

Name _____ Date _____

Handout 2B: Family Environment and Poverty

Directions: Review the following material. On a piece of butcher paper, use pictures, symbols, drawings and the information presented on this handout to describe the link between single-parent families and poverty.

Child Poverty by Family Type

Estimate	
Total number of families	80.9 million
Number of families below poverty line	9.5 million
Female Householder (no husband present) below poverty line	4.7 million families
Male Householder (no wife present) below poverty line	1,023,000 families

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2012.

More than one in every five children in the United States lives in poverty. Studies show that one major factor in predicting child poverty is family composition. Approximately 6.3% of married-couple families live in poverty, while 30.9% of households headed by single mothers are below the poverty line, and 16.4% of households headed by single fathers are in poverty.

When couples do separate, children are more likely to live with their mother. On average, women's earnings tend to lag behind men – sometimes because women stop working to have children and start at a lower wage rate when they return to the workforce. Many single moms work, but their jobs pay so little that many of them remain eligible for public assistance. The most common jobs held by women with children who receive welfare assistance include maid, waitress, cashier and childcare worker.

According to the 2012 Current Population Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, 37.9% of white families with children headed by a female with no husband are poor. Among African American families that same figure jumps to 46.8% and it reaches 48.6% among Hispanic families.

Regardless of race, children in single-parent households are almost four times as likely to live in poverty as those in married couple households. This is one reason why the Church encourages faithful, committed, married life both before and after starting a family.