

**Ending Poverty In Community**  
A Toolkit for Young Advocates

**Lesson 4**  
**Walking with Christ: The Two Feet of Love in Action**

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**Overview**

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, “*The Eucharist commits us to the poor*” (no. 1397). Our faith challenges us to alleviate poverty. We have many role models to suggest how this may be done. As a champion of “charitable works,” Mother Teresa met human need “one person at a time.” As a champion of “social justice,” Archbishop Oscar Romero sought to address social structures that gave rise to poverty. To follow Christ, it is necessary to walk with both feet of love in action – charitable works and social justice. In this activity, participants will consider the differences between these two approaches and how they are personally called to respond.



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**Objectives**

- To identify ways that our Catholic faith requires individuals and groups *both* to engage in charitable works *and* to work for social justice as methods of alleviating poverty.
- To consider a personal faith response to meet the needs of the poor that is grounded in charitable works and social justice.

**Materials Checklist:**

Click [here](#) for a list of materials required for this lesson.

**Part I: Opening Prayer/Warm-up – The Two Feet**

(Estimated Time: 10 minutes prayer / 15 minutes warm-up)

Before the session begins, place a lit candle and bible open to [Luke 10:25-37](#) (Good Samaritan) on a table at the front of the meeting room. Photocopy the facilitator [Warm-Up Reflections](#) handout and cut each of the eight quotations into individual strips.

As participants enter the room, ask for eight volunteers. When everyone is seated and quiet, ask one of the volunteers to proclaim the Gospel. After the Gospel proclamation, give participants a moment for quiet reflection. Direct them to reflect on the following questions as a large group:

- Who is my neighbor?
- How does the Gospel challenge me to respond to my neighbors?

Explain that in this warm-up activity, participants will consider two approaches to serving the poor. These approaches are known as the two feet of love in action: “charitable works” and “social justice.” Mother Teresa was a champion of “charitable works.” Her faith called her to serve God by meeting people’s immediate needs for comfort, food and medicine.

Archbishop Oscar Romero was a champion of “social justice.” He believed that it was important to address the social conditions that give rise to poverty.

Now distribute one of the quotations from the [Warm-Up Reflections](#) handout to each of the eight volunteers. Ask them to read their quotation. Challenge the participants to compare and contrast the approaches offered by Mother Teresa and Archbishop Romero. Explain that while our individual talents and experiences may lead us to one approach or another, our Catholic faith identifies both charitable works and social justice as elements essential to living out a faith that does justice.

Now divide participants into small groups of no more than four. Provide each group with one copy of the [Two Feet of Love in Action](#) handout. Ask participants to brainstorm examples of Charitable Works and Social Justice and to “fill in the feet” with their ideas.

*Suggested Responses:*

*Charitable Works – Helping **individuals** meet their present needs by serving in soup kitchens; donating food, clothing, money, etc.; tutoring or mentoring; sponsoring a refugee family, etc.*

*Social Justice – Correcting long term problems in **communities** by participating in community self-help projects; advocating for just public policies; developing local community enterprises; etc.*

## **Part II: Activity – Poverty Scenarios**

(Estimated Times: 30 minutes)

This activity will help participants apply their understanding of “charitable works” and “social justice” to real scenarios based on issues faced by CCHD-funded groups. Before the session begins, select some or all (depending on the size of your group) of the following scenarios for the participants to consider in small groups. Make enough photocopies of the correlated student handout so that each group receives one copy.

**Handout 4A:** [Housing Foreclosure](#) (Massachusetts)

**Handout 4B:** [Lack of a Living Wage](#) (California)

**Handout 4C:** [Underdevelopment](#) (New Mexico)

**Handout 4D:** [Homelessness](#) (Kansas)

**Handout 4E:** [Environmental challenges](#) (Louisiana)

*Note: The facilitator may wish to select scenarios based on the relevance to your group, number of small groups, and the amount of time available.*

Divide participants into groups of four. Each group should receive one copy of each scenario you selected above. Give groups ten minutes to read the scenario and brainstorm at least two solutions to the problem presented. One solution should be a involve charitable works. Participants should decide how they could meet the immediate needs of the individuals involved through charitable works. The other solution should be a social justice solution. Participants should decide how they could help to correct the problem in the community in the long term.

Ask volunteers to share their solutions. Write the solutions on a white board or presentation board for the entire group to see. After groups have presented their solutions, consult the facilitator handout [CCHD Funded Group Solutions](#). Read the description of what the CCHD-funded group actually did. Discuss with the participants the difference, if any,

between the solutions they devised and the solution created by the people who are actually living in the situation.

### **Part III: Reflection**

(Estimated Time: 10 minutes)

Have the participants recall the story of the Good Samaritan, and ask them to reflect on the following questions:

1. How is the story of the Good Samaritan an example of "charitable works"? Can you think of any ways the story raises issues about "social justice?" How?

*Suggested Response:*

*The Samaritan's response demonstrated love through "charitable works" by providing for the immediate needs of an individual.*

*We can also look at the historical context to consider why the priest and the Levite did not help the injured man. Biblical commentaries note that the bloodied man would have been considered ritually unclean according to laws of the time. The story is not only about charitable works; it is also about social justice. It highlights the need to change laws that prevent the fulfillment of basic needs.*

*Students could also mention other issues about social justice the story raises. For example, why is the road so dangerous? What changes would need to occur in order to better provide for the protection of travelers in the long term?*

2. If you wanted to more explicitly highlight the "social justice" dimension of the story, what might the "next chapter" look like? How could the Good Samaritan work to correct the long-term problems in the community that lead to unsafe conditions along the Jerusalem-to-Jericho road? How could attitudes toward the injured as "unclean" be challenged?

### **Additional Resources**

Click [here](#) for additional resources that will support this lesson.

### **Faith in Action Extension Activity**

Many students are already involved in community service projects either as individuals or members of a larger group. Most of these projects ask them to perform some type of charitable work or direct service. Challenge participants to consider, as they have done with the Good Samaritan story, the social justice dimensions of the issues they are addressing in service. Ask them to brainstorm specific questions they could ask about the causes of these issues and what could be done, in addition to the essential and important services that are already offered, to alleviate problems permanently in the long-term project.

Excellent project suggestions can be found by asking a local CCHD funded group, or a CCHD diocesan director for suggestions or opportunities to assist the group in their work.