



SOCIAL JUSTICE KIT

INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

INTRODUCTION

Social Justice aims to overcome systemic and prejudicial behaviours that create disadvantage and prevent people having the opportunity to better themselves and contribute to society. Indigenous peoples historically suffer systemic prejudice.

Key areas of disadvantage for Indigenous peoples in Australia include:

- education
- health
- housing; and
- employment

Underlying this are contributing factors of exclusion and injustice, including a lack of opportunity, support and encouragement, which prevent Indigenous people from participating as full members of society.

DISCUSSION: Do you know any/are you indigenous Australians?

PRINCIPLES

The underlying principle for good Social Justice Policy is a preferential approach of fostering self-help strategies, rather than reliance upon welfare.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders are increasingly trying to develop self-help strategies. It also means that an effective, realistic community consultation process should be undertaken with local communities, to identify the issues that should be addressed as a priority, and how to go about resolving them.

With local community groups and parishes, this approach could include strategies of making links through Catholic schools, to raise awareness.

For example, Aboriginal elders could be invited to come and teach aspects of their culture to the students, and also to use that as a basis for including members of the wider community who may be interested in participating in this process.

EXERCISE: "Go outside, take off your shoes, walk on the ground. By walking on the ground you are absorbing over 50,000 years of rich culture: the songs, the stories, the births and deaths, the laughter and the tears of Aboriginal people are rising up through your feet." Professor Lyn Henderson-Yates, Deputy Vice Chancellor of the Broome campus of Notre Dame University





Figure 1 Indigenous Australians

THE WORD OF GOD:

Select a suitable Bible passage that calls us to relationship and justice

REFLECTION: Share your Bible passages. Note some thoughts that come to mind

GROUP EXERCISE:

Aboriginal spirituality includes connections to the land, tribe, family and ancestors. In relation to Catholic spirituality, what ways might we reconcile the two traditions applying due respect?

Who are our local Aboriginal Elders and other community leaders?

Do the local indigenous community have any problems that they seek our assistance with?

ACTION: What will we do in the coming months to connect with our local indigenous community?
