has need of a Jubilee experience. So many men, women and children are unable to realize their God-given potential. Poverty and gross inequalities remain widespread, despite enormous scientific and technological progress. All too often, the fruits of scientific progress, rather than being placed at the service of the entire human community, are distributed in such a way that unjust inequalities are actually increased or even rendered permanent.

The Catholic Church looks at the situation with great concern, not because she has any concrete technical model of development to offer, but because she has a moral vision of what the good of individuals and of the human family demands. She has consistently taught that there is a "social mortgage" on all private property, a concept which today must also be applied to "intellectual property" and to "knowledge". The law of profit alone cannot be applied to that which is essential for
the fight against hunger, disease and poverty.

Debt relief is, of course, only one aspect of the vaster task of fighting poverty and of ensuring that the citizens of the poorest countries can have a fuller share at the banquet of life. Debt relief programmes must be accompanied by the introduction of sound economic policies and good governance. But, just as important if not more so, the benefits which spring from debt relief must reach the poorest, through a sustained and comprehensive framework of investment in the capacities of human persons, especially through education and health care. The human person is the most precious resource of any nation or any economy.

Debt relief is, however, urgent. It is, in many ways, a precondition for the poorest countries to make progress in their fight against poverty. This is something which is now widely recognized, and credit is due to all those who have contributed to this change in direction. We have to ask, however, why progress in resolving the debt problem is still so slow. Why so many hesitations? Why the difficulty in providing the funds needed even for the already agreed initiatives? It is the poor who pay the cost of indecision and delay.

I appeal to all those involved, especially the most powerful nations, not to let this opportunity of the Jubilee Year pass, without taking a decisive step towards definitively resolving the debt crisis. It is widely recognized that this can be done.

I pray that this Jubilee Year 2000, commemorating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, will indeed be a moment of promise and of hope, especially for our brothers and sisters who still suffer abject poverty in our affluent world. Together we can do much, with God’s help. May his blessings be upon you and your loved ones.

From the Vatican, 23 September 1999.

Thought Provoker

St. Ambrose put it: “You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving him back what is his. You have been appropriating things that are meant to be for the common use of everyone. The earth belongs to everyone, not to the rich.”
**Assessment Assignment:**

Invite someone from the Catholic Charities office to speak about their efforts to meet the needs of the poor in your community.

**Adaptations (for students with learning disabilities):**

Play the on-line game called “Hungry Decisions” at www.worldchurchservice.org then search “Hungry Decisions”.

**Extensions (for gifted students):**

Host a hunger meal, fast, or retreat see:www.foodfast.org or www.education.crs.org/resources