

ECONOMIC JUSTICE K-5

SOLIDARITY: BEING ONE WITH OTHERS

Vol. 5, No. 3, March 2022/Lent

OBJECTIVE:

This issue focuses on solidarity by learning definitions, seeking real life examples in a story, prayer, church teachings, and making interesting comparisons between humans and other creatures. Families can engage in Lenten practices that are also acts of solidarity.

STEP 1: PRAY

If possible, place a globe or world map near your gathering space.

LEADER: There are many ways to pray. Today we will first pray by watching the video, DREAM PEACE.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ncsYPPMU18

And then we will take a short quiet time to talk with God in our hearts.

After a brief silence:

LEADER: The children in the video may have been doing a kind of prayer as they considered how the world could be a better place. We will now do a petition, or an asking prayer. We will ask Jesus to help children in the world. This is what we will say together: Jesus, please help our friends around the world.

LEADER: Today we pray with the children who do not have enough to eat.

RESPONSE: Jesus, please help our friends around the world.

LEADER: Today we pray with the children who do not have a chance to go to school.

RESPONSE: Jesus, please help our friends around the world.

LEADER: Today we pray with the children whose homes are unsafe.

RESPONSE: Jesus, please help our friends around the world.

LEADER: Today we pray with the children who are living in refugee camps.

RESPONSE: Jesus, please help our friends around the world.

LEADER: Jesus, show us how to be good sisters and brothers to our family all over the world.

RESPONSE: Amen.

STEP 2: MAKE PERSONAL CONNECTION

[STORY]

WORKING TOGETHER

This story is based on the work of Brother John Nitsch and others in their parish of Cristo Resucitado, in Curico, Chile. You will need two readers.

READER ONE:

Tomas and Alicia were walking in a neighborhood of very poor houses. They were with their mother and Brother John Nitsch, who were both carrying sacks of groceries. "Many people in this



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neighborhood are also part of our parish church,” Brother John said. “That’s where Patricia lives. She had no children, and though she is quite poor, some years ago, she asked two children who had no home to come and live with her. Now they are a family and help each other.

Mama nodded. Though this was her first day of delivering food and help to people, she had already heard of Patricia’s family.

Hi Brother, John!” someone called. “Hello Church Lady!”

They turned to see a man coming toward them. Tomas whispered to Alicia, “Look at his shoes.”

Though he was carrying a new pair of sneakers, the shoes he was wearing were very worn out.

“Hello, Luis! I see you have some new shoes,” Brother John said.

“I want you to give them to someone who really needs them. I can still walk in the ones I am wearing, and I have food,” he said, handing the new shoes to Brother John. “Goodbye now! I will see you all on Sunday!”

Mama exclaimed, “How generous he is!”

Brother John nodded. “He is! I often see people who have little still give to others. When there is a catastrophe, like a flood or sickness, it is common that everyone comes to help, no matter who they are.

“That is called ‘solidarity’,” Brother John said. “A good community is one where people work together to help each other. That makes life better for everyone.”

READER TWO:

Jorge the beekeeper looked out at the hundreds of apple trees growing on the land below a great hill. Here, fifty of his beehives stood, a colony of hundreds of bees in each one. As he moved amongst the hives, Jorge always felt a sense of awe about the complicated ways bees lived and worked together both inside and outside the hive. They produced honey so the whole colony could live and grow. A few laid or fertilized eggs and hundreds of others fed the bee larvae, kept the hive cool and clean, or added enzymes to the nectar that would become honey.

A beehive was as busy and productive a place as anything humans build. Maybe more so, Jorge thought, watching the constant movement inside a hive. Bees never fail to work together and help one another.

His friend, Brother John, called this solidarity.

READER ONE:

Further down the street, another man called and waved though he hurried on. Alicia frowned, trying to remember. “Who is that?” she asked. “I’ve seen him before.”

Brother John laughed. “Yes you have! He is our church bell-ringer. He is probably hurrying to ring the bell now! When his wife died, he said he would eventually see her in heaven, but we knew he was very lonely and sad. And someone got an idea to help him. We asked him to ring the bell several times a day. So now he does that and this give him a reason to stay around the church buildings. He talks with everyone who comes and goes there, so he is less lonely,” he explained. “Oh, here we are.”

Tomas looked at the house they were approaching. There were very nice and very shabby houses in his city. This was certainly one of the shabby ones. Inside, he stood next to his mother who was unloading a bag of beans, some potatoes and other food onto a makeshift table. An elderly man was sitting in a chair, a thin blanket across his lap. He was smiling as he talked with Brother John, who was asking him questions. “How are you, my friend? Did you have enough food from last time I came? Has your good neighbor been visiting you and cooking your food? Good! Have you been able to walk lately?” Tomas looked at his sister. She seemed sad. He realized he was standing on a floor made of dirt. Looking up, he saw holes and knew that rain would come through. The floor must become mud when it rains....

READER TWO:

Jorge noticed many bees leaving the hives and setting off, one after another, after another. Though bees could fly as far as three miles, these bees were in an orchard and would probably find a great source of nectar or pollen nearby They needed both, the nectar to make honey for the colony, and pollen for feeding the young bees.

A bee was flying toward a hive. Jorge watched closely, knowing a bee would return to the hive to inform the other worker bees about a good source she had found. Jorge admired that. This tiny being not only communicated with others, but always chose to do so! The whole colony would benefit from this.

The bee would communicate by doing the waggle dance. She would walk in figure eights and straight lines, shaking her wings. Each movement was like a word, showing the other bees where the food was. The longer she danced, the further away the source was from the hive. If she danced with lots of energy, it meant this was a really great place for nectar.

Jorge smiled, thinking of the Creator God who had made these little beings so very clever!

READER ONE:

Tomas and Alicia followed their mother and Brother John to more houses with dirt floors and lonely, hurting people. They talked, asked questions, prayed together, and brought food each time. On the way back, another person called and waved to Brother John. “Is that the young man whom you and others in our parish helped go to law school?” Mama asked.

Brother John said simply, “A good education helps people to not be poor. Both of his parents had died. He was a great student, but he had no family and no money. So, helping him get an education was important.”

“And now he uses his education and work to help others?” Mama asked. Brother John nodded.

Now a woman approached them. “Brother John, my neighbor’s roof needs repair. I thought perhaps you might know how to get help,” she said.

Brother John assured her he could find someone to look into what needed to be done. As she left, he turned to Mama and said, “You can see why it is important to walk in the neighborhoods when we deliver food. We learn who needs help, who can give help, and who might like to become part of our community.”

“Must they be in the parish to get help?” Mama asked.

“Oh, no. But it is through our parish community that we can offer help,” Brother John answered.

Alicia said, “Solidarity?”

Mama laughed. “Yes. That is solidarity.”

READER TWO:

Jorge’s work at this orchard was finished. Sitting under a blooming apple tree he ate his lunch, enjoying the sweet smell of the blossoms and the hum of honeybees at work.

How many ways the bees care for each other! Jorge knew they bathed one another. If a bee gets honey on its wings, it cannot fly. Bees have been known to spend hours cleaning the honey off one bee’s wings. They worked together to store up food for the winter so the young bees would be healthy in the spring. Together they collected resins from certain plants, which their sister bees helped make into a glue to fix cracks in walls and honeycombs. These resins also fight germs! And like humans working in hospitals, they take care of their sick members. If the hive gets too hot, they all work together to cool it down, and they can warm it up in the cold months too. It was amazing!

Bees only live about six weeks, and only make a small amount of honey in that short time. But they may visit 5000 flowers a day, which helps the crops, the colony, and people. What a gift bees are!

Looking out at the many apple trees and hives, Jorge thought about how Brother John and others had helped him start his beekeeping business. Now he could better care for his family, offer jobs to others, and help millions of bees thrive.

When you throw a stone into a lake, it creates circles on the water surface. These multiply and become larger. Helping each other, whether you were a human or a bee, made good things come about and grow, like those circles. Jorge packed up his equipment and thought, “Solidarity.”

READER ONE:

Back at the church buildings, Tomas and Alicia said goodbye to Brother John. “Thanks for helping your mother and me today,” he said as he went into an office.

“I am going to pack some of the food we will give tomorrow,” Mama said. “You can help.”

Tomas, looking at another building, asked, “What are those workers doing over there? They have lumber and tools.”

“Some of the church buildings are being made into temporary housing,” Mama explained. “There are many people coming here from other countries, and they need places to stay until they get work.” Mama said.

“Why are they coming to our country?” Alicia asked.

“Because they cannot find work in their own countries. Here in Chile, we have many orchards. We grow a great deal of fruit, which gets sent to other places. So there are jobs here. But until these migrants get jobs and have enough money to pay for a place to live, they need to have a safe place to eat and sleep.”

“But why does our church help them?” Tomas asked.

Mama stopped walking and looked at her children. “What does Jesus ask of us?”

“Love one another,” Alicia said.

Tomas added, “Which is solidarity.”

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS: SOLIDARITY

- Humans often work together to make a situation better. In addition to bees, there are other creatures that also work and communicate with each other. Do research to find some others. (Some possibilities: ants, otters, crows, elephants, emperor penguins, wolves, and spotted hyenas.)
- Name five examples from the story in which bees help each other. (e.g. bathing each other, feeding the young, taking care of sick bees)
- Name five examples in this true story of the humans helping each other. (e.g. giving shoes, helping someone get an education)
- Name some other ways people help and work together (e.g. in a hurricane, people might set up a safe place to stay)
- Take a step to connect: if your students would like to be in touch with Jorge’s son, who is a first grader, send emails to Brother John at jnitschf@yahoo.com
- Which do you think are more likely to act in solidarity: bees or humans? Why?
- Bees’ work with pollen and nectar also helps humans. How?
- Think about how tiny a bee is compared to you!

VOCABULARY: SOLIDARITY

DEFINITION FOR GRADES K-3:

All people are God’s children. That makes us brothers and sisters. Imagine everyone in the world were holding hands! We are connected to each other, and we need one another. Another word for this is interdependent. We must work together, or be interdependent, if we are to go on living. And, when we share our lives with our sisters and brothers around the world, we will become the best we can be. Even though there are huge differences among us, we are still one family—the family of God.

DEFINITION FOR GRADES 4-5:

The world’s people are interdependent. That means we rely on each other for almost all of our bodily and social needs. Our food production, medical knowledge, languages and art are just a few examples of how humans have always worked together. Even though there are huge differences amongst us, we are still one family—the family of God. This means we should view family not just

as our immediate relatives, just our neighborhood, or just our country. Our family includes all the people in the world. As a family, we must not only tolerate differences, but appreciate them. As a family, we must care about the well-being of each other, making sure other family members have what they need and are being treated fairly.

ACTIVITIES TO USE WITH THE DEFINITION OF SOLIDARITY:

FOR GRADES K-2:

Purple is the liturgical color for Lent. Provide strips of purple paper for making a paper chain. Using a globe or world map, have children find the names of as many countries as you have strips of paper and write these names on them. As the children create the chain, talk with them about the chain as a symbol of solidarity. If you have a prayer table, use the chain to encircle the table.

FOR GRADES 3-5:

Make a list of words or phrases that are synonyms for the word SOLIDARITY, then use these words to complete the acrostic poem:

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O
LOVE ONE ANOTHER
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A
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I
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YOU AND I

BOOKS ON BEES AND HIVES:

- Bees: A Honeyed History by Piotr Socha, for grades 1-4
- Bees in the City by Andrea Chen, for grades 2-6
- Bee Tree by Patricia Polacco, for grades K-3
- Begin with a Bee by Liz Ketchum and others, for grades K-4
- The Hive Detective by Loree Griffin Burns, for grades 5-7
- Honeybee: The Life of Apis Mellifera by Candace Fleming, for grades 1-4
- The Way of the Hive: A Honey Bee’s Sting by Jay Hosler, for grades 3-7

ONLINE: The Bee Conservancy, activities for kids: <https://thebeeconservancy.org/bee-activities-for-kids/>

LEARN ABOUT THE BEEHIVES AT THE VATICAN FARM: <https://catholicsentinel.org/MobileContent/News/Pope-Francis-and-Vatican/Article/Hidden-away-behind-pope-s-summer-residence-is-land-of-milk-and-honey/2/61/22373>

STEP 3: EXPLORE SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

OLD TESTAMENT: IS 55: Long ago, the prophet Isaiah wrote that all people of all nations, should know that God loves them.

LIFE OF JESUS: JOHN 15:17: Jesus says, “Love one another as I love you.”

CHRISTIAN LIVING: 1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19

St. Timothy and St. Paul were good friends. When they were teaching people about Jesus, they often had to work in different places and they needed to be in touch. But they did not have cell phones, so they could not call or text each other. Instead, Paul wrote letters to Timothy, and these letters are part of our bible.

In one letter, Paul was thinking about the people Timothy was working with who had more than they needed. Paul wrote, “Tell those who are rich not to be proud. If they have a lot of things and money, that does not make them better than anyone else. And remind them that they can’t be certain that they will always have so much. Instead, they should count on God always being there for them. God gives us many ways to be joyful! Tell them to be kind, do good things and to share with others. For in helping others, we find happiness. Doing God’s work in the world will give them happiness.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- Name ways you are rich that are not things like games or money.
- What are some things that God gives you to enjoy? (e.g. laughing with friends, appreciating colors of the sunset)
- What does it mean to be kind?
- What are three things you can do to help someone else?
- Samaritan took care of him all night. In the morning, the Samaritan had to leave. He asked the innkeeper to help the man. “I will come back soon and pay you any money you must spend on this man.”

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY?

Pope Francis knows that many people in the world are hungry, homeless, or in unsafe places. He says when COVID began, the world’s people who were poor became even poorer. He thinks we all need each other more than ever now. He wants everyone, including children, to help in whatever ways they can. Pope Francis says we all need to live in solidarity with each other, in ways that are more just and sustainable.

VOCABULARY:

- **JUST:** While this word can be used in different ways, here we are using to mean acting fairly, doing the right thing.
- **SUSTAINABLE:** To be able to continue doing something over a long time.

To sustain someone means to make certain they have everything they need to live.

To live sustainably means making good choices so that you and others can live in a healthy way for a long time.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

During the spring of the year, our Church takes six weeks to observe Lent. This is a time for preparing for Easter. Often, people choose to do these things for Lent: pray more, share their money or other things (this is called ‘giving alms’), and fast. To fast is to give up something for a time. You can fast from French fries, movies, candy, online games, etc.

The special things we do for Lent can help us be in solidarity with others, such as the people in Chile that Brother John and others help. Discuss with an adult how praying, giving alms and fasting can help the people of Curico, Chile and you to be in solidarity.

Together, consider these three things. Write how you think you could do them during Lent:

PRAY _____

GIVE ALMS _____

FAST _____

RAISE YOUR VOICE

WATCH the video Kid President + Glad to Give present How Good Spreads. The pertinent information ends at 3:50.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bH5ozEo1Ao4>

DISCUSS:

- How will you show up?
- How will you make things brighter?
- How can you spread hope?

For more information about the organizations mentioned in this video:

<http://www.rakenow.org/home>

<https://www.socktober.org.au/>

WATCH the video **CST: 101 VIDEO SOLIDARITY** <https://www.crs.org/resource-center/cst-101-video-solidarity>

This video explains the concept of solidarity. While the audio part may be challenging for some students, the visuals continually portray solidarity.

FOR GRADES K-3: Explain that in this video there is an artist who draws a picture of solidarity. His name is Brother Mickey McGrath. Watch for him and notice how his drawing grows to include more people and becomes more colorful. Then provide children with paper and markers or crayons and have them draw their vision of solidarity. Use this link to have link to Brother Mickey’s **DRAWINGS** and have your students pick one of them to color in and then ask them why they picked the one they did.

FOR GRADES 4-5: Have the students listen for these phrases as they watch.

“Solidarity is based on our common belief that everything was created by God and so all creatures are related to one another in this one beautiful community called creation.”

“We are one human family.”

“I am always in relationship, not only with myself but with God and with everyone that God loves.”

“Prayer is always going to lead to action.”

Discuss:

Based on these phrases and the people on the video, draw or write your idea of solidarity.

BE A GLOBAL NEIGHBOR

Brother John Nitsch’s parish in Chili continues to support the studies of college students, the bee project, and migrants. You can be part of making dreams come true with Brother John and the community by visiting <https://maryknollsociety.org/project/parroquia-cristo-resucitado-curico> and supporting their project.

While on Maryknollsociety.org share your prayer requests and they will be added to the intentions offered at daily Mass at Maryknoll, as well as being mentioned during morning & evening prayer and daily rosary.

ENGAGE YOUR FAMILY

As a family, discuss Lenten fasting and choose what simple meals you will have on Fridays. Consider choosing an additional day of eating simply or fasting from take-out foods to join in solidarity with those who are hungry throughout the world. Use the money you save to donate to an organization that supplies food to those experiencing food insecurity. Find simple recipes at <https://www.crsricebowl.org/recipe>.

Ask your child to share a definition of the word “solidarity” they learned in class.

Together view “Dream Peace” for discussion and prayer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= ncsYPPMU18>

NEXT ISSUE COMING MAY 2022 GO FORTH