



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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JUSTICE, FAIRNESS, AND CHANGING THE RULES: CANDY GAME

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the difference between charitable works and social justice.
- Identify the key concepts of social justice.
- Understand that we should share our gifts with others because God created us all and has blessed us with gifts.
- Affirm that God has distributed talents equally.
- Understand that as a result of God's creation, each person enjoys special dignity.

The purpose of this introductory activity is to provide students with background knowledge of social justice, and to understand that there is a difference between charitable works and social justice.

Preparation:

1. Prepare the materials for the lesson. You will need:
 - A deck of playing cards
 - 12 small bags of bite-sized objects, with 36 in each bag (The "objects" could include marbles, erasers, beans, raisins, pretzels, or candies.)
 - As many envelopes containing prizes as there are face cards being used (Prizes can be real prizes, like movie tickets or a cool gel pen. You could also use fake prizes, like a picture of a bicycle, but using real prizes will make the game more realistic for students.)
 - A bag with a number of marbles (or whatever small objects you are using) equal to two times the number of number cards being used
 - An empty bag
2. Count out the playing cards, one per student.
3. For a group of 20 or more, use ten face cards (which will be given to ten students) and number cards for the rest of the students.
4. If you have less than 20 students, you should only use 8 face cards, and the rest number cards.
5. If you have less than 15 students, use only 6 face cards and the rest number cards.
6. Copy the homework assignment.
7. Meet with the outside presenter (if applicable) to touch base on the lesson.

The Lesson:

The teacher should begin the lesson by introducing the outside classroom presenter, and telling the students that he or she wants to play a game with them. Allow some time for each student to introduce him or herself to the presenter. You may want to consider having the students wear name tags. (If no outside presenter is available,

the game can also be facilitated by the teacher. However, having an outside presenter may help the students enter the new reality and rules of the game.)

Instructions for the Presenter:

1. Pass out a playing card to each student, giving the following instructions: "I am going to give each of you a card and you may not look at it until I tell you to."
2. After you have passed out the cards, tell the students to look at their cards. Then arrange the desks into two rows so that those with a face card are on one side of the room, and those with a number card are on the other side of the room.
3. Tell the students that those with face cards are "the royalty" and those with number cards are "the lowly number people."
4. Initiate discussion. For example:
 - "What is it like to be a poor person?" Amplify and affirm responses. For example, if a student says, "They probably don't get many toys at Christmas," respond by saying, "That's a good answer. Our parish does a toy drive each year for kids who otherwise wouldn't get any toys."
 - "What do you think of when you hear the words 'poor person'?" Amplify and affirm responses. Anticipate that students may describe a dirty, drunken, homeless man.
5. Pass out the marbles. Give two marbles to each poor person, and a whole bag to each rich person. If you are using food, such as raisins or pretzels, tell the students not to eat them or open the bags until you tell them to.
6. Tell the students about the prizes: "Each of these envelopes contain a prize. You can buy these prizes, or 'gifts' from me today." Tantalize the students by telling them the contents of some of the envelopes. Help them picture themselves enjoying the gifts. After they see the value of each gift, ask the students what they think they will use to buy the gifts (the correct answer is "the marbles") and how much they think each gift will cost.
7. Explain the rules of the game:
 - Each gift costs 18 marbles.
 - Since the lowly people have only two marbles, tell them they will have a chance to get more marbles by asking the royalty to share with them. "Don't worry, you'll get a chance to get more marbles. You will be asking the royalty to share with you. You need to start thinking of reasons why the royalty should share their marbles with you."
 - Tell the royalty, "You can do whatever you want with your marbles. You can eat them, take them home, share them or use them to buy prizes. When they, the lowly numbers, come begging, it is up to you to decide whether you listen to them or not."
 - When the lowly numbers ask the royalty to share, they must get on their knees. (This simulates the indecency of poverty.)
 - Explain that gifts *cannot* be split between the lowly and the royalty. (It's possible that someone on the poor team is a good friend of a person on the rich team. They may say, "Give me yours and we'll split the gift certificate to the movies." However, in the real world, the rich are not taking the poor out to a movie.)
 - The rich team may buy a gift at any time. Explain: "You don't have to wait for the poor people to beg you for marbles. Buy what you want, when you want."
8. Tell students not to open the envelopes until all the gifts are purchased.
9. Be ready to begin handing out the envelopes as students come forward with 18 marbles. Give the class a signal to begin. Have a bag ready, as students will "pay" for a gift by placing 18 marbles in the bag.
10. After all the gifts have been purchased, ask the students to return to their seats. Tell them, "That's the end of the game." Then, initiate discussion:

-Ask, "What were the messages of this game?" Listen for: "People only share after they get what they want, not need." "God decides which families we are born into." "It hurts to beg." "Some have more than others." "The rich have easier access to gifts." "It's a game about sharing." "It's a game about greed."

-Ask the students to describe the type of sharing that did take place. What you are listening for is a description of "leftover sharing," that is, we tend to share with the poor after we have made sure all of our needs and wants have been fulfilled. Tell the students that "leftover sharing" is often how adults share. People usually do not donate to the point that they no longer have enough money to go to the movies or out to eat. "Leftover sharing" describes what probably takes place when schools or parishes conduct food drives.

-Ask the questions:

- "Should those with more share with those who have less?" Most students will say "yes."
- "Why should those who have more share?" Note: This is a critical question. It is disarmingly simple, but even adults can have a hard time answering this question.

-This question is looking for motives of giving. Many people, when pressed for an answer, will disclose their motive as one that is self-serving or in their self interest. For example, some have said, "It makes me feel good to give." Or, "I might be poor one day, and if I help a poor person now, maybe someone will help me." Another motive for giving is religious in content. For example, "God made us all." "Because Jesus said we are to share." "We are all brothers and sisters in the eyes of God."

11. Throughout the program you will want to emphasize with the students the proper motive for sharing or helping others. Unfortunately, in many of our schools we teach children to do the right thing but for the wrong reason. For example, we conduct a food drive in our school, but the children are told if they bring in food, they can wear jeans on Friday. That is teaching them the motive of self-interest and not the motive of other-interest professed in the Gospels. We should bring in food for the poor because they are our brothers and sisters.

12. Ask the children to hold up their cards. "See how we are different? Some of you are black fours. Some of you are red sevens. Some of you are kings and queens."

13. Talk about social differences. Racial and economic groups tend to "hang around" their own kind. We often judge by appearances.

14. Direct the students to show the back sides of their cards. "What do you see?" Listen for "We are all the same." "God doesn't see color or rich or poor. He only sees sons and daughters."

15. Ask the students who you represented at the beginning of the game when you passed out the cards. They should guess, "God." And that's right. Explain that passing out the cards at the beginning of the activity symbolizes that God decides where, how, and to whom we were born. None of us gave God input as to the station of our birth.

16. Ask the students "What were the rules of the game?" You might even write them on the board. Then ask, "Were the rules fair?" They should say, "No." Ask, "How could the rules be more fair?" Listen for: "Change some of the rules." "Give everyone the same amount of marbles."

17. Explain and emphasize the two ways the Church says we can help people:

-Charitable Works. Direct assistance, such as giving the poor people more marbles. A food drive is an example of charitable works.

-Social Justice. Changing unjust rules, such as lowering how much the prizes cost or redistributing the candy allotment so that those with the fewest have more.

-Explain that this program is about justice, about learning how to help people change unjust rules.

18. Pass out the homework assignment. Ask the students to illustrate the three concepts from this lesson. The three concepts are: (1) a poor person, (2) a charitable work, and (3) an act of justice. Anticipate that most students will have a hard time illustrating an act of justice, because it is a concept that most Catholics are not familiar with. You might need to brainstorm some ideas with the students: Justice is helping to change the laws in some way to make all more equal. What can students do to help change laws they think are unfair or could be better?

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