

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson 3: A Place at the Table**  
**Participant Handout 3D**  
**Government**

Directions: Read the following passage from the United States Catholic bishops' pastoral reflection, *A Place at the Table*. Using words, pictures or symbols complete the following two tasks:

- Summarize the passage. Describe the "leg" on the table; and
- Identify ways that government can address poverty both in the United States and throughout the world.

*Introduction*

"Our efforts to serve and stand with the poor recognize and build on the essential roles and responsibilities of four institutions. In a sense, the table we seek for all rests on these four institutions, or legs: (1) what families and individuals can do, (2) what community and religious institutions can do, (3) what the private sector can do, and (4) what the government can do to work together to overcome poverty."

*Government*

"A fourth essential leg of the table is the role and responsibilities of *government*—a means to do together what we cannot accomplish on our own. In the Catholic tradition, government has a positive role because of its responsibility to serve the common good, provide a safety net for the vulnerable and help overcome discrimination and ensure equal opportunity for all. Government has inescapable responsibilities toward those who are poor and vulnerable, to ensure their rights and defend their dignity. Government action is necessary to help overcome structures of injustice and misuse of power and to address problems beyond the reach of individual and community efforts. Government must act when these other institutions fall short in defending the weak and protecting human life and human rights."