

Preparing for action – two options for secondary schools

The following are two different ways to prepare, each with its own focus. Clearly, depending on circumstances and time, one or other could be used or they could be combined. Stories, Catholic teaching and current facts can be found on the CAPSA website.

Goals

- to provide students with some basic information about seeking asylum and the present government policies in regard to people seeking asylum
- to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on their own attitudes
- to encourage a compassionate stance in line with the Jesus of the gospels and Catholic social teaching

OPTION ONE

1. Share one of the stories of an asylum seeker or refugee by reading or showing a video.
2. After the story, ask students what stood out for them, what may have shocked them or what seemed unfair.
3. Provide a page of quotes from Catholic teaching, including the gospels. Ask each student to choose one or two of these quotes which have bearing on one or more aspects of the story and to think about what that means for the way people seeking asylum should be treated.
4. Invite students to share their findings in small groups.
5. Make a connection between what has been covered and the particular action in which

your students are to participate, eg the need for solidarity, an expression of empathy and love of neighbour or challenge to unjust policies.

6. Conclude with a time of quiet and the prayer.

God, no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness watch over refugees and asylum seekers, those separated from their loved ones, those who are lost, and those who have been exiled from their homes. Bring them safely to the place where they long to be, and help us always to show your kindness to strangers and those in need.

OPTION TWO

Steps one and two could be done very quickly like a brainstorm with no discussion of the rights or wrongs.

1. Ask students to name some of the opinions/words/labels that are expressed for and against asylum seekers and make a note of them on a board.
2. Ask students to name some of the "facts" (real or not) that are mentioned in the media or by people they know and make a note of them on a board.
3. Provide a page of facts about asylum seeking and government policies. Ask students to read through the page then make comments to one other student about which facts they were aware of and what they agree/disagree with.
4. Provide a page of quotes from the gospel and Catholic social teaching. Ask each student to choose one or two of these quotes to provide either support for a community attitude or government policy or a challenge.
5. Invite students to share their findings in small groups.
6. Make a connection between what has been covered and the particular action in which your students are to participate, eg the need for solidarity, an expression of empathy and love of neighbour or challenge to unjust policies.
7. Conclude with a time of quiet and the prayer.

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