

Augustinian Mission Office

Recommended Assignments

High School

Poverty Awareness Activity

This activity is designed to help students realize that there is an unequal distribution of resources in the world. Inform the students that they will be trying to recreate a shape on a blank piece of paper. The shape should be pre-made and posted in the front of the classroom. It should be a complicated shape (not just a rectangle or triangle).

Split the students into groups and tell them that there is a contest for the group that comes the closest to replicating the original shape. The groups should sit together, but they can use only the supplies that are given to them. Then pass out an envelope to each table.

The envelopes should be pre-packaged and include different amounts of helpful resources, such that one has all the necessary supplies: a piece of paper, a pencil and eraser, a ruler, a protractor, and descriptions of the lengths and angles of each side of the shape. The other envelopes should have progressively fewer and fewer supplies until the final envelope contains just the piece of paper.

Allow the students a short amount of time to recreate the original shape. Once the allotted time has ended, select the shape that is the closest to the original.

Then discuss this activity with the students.

- 1.) Ask the ones who only had a few supplies to explain how they felt during the process.
- 2.) Ask the students who had the most supplies to explain how they felt when they saw that they had more than the other groups.
- 3.) Discuss who had the best chance of recreating the shape, who had the least chance, and why.
- 4.) Ask the students what their thoughts and feelings are about a contest like this.
- 5.) Discuss the parallels with this contest and the distribution of resources in our world.
- 6.) Ask the students to think of ways to respond to the needs of those who have less than we do.

Shopping for a Meal Activity

This activity introduces students to the difficulties of sustaining a family in a state of poverty. You will need a couple copies of grocery store serials that list the prices of a wide variety of food items. Begin by dividing the class into groups. Tell them that they are creating the menu for a big meal shared among their friends and family. They are allowed to include items for any of the following:

- One appetizer
- One salad
- One soup
- One main course
- Three side dishes
- One dessert
- Two types of beverage

In creating the menu, however, they have to stay within their budget, so they might not be able to include all parts of this meal into their menu. On small note cards, write different amounts that can operate as the budget for the different groups. For one card, include a sizeable value (\$500, for example) that could easily cover the entire menu. With the other cards, write progressively lower amounts such that the final card has a low value around \$2-5. Give these note cards out to the different groups and have them design a menu accordingly.

When they have finished, begin with the group that had the largest budget and ask them to present their menu. Then proceed in descending order, having each group present their menu in turn.

After finishing the presentations, discuss this activity with the students.

- 1.) How did the respective budgets affect the decision-making process? In what ways was it limiting or encouraging?
- 2.) How did it feel to hear the other groups introduce their menus? What emotions did the groups with higher budgets feel? What emotions did the groups with lower budgets feel?
- 3.) Ask about the difficulty of preparing a menu with the smallest of the budgets.
- 4.) Discuss the challenges in feeding yourself and your family when you live in poverty.

The Global Village Activity

This activity introduces students to the diversity across the globe and offers a simplified way of looking at the global community. You will need 11 rulers, and a series of cards displaying the figures 0, 10, 20...up to 100. Lay the rulers on the ground about yard apart and place the corresponding numerical card at each interval.

Have the students (or just a few students, if the class size is very large) stand up by the rulers. Ask participants to imagine that the world is a village of 100 people. They will have to guess how many of these 100 people fit the description that you're going to offer. You will read a statement out loud, and they will decide what number they think this would apply to and then stand by the ruler with that number.

Create statements based on the following information:

- The village would have 60 Asians, 14 Africans, 12 Europeans, 8 Latin Americans, 5 North Americans, and 1 person from the South Pacific
- 51 would be female, 49 would be male
- 82 would be non-white, 18 white
- 67 would be non-Christian (of which 21 would be Muslims, 13 Hindus, 9 practicing folk religions, 6 Buddhists, 2 assorted global religions, 1 Jewish, 15 non-religious), 33 would be Christian
- 80 would live in substandard housing
- 67 would be unable to read
- 50 would be malnourished without a reliable source of food, 16 others would be severely undernourished, and 1 would be dying of starvation. Only 34 would always have enough to eat
- 18 would be without access to a safe, clean water supply
- 36 would lack adequate sanitation in the form of a public or household sewage disposal
- 24 would not have any electricity, most of which use it only for light at night
- 1 would have a college education

After finishing the activity, allow the students some time to write down their reflections on the following questions, and then ask them to share in groups or as a class.

- 1.) What were you most surprised to learn about the global village?
- 2.) Which statistic did you underestimate the most? Which statistic did you overestimate the most?
- 3.) How much of your opinion was based on what other participants were estimating with where they stood?
- 4.) How do you see your place in the global village?
- 5.) How has this changed your understanding of the global village that you are a part of?

Augustinian Mission Site Research and Reflection Paper

This assignment encourages students to learn more about the people and places where Augustinian mission sites exist. Students should either select or be assigned one of the mission locations (Japan, Peru, or South Africa). Once they have the location of the mission site, they must research the area to discover some basic facts:

- 1.) Where is it located?
- 2.) What is some of the history of the area?
- 3.) Describe the people who live in this area: language, culture, ethnicity, etc.
- 4.) What are the greatest challenges facing the people that live in this area?

Along with this research, have the students contribute their own personal reflections on learning about this area. They should reflect on some more in depth questions, such as:

- 1.) How does life for people in the mission site compare with their life?
- 2.) Have they had experiences with similar situations of poverty?
- 3.) What are the greatest needs for people in these areas?
- 4.) What types of practical programs would be useful to serve these needs?
- 5.) What does “solidarity” mean? How can you live or act in solidarity with the people of the area?

This assignment can be done in a variety of ways, depending on how much time you want to dedicate to it. It could be a one page reflection; it could be a more involved research project that includes a poster or interview with someone who has been to their mission site (names and contact info could be provided); it could involve a classroom presentation.