



SOCIAL JUSTICE KIT

RESOURCE GUIDE

So much information, but *where to start?* <http://www.msjn.org/home/social-justice-handbook>

1 Introduction to Catholic Social Justice

A kit for **starting and growing** a Parish social justice group. A handy first reference.

2 Resource Guide

This document.

It provides some **handy reference pointers and exercises** that you can use including:

- A **Group Evaluation Exercise** to undertake from time to time
- An **Exercise on Prayer**
- Suggestions for using the separate **Topic Starter guides and worksheets**
- Information about Annual **Catholic Social Justice Statements**
- Information about the **Wollongong Diocese Justice Ecology and Peace Council**
- Links to other **resources on the Internet**

3 Topic Starter Guides

The topic starter guides provide **ready-made material** to kick-start your discussions

4 Issue Reflection Worksheet

A pre-set worksheet to **help guide discussion** on your own topics

The **Wollongong Diocese Justice, Ecology and Peace Council** hopes you find these materials useful for animating your Parish social justice efforts.

With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God 1 Chronicles 29:2a



Compiled by the Justice, Ecology and Peace Council of the Diocese of Wollongong with thanks to the Macarthur Social Justice Network, Kiama Parish Social Justice Group, and other contributors.

GROUP EVALUATION EXERCISE

Groups will find it easier to retain a sense of direction if, at least annually, they *take stock* of what they are doing.

DISCUSSION:

- *What are you trying to do*, in the long term and the short term? How have you been trying to do it?
- What is the shared *vision* you have for the world and for the Church within which you operate?
- What have you been *trying to achieve* within the parish, the Church and the wider community?
- Have you *achieved any of your objectives*? If so, in what way? If not, why not?
- What does each member of the group *feel* about the aims and methods of the group? How could they be developed?
- Have you remained *sufficiently open* to new members?
- What does the *parish think* your group is about?

SOCIAL VALUES

The vision and goals of a society are expressed in its values: what it looks up to and sets store by. In following Jesus, in trying to build up the kingdom of God, our sense of God's personal love for each and all is partly expressed in social values like:

- the value of every human person;
- the value of loving service to others in our society;
- the value of standing in solidarity with those who are treated unjustly; and
- The value of caring for, and defending the dignity of, those who are sick and weak.



EXERCISE:

These may take more than one meeting; a good brainstorming exercise.

1. What are your own values?

2. What do you believe is important?

3. Which are the five or six values that are most frequently referred to by the group?

PRAYER

“*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks* in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”. So wrote Paul to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Prayer combats the tendency to become either despondent or overconfident in the works of social Justice.

PRAYER

Just as *the quest for justice and peace are intertwined*, prayer and the work for justice and peace belong together.

If we attempt this work on our own without the *help of God*, we may begin to believe that the vision of a just and peaceable kingdom is our own.

Grounding ourselves in God through prayer holds us accountable for our actions and keeps us *connected to God’s promise* for the world.

Praying requires us to lift up the world’s pain into God’s presence, asking God to *touch and heal it*.

Jesus leaves little doubt about the meaning of prayer when he says: “*Apart from me you can do nothing*, those who dwell in me as I dwell in them, bear much fruit” (Jn 15:5).

Dwelling in Jesus is what prayer is all about.

Life and social justice issues can become an unbearable burden whenever we lose touch with the presence of a *loving Saviour* and see only hunger to be alleviated, injustice to be addressed, violence to be overcome, wars to be stopped, and loneliness to be removed.

All these are critical issues and Christians must try to solve them; however, when our concern no longer flows from our *personal encounter with the living Christ*, we can feel an oppressive weight. (Henri Nouwen, *The Road to Peace*)

EXERCISE

1. Why should I bother praying for Social Justice at all?

2. What relevance does my faith have to the work of Social Justice?

3. What does action for Social Justice hope to achieve?

4. Other thoughts



“Come to me”, Jesus says, “all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your soul will find rest, for *my yoke is easy and my burden light*” (Mt 11:28-30).

Whatever our motivation, it can be strengthened by the knowledge that we are not just acting out of instinct. We are *participating in God’s existence in the world*.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Put the activities of the group on the Parish Noticeboards, Bulletin and Website.

Members to do this will be:

Noticeboard: _____

Bulletin: _____

Website: _____

Create your Social Justice Group website and contact email address

Webmaster: _____

Email: _____

URL: _____

Find prayers relevant to your current topic(s)

Who: _____

Create bookmark style prayer cards for Social Justice

Who: _____

Occasional retreat days, with a Social Justice theme and guest speaker.

Organiser: _____

When: _____

Where: _____

The three persons of the Trinity loved the universe into existence and are constantly healing, transforming, reconciling and uniting the world. God has a *liberating plan for the world* and we are participating in it.

LITURGY

In your *local liturgies* you may like to consider these ideas:

- A *Social Justice Mass* each year or around a key feast will highlight our need for God in this work and counter the tendency to be overwhelmed by the task at hand
- Incorporating *Social Justice Sunday* material into Mass on the last weekend of September
- *Prayers of the Faithful* with a Social justice focus could be included at Sunday masses

LOCAL RESOURCES

Priests _____

Religious Communities _____

Retreat Centres _____

Other _____



TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

TOPIC STARTERS

Topic Starters have been developed to provide some outline for discussion at your social justice group meetings. These are available on the Social Justice Kit web site. While these cover a broad range of topics they are by no means exhaustive.

To help explore your own local issues the *Issue Reflection Worksheet* can be copied from the Social Justice Kit and used to guide discussion of your own topics.

SUGGESTED USE

Your group could work through one of these topics at each of your meetings as you are starting up.

A typical meeting agenda might be:

1. Opening *prayer*
2. *Reading aloud*, together, through each topic. Perhaps readers could take turns reading each paragraph.
3. Pause after each section to allow people to *reflect and discuss* for 5-10 minutes.
4. Have an appropriate *scripture passage* selected. Read these aloud.
5. Allow 5-10 minutes for group reflection on how the passage reading *informs and speaks to us* about the topic.
6. As a group, read and respond to the *Reflection Questions*.
7. Identify *one action item* that the group agree to pursue.
8. Closing *prayer*

At your next meeting you might *follow up on your action item* to confirm that it was done and gauge the impact of the action.

ONGOING DISCUSSION

As you work through these and other topics you may find that your group has a particular affinity with *one or two particular issues*.

You can use these as *focus topics* for your group.

As you delve more deeply into a particular issue you may find your meetings absorbed wholly on that topic and *seeking solutions*.

At some point in the future the group may feel that it is time to move onto other things, and you can then return to these starter topics to get discussion going on *new areas*.



RESOURCE: SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENTS

The last Sunday of September each year is set aside as *Social Justice Sunday*.

Every year the *Australian Catholic Bishops Conference* issues a Social Justice Statement, focusing on a current Social Justice issue, to coincide with this day.

Not only can this day and the accompanying Statement provide a *focal point for Social Justice Activities* in your area, but the topic and resources provided can be used throughout the following year to promote Social Justice.

TOPICS

The topics covered by the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council in their Social Justice Sunday Statements cover the full range of Social Justice Issues and provide a *ready resource for any Social Justice Group*.

Statements are available for download from the ACSJC web site.

2013: Lazarus at our Gate: A critical moment in the fight against **world poverty**

2012: The Gift of **Family** in Difficult Times: The social and economic challenges facing families today

2011: Building Bridges, Not Walls: **Prisons** and the justice system

2010: **Violence** in Australia: A message of peace

2009: And You Will Be My Witnesses: **Young people** and justice

2008: A Rich Young Nation: The challenge of **affluence and poverty** in Australia

2007: Who is my Neighbour? **Australia's role** as a global citizen

2006: The Heart of Our Country: Dignity and justice for our **Indigenous sisters and brothers**

2005: Jesus, Light for the World: **Living the Gospel** Today

2004: Peace Be with You: Cultivating a **culture of peace**

2003: A Generous Heart in the Love of Christ: Challenging **Racism** in Australia Today

2002: A New Earth: The **Environmental Challenge**

2001: A Just and Peaceful Land: **Rural and Regional Australia**

2000: **Woman and Man**

MATERIAL

Each year the ACSJC Social Justice Statement and accompanying material includes:

- A *booklet* discussing the issue in detail
- A *ten point summary* flyer
- A *prayer card*
- Social Justice Sunday *Liturgy Notes*
- A *PowerPoint presentation*
- Community and School *Education Resources*

Printed resources can be purchased through the ACSJC and *downloadable* versions are available through their web site.

A Social Justice Group could choose to *use these materials* in a variety of ways.

www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

DIOCESAN JUSTICE ECOLOGY AND PEACE COUNCIL

MISSION

To promote justice and peace, ecological concern and respect for life in society, in the light of the Gospel and the social teaching of the Church

INTRODUCTION

In keeping with our Baptismal calling and our stewardship of God's creation, the Diocesan *Justice, Ecology and Peace Council (JEPC)* seeks to be of service to all members of the local church as they respond to Jesus' invitation to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, freedom for the oppressed, and to be Good News for the poor. (cf. Luke 4:16-20)

The Council aims to *assist the Bishop* in addressing social justice issues, and in the task of spreading the Gospel message of justice in the local Church and wider community.

REGIONAL SOCIAL JUSTICE NETWORKS

These *networks are established under the authority of the Bishop* as part of the mission of the Diocesan Justice, Ecology and Peace Council.

As such they have the *same core mission* as the Diocesan Council, seeking to promote justice and peace, ecological concern and respect for life in society, in the light of the Gospel and the social teaching of the Church within their particular region.

As the Network draws from a *number of parishes* within the Diocese it is important for the Network to maintain a strong collaborative relationship with the Parish Priests of the parishes within the boundaries of the Network.

Contact Darren McDowell in the *Parish Services Team* to discuss setting up a social justice group in your area. Phone: 02 4253 0985 darren.mcdowell@woll.catholic.org.au

ACTIONS

- Assist in the development and guidance of a network of social justice representatives and social justice groups, at parish, deanery, or regional levels, and to provide appropriate formation and resources (such as clearing house resources, guest speakers, training kits, an annual Formation Day, assistance with submissions)
- Develop and organise meetings of a Diocesan Social Justice Network as a forum to discuss issues and strategies and to work towards solutions
- Heighten awareness of social injustice and of the need to promote peace and a spirituality of non-violence, through creating opportunities for forming and educating the Catholic community in the social doctrine of the Church
- Initiate and support activities in the preparation and promotion of the annual Catholic Social Justice Statements
- Where appropriate, collaborate with Christian and other faith communities, as well as with groups and individuals, to promote spirituality, advocacy and joint action in favour of justice, peace, and integrity of creation



OTHER RESOURCES

CATHOLIC	GENERAL	<p>Diocese of Wollongong www.dow.org.au</p> <p>Macarthur Social Justice Network www.msjn.org</p> <p>Australian Catholic Social Justice Council www.acsjc.org.au</p> <p>Australian Catholic Bishops Conference www.catholic.org.au</p> <p>Brisbane Catholic Justice and Peace Commission bne.catholic.net.au</p> <p>Prayers www.catholic.org/prayers</p>
	JUSTICE	<p>Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace www.ccjpoz.org</p> <p>Faith Doing Justice www.faithdoingjustice.com.au</p> <p>Catholic Religious Australia - Justice Network catholicreligiousaustralia.org</p> <p>Jesuit Social Services www.jss.org.au</p> <p>Jesuit Refugee Service www.jrs.org.au</p>
	MISSIONS	<p>Columban Missionary Society www.columban.com</p> <p>MSC Mission Office www.mscmission.org</p> <p>Catholic Mission www.catholicmission.org.au</p> <p>Caritas Australia www.caritas.org.au</p>
	TOPICS	<p>Catholic Earthcare www.catholicearthcare.org.au</p> <p>Interfaith www.catholic.org.au/ecumenism</p>
	FAMILY	<p>Catholic Society for Marriage Education www.csme.catholic.org.au</p> <p>Australian Catholic Marriage Council www.acmfc.org.au</p> <p>Project Rachel www.rachelsvineyard.org.au/</p>

OTHER	GENERAL	<p>Social Action Office sao.clriq.org.au</p> <p>Uniting Justice Australia, Uniting Church www.unitingjustice.org.au</p> <p>Refugee Council of Australia www.refugeecouncil.org.au</p> <p>Strategic Community Assistance to Refugee Families www.scarf1.org.au</p>
	ENVIRONMENT	<p>Australian Conservation Foundation www.acfonline.org.au</p> <p>Earth Charter Movement www.earthcharter.org</p> <p>Landcare www.landcareaustralia.com.au</p> <p>Eco Steps www.ecosteps.com.au</p> <p>CSIRO www.csiro.gov.au</p>
	FAMILY	<p>Smart Loving www.smartloving.org</p> <p>Parish and marriage Resource Centre thepmrc.org</p> <p>Gottman Relationship Institute www.gottman.com</p> <p>Marriage Resource Centre marriageresourcecentre.org</p> <p>FACS www.families.gov.au</p> <p>Lifeline www.lifeline.org.au</p> <p>Raising Children www.raisingchildren.net.au</p> <p>Mensline www.menslineaus.org.au</p> <p>Keeping Kids in Mind www.keepingkidsinmind.org</p> <p>Beyond Blue www.beyondblue.org.au</p> <p>Suicide Call Back www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au</p> <p>Kids help Line www.kidshelpline.com.au</p>

MY SITES

