

Responding to Community Needs

“Faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (James 2:17)

Scripture and our faith tradition require that we put our faith into action. This worksheet will guide your group in developing a social action plan to address a community need. Select one of the issues brainstormed by your class. Then discuss the questions in each section and record your responses on a separate sheet of paper.

Part I: Understanding the Need

1. What is the community issue you identified? In your own words, summarize the need you hope to address.
2. Who in your community is most affected by this need?
3. Are there organizations or individuals in the community that are already working to address this need? List them along with contact information for each.

Part II: Brainstorming Responses: *The Two Feet of Social Action*

Catholic social teaching helps us to see the world through new eyes and to discover opportunities to live out our faith that we might otherwise overlook. According to our social tradition, there are two basic ways we must respond to human needs – charitable works and social justice. Through **charitable works**, we identify people who need assistance and then go out and help them. For example, if someone is hungry, we give them food. These are important works of charity that we are all called to do. Catholic social teaching also tells us there is a second necessary response to meet human needs – through **social justice**. Social justice means we work to change the structures of our community that give rise to these needs in the first place. For example, if someone is hungry, we might ask, “Why are people hungry?” We may then write a letter to an elected official, write an opinion piece to the local newspaper or organize a hunger banquet to raise awareness about the problem and advocate a way or ways to address it.

1. Identify at least two examples of *charitable works* you can do to help alleviate this need. Estimate the amount of time it would take for each.
2. Identify at least two examples of actions for *social justice* you can take to help alleviate the *causes* of this need. Estimate the amount of time it would take for each.
3. For each example listed above, what is accomplished by taking this action?
4. What remains undone?

Name _____ Date _____

EPIC Handout

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Part III: Called to Action

You have considered different ways to respond to your identified community need. Now, you will select one way to meet this need and develop an action plan. Be sure to select steps that are realistic and can be completed with the time and resources available to you.

What is the community need? _____

Generally, what will you do to meet this need? _____

Which foot of justice (*charitable works* or *social justice*) takes a step forward with this action? _____

Action Steps <i>What needs to be done?</i>	Responsibility <i>Who will complete this step?</i>	Time Line <i>When will this step be completed?</i>	Resources <i>Who else will you work with to complete this step? What additional resources are necessary? (money, materials, etc.)</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Use additional sheets as necessary.