

>>> **Catholic Social Teaching for Middle Schoolers** <<<
CST: Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers
Catechesis for the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh

Faced with the grave social problems which, with different characteristics, are present throughout America, Catholics know that they can find in the Church's social doctrine an answer which serves as a starting point in the search for practical solutions. Spreading this doctrine in an authentic pastoral priority. In this regard, special care must be taken to train lay persons capable of working, on the basis of the faith in Christ to transform earthly realities. *Ecclesia in America*, Pope John Paul II, 1999

Scripture

...God created humans in God's image; in the divine image God created them; male and female God created them. God blessed them, saying: "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth." *Gen 1:26-28*

...But the Lord said, "I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry of complaint against their slave drivers, so I know well what they are suffering. Therefore I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians." *Ex. 3:7*

...You shall not defraud poor and needy laborers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside your land in one of your towns. You shall pay them their wages daily before sunset, because they are poor and their livelihood depends on them; otherwise they might cry to the Lord against you... *Deut. 24:14-15*

...For every human, moreover, to eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of all his labor is a gift of God. *Eccles. 3:13*

...Woe to him who builds his house on wrongs, his terraces on injustice; who makes his neighbor work for nothing and does not give them their wages... *Jeremiah 22:13*

...Prosper the work of our hands, O Lord. Prosper the work of our hands. *Psalms 90*

...Jesus said to his disciples: "No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second... You cannot be the slave both of God and of money." *Mat. 6:24*

...In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. *Matthew 7:12*

...The parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard... *Matthew 20:1-16*

...You have stored up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. *James 5:2-4*

Papal Encyclicals & Bishops' Statements

It is the challenge of our Lord Jesus Christ who laid out our continuing challenge in the Sermon on the Mount... Let us explore together what it means to be "poor in Spirit" in a consumer society; to comfort those who suffer in our midst; to "show mercy" in an often unforgiving world; to "hunger and thirst for justice" in a nation still challenged by hunger and homelessness, poverty and prejudice; to be "peacemakers" in an often violent and fearful world; and to be the "salt of the Earth and the light of the world" in our own time and place. *A Century of Social Teaching*, USCCB, 1990

All work has a threefold moral significance. First, it is a principle way that people exercise the distinctive human capacity for self-expression and self-realization. Second, it is the ordinary way for human beings to fulfill their material needs. Finally, work enables people to contribute to the well-being of the larger community. Work is for one's family, for the nation, and indeed for the benefit of the entire human family. *Economic Justice for All*, USCCB

A just wage is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice. In determining fair pay both the needs and the contributions of each person must be taken into account. "Remuneration for work should guarantee a person the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and the family on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level, taking into account the role and the productivity of each, the state of the business and the common good. Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, (2434)

Work is more than a way to make a living; it is an expression of our dignity and a form of continuing participation in God's creation. The economy must serve people, not the other way around. All work is essential and equally valued. If the dignity of the work and the worker are to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected – the right to decent and fair wages, to organize and join a union, to private property, and to economic initiative. The economy exists to serve the common good of all people.

Sharing Catholic Social Teaching, U. S. Catholic Bishops, 1999

Learn More

Office of Peace & Justice, Catholic Diocese of Raleigh

www.dioceseofraleigh.org

919-821-9751 jurski@raldioc.org

Office of Social Justice – Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis

www.osjspm.org

National Catholic Educational Association

Journey to Justice: Transforming Heart & Schools with Catholic

Social Teaching, by Connie Fourrie

Order at www.ncea.org – religious education dept. – resource

Catholic Labor Network

www.catholiclabor.org

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CST: Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers
Catechesis for the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh

Life and Dignity of Person >>> Rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person >>> Call to Family, Community, Participation >>>

Solidarity >>> Care of Creation >>> Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers >>> Option for the Poor and Vulnerable >>>

Objectives: To learn the themes of Catholic social teaching, its gift, its roots in the life of Christ and the Gospel, papal encyclicals and bishops' statements, its challenge to today's Catholics and its essential role in Catholic faith and identity.
To journey more deeply in our life of faith; to respond in our world today in light of Catholic social teaching, as salt and light; and to rejoice in the Good News.
To realize the dignity of work and worker, that all work is essential for the human person and common good.

Overview

Read the Catholic Teaching on work on the back page:

~Reflect on this teaching :

- In your own life, your community, country and world.
- In connection with the other themes of CST listed on the border.
- In Jesus' life as son of a carpenter.
- As a vision of what work is in the kingdom of God given for us and for the world.

~Expand your familiarity with Church teachings on labor by reading Pope John Paul II's *Laborum Exercens*, (www.osjspm.org)

Preparation

The Church teaches that as workers, owners, managers, investors, consumers we are connected and under obligation to one another in economic life. By our choices, creativity and investment we add to or lessen economic opportunity, community life and social justice.. USCCB
A Catholic Framework for Economic Justice

As consumers we need to understand that what we buy is an extensive exchange. There is the worker who sews the shirt, the manager and the factory owner and the distributor and the buyer (who is the store where we buy the shirt with the money we earn with our labor. All people have the right to work and a right to earn enough to support family and contribute to the common good. This applies to every person for we are all created in the image of God. All are neighbor, locally and globally.

Make copies of the attached from www.nlcnet.org.

Curriculum
Work for just labor

In Ten Minutes

Have everyone pair off and check the label on shirts to see where it was made. Ask "Do you know the story of the person who made the shirt? Does he or she receive a wage that gives all that is needed for life? Are working conditions just in hours worked, proper facilities, health care, so that human dignity is safeguarded?"

Give an explanation of Church teaching regarding work and worker using the side panel as guide.

What is fair labor to you? What would it take for the exchange of goods to be happy for everyone? Can you be happy in an exchange that is not just? What does Jesus tell us (see *Scripture*)
(Use newsprint for brainstorming discussion – no right answers)

In One Hour

Handout copies from www.nlcnet.org, Mary Kate & Ashley
Read and discuss together. What did you learn that you did not know before? How do you feel about this? Much of our clothing is made under similar circumstances. What can we do to help bring justice to our purchases? One way is to investigate on the web and write to companies on behalf of workers. (In the case of Mary Kate & Ashley you can "send a fax" which will be a written fax you can read and send from the website.

More

You will be working for wages in a few years. We need to help one another bring about good exchange through our labor and our purchases. God calls us to justice for work and workers. We are all made in God's image and we are given the gift of work for ourselves and others.

- Investigate this site and others and report back – as groups or individuals
- www.nlcnet.org (National Labor Committee)
- www.catholicrelief.org (Catholic Relief)
- www.fairtradefederation.com (Fair Trade Federation)
- www.walmartwatch.org (Wal-Mart Watch)
- www.oxfam.org

As a group, submit quotes from encyclicals or bishops' statements for your

...everyone must consider every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all their life and the means necessary to living it with dignity, so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concern for the poor man Lazarus (Luke 16:18-31). ...Furthermore, whatever is opposed to life itself, ...whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, ...as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. *Gaudium et Spes*



"mary-kateandashley" Label Sold Exclusively at Wal-Mart

DualStar Entertainment Group

1801 Century Park E #12

Los Angeles, CA. 90067

Phone: (310) 553-9000

Fax: (310) 201-9190

Chief Executive Officer: Robert Thorne

Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen began their career in 1987, when they were 9 months old, playing the infant Michelle on the TV sitcom "Full House." They have parlayed that role into becoming one of the most recognizable brand names in the world.

In 1993, Dualstar Entertainment Group was launched to create projects for the Olsens' to star in and produce. Dualstar has produced nearly 50 movies and CD's. When Mary Kate and Ashley turn 18 on June 13, 2004, they will become co-presidents of Dualstar.

Besides movie making, Dualstar owns the mary-kateandashley brand. The brand includes more than 50 merchandise categories, including fashion, household items, and accessories.

In 2002, Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen were number one on Forbes list of highest paid entertainers at age 16. They will each take control of an estimated \$150 million on their 18th birthday. They are number 83 on Forbes Magazines "100 Most Powerful Celebrities" list. Their books have generated more than \$130 Million in retail sales and sold more than 30 million copies in print among four book series. The mary-kateandashley clothing brand has an exclusive US license with Wal-Mart. mary-kateandashley branded merchandise is also sold in Canada, Germany, the UK, Japan, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, and France. In 2003, the brand earned more than \$1 billion in revenue. Overall, the mary-kateandashley brand is estimated to be worth \$300 billion. In 2003, the mary-kateandashley brand outsold Sean Comb's Sean John line by \$450 Million. Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen dolls, made by Mattel, are number 1 selling celebrity dolls in the U.S. They are Mattel's number 2 fashion doll behind Barbie. The brand will be launched in South Korea this summer, and China in late 2005.

Send a fax over the web to Mary Kate & Ashley. Download a model letter to mail to the Olsen twins. Visit the MaternityRights.org Campaign.

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(The original can be found at National Labor Committee (www.nlcnet.org/campaigns/maternity/dualstar/) to fax a letter to Wal-Mart on behalf of workers.

Solidarity Works!

Seventeen companies have endorsed The Pledge! Read more...

You can now send a fax to Mary Kate and Ashley, asking them to help the women producing their Wal-Mart Label.

(Respected anti-poverty group Oxfam International recently released a report confirming the erosion of maternal rights in the global sweatshop economy. Go to Oxfam.International for more. Or visit www.nlcnet.org/campaigns/maternity/

Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop, has already begun to build the maternity leave campaign in England:

“In Bangladesh, the garment workers have the legal right to three months’ maternity leave with full pay. Yet over 90 percent of the factories... this right is routinely violated. For the women and their infants, this is literally a matter of life and death. It’s not an anti-corporate campaign, it’s an attempt to put a human rights concern into these corporations.”

A Bangladeshi garment worker sewing clothing for major U.S. companies

Maternity Rights Denied

An estimated 90 percent of the more than 3780 export garment factories in Bangladesh violate women's legal right to 3 months maternity leave full pay. Some companies harass and pressure the pregnant women workers to force them to quit. Others give the leave but will only take the women back as new employees. Only a handful of companies in fact pay the benefits. The vast majority of factories simply cheat the women.

Please write to Wal-Mart, Disney, Kohls and other companies asking them to sign The Pledge-**that any woman in Bangladesh sewing their garments will be guaranteed her legal right to maternity leave with benefits.** The law in Bangladesh is very straightforward- it requires companies to provide three months maternity leave with full pay.

Some of these garment workers earn as little as eight cents an hour, while the top wage for an experienced sewer is just 18 cents. This means the U.S. companies and their suppliers in Bangladesh would be responsible to pay anywhere between \$15.76 and \$36.44 a month for three months for a grand total of \$47.28 to \$109.32 in maternity benefits.

Surely the multinationals could afford this!

Helpers earn: 8 cents an hour \$3.64 a week \$15.77 a month \$189.28 a year

Senior Sewing Operators earn: 18 cents an hour \$8.40 a week \$36.40 a month \$436.80 a year

The women feel they can win-but they desperately need our help. The multinationals only react when they feel pressure in their marketplace. And together, we can help well over one and a half million women workers in Bangladesh, who are struggling against some of the largest multinationals in the world, to finally win respect for their legal right to maternity leave with benefits.

This Could Be a Real Victory!

Visit this web page to help www.nlcnet.org/campaigns/maternity

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