



Rights of Workers

Activities for Teachers, Catechists, or Families

BACKGROUND

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers is a principle of Catholic Social Teaching. The dignity of work and the rights of workers means that all work is important and that workers deserve a just salary and proper working conditions. Work has dignity because of the dignity of the worker, who is created in the image and likeness of God. Through our work we express and fulfill our humanity, share in God's work of creation, and contribute to the world through our work. We all have the obligation and the right to make use of our talents and work for the common good.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

During the Jubilee month of May, the Church celebrates the dignity of work with the Jubilee of Workers. Four activities are provided to help children explore this important principle of Catholic Social Teaching.

The first activity, **Thank You, Workers**, can help primary age children offer expressions of gratitude to workers and the work they do. Have the children choose a worker at school, at church, or in their community. Ideas might include a custodian, cafeteria worker, deacon, nurse, construction worker, and so on. Help the children cut out and decorate their cards, and invite them to add their own messages of gratitude. Invite them to deliver their cards to the workers to which they are addressed.

The second activity, **Job Fair Role-Play**, can help primary or intermediate age children explore what workers do and why work deserves respect.

Give each student or small-group a job from the handout. Invite them to research what the worker does and why it is important. Then have students present their role at a pretend Job Fair, explaining why their work deserves dignity and respect.

The third activity, **¡Si, se puede!**, invites intermediate or junior high age children to learn about a labor leader and the importance of safe and dignified working conditions. Invite them to read the handout, then ask them why Chávez is important to so many workers today and why the migrant workers may have struggled to receive adequate pay and just working conditions.

Research together other Catholic ministries that were established to honor the dignity of people, especially workers. These might include programs that help those who have been in prison to learn a trade or provide job training for individuals with disabilities. Ask the young people to report on the main activities of these organizations and how the activities demonstrate Christian values.

The fourth activity, **Worker Rights Pledge**, will help intermediate age children commit to valuing and defending the dignity of work and workers. Together with the children, discuss the first two rights (the right to decent work and the right to fair wages), why they are important, and how these rights can be protected. Then brainstorm additional rights that all workers should have and add them to the list. Invite the children to pledge their support for the rights of workers by having them sign the border, then display the poster where children can see it throughout the month of May.

Thank You, Workers

Thank You

"The Lord blesses our work so that we
may share its fruit with others."

-Deuteronomy 14:28-29

Thank you for all you do.
Your work is important.



Job Fair Role-Play

Farmer

A farmer grows food for people to eat. Without farmers, we would not have grains, vegetables, or fruit.

Nurse

A nurse takes care of people who are injured or sick. Nurses help to keep our communities healthy and strong.

Construction Worker

Construction workers use heavy equipment to build homes, schools, and roads. They make sure that what they build is strong and safe for us to use.

Bus Driver

Bus drivers help children get to school safely. They provide transportation so people can travel back and forth between work and home.

Sanitation Worker

Sanitation workers use big trucks to pick up garbage and recyclables. They take garbage to landfills and sort recyclables to be reused. They help keep our cities and neighborhoods clean and healthy.

Delivery Driver

Delivery drivers deliver packages with all kinds of important things. They deliver to homes and businesses. They make it easier for people to get what they need.

Childcare Worker

Childcare workers care for children who are too young to go to school. They watch children while their parents are at work. They support families and help children grow.

Mechanic

Mechanics work on machines and help to fix cars, trucks, and buses. They keep vehicles safe and running so people can get where they need to go.

Data Entry Worker

Data entry workers type important information into computers to keep careful records. Without them, information would be lost. They help other work run smoothly.

Retail Worker

Retail workers work in places such as grocery stores, clothing stores, and sporting goods stores. They stock shelves and sell goods. They help people get the food and supplies they need.

¡Si, se puede!

Cesar Chavez was born near Yuma, Arizona on March 31, 1927. He was the son of migrant farm workers. He worked in the fields with them when he was young. As an adult he worked to improve treatment of farm workers. This included increasing their pay and improving working conditions. After a struggle that lasted for twenty years, he and his co-leader, Dolores Huerta, established the National Farm Workers Association in 1972. The group later merged and became known as the United Farm Workers Union. The organization's motto was "¡Sí, se puede!" which means, roughly, "Yes, we can!"

Cesar Chavez was a Roman Catholic. He was inspired by Catholic Social Teaching and the life of Saint Francis of Assisi. Saint Francis was a champion for the poor and lived in solidarity with them. Chavez was committed to nonviolent means of achieving his goals. His tactics included boycotts, marches, and hunger strikes. In fact, some feel his many hunger strikes may have contributed to his death in 1993.

Chavez also helped the public to understand the dangers of chemicals used in the fields. He advocated for the rights of workers until the end of his life. He dedicated his life to the dignity of work and the rights of workers. After his death, Chavez was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1994. The award was accepted by his wife, Helen.

migrant

a person who moves from one place to another, usually to obtain work or seek better living conditions



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Workers Rights Pledge

1. The Right to Decent Work

2. The Right to Fair Wages

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

We Support the Rights of Workers!