

Advocacy Workshop

Part One

This three-part workshop is designed for delivery at the parish council level by anyone with basic computer skills. This document is intended to accompany the three PowerPoint presentations on advocacy. Flexibility is built into the PowerPoints so that they can be presented individually over the council's chosen timeframe or for the presentation of all parts as a one-day retreat or full-day workshop.

One of the resources highly recommended to accompany this workshop and further develop advocacy skills is the *Advocacy Toolkit: Helping Ordinary People Make a Difference*, published by Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ). This toolkit includes detailed examples of how members can advocate, from letter writing to meeting with government representatives and tips on using media to succeed in advocating. Find the toolkit at cpj.ca under "Resources." Copies can be ordered directly from CPJ for \$15.00 (July 2022 price).

Why is advocacy so important to the League?

The main reasons why members advocate include the following:

- The long tradition of Catholic social teaching (CST) is based on sacred scriptures.
- Sacred scripture dates back to Catholicism's roots in Judaism and the Old Testament. We will explore how fundamental collaboration is to our faith.
- By virtue of baptism, Christ not only calls each Catholic to be priest, prophet and king but a disciple called by the church through the call of the Spirit to live this baptismal call every day.
- It reflects the baptismal call to be a voice for the poor and marginalized.
- Through the Second Vatican Council, Catholics are called to "read the signs of the times" and be Christ for others in today's world.
- The Reign of God: "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Mt 6:33). "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt 6:10). All of these reasons for advocacy come together in this line from The Lord's Prayer. Catholics work together to further the reign—the kingdom of God.
- League advocacy adheres to the CST principles, such as the key principle of Care for God's creation or Life and Dignity of the Human Person.
- League advocacy has always included the education and mobilization of members.
- To inform members about issues and causes they care about, so they can take action and become involved in developing and promoting solutions.

Slide - Seek First the Reign of God questions:

- Can you describe an action you have personally taken to answer the call of Jesus in this passage to further the reign of God to bring about justice here on earth?
- Can you share an activity/project that your parish council has taken to address one of these calls from Jesus in the passage?

1. Distinctions between charity and justice

Charity	Justice
Charity = social service. Charity provides direct services like food, clothing, shelter.	Justice = social change. Justice promotes social change in institutions or political structures.
Charity responds to immediate needs.	Justice responds to long-term needs.
Charity is directed at the effects of injustice, its symptoms. Charity addresses problems that already exist. Otherwise put: LOVE MOPS UP.	Justice is directed at the root causes of social problems. Justice addresses the underlying structures or causes of these problems. Otherwise put: JUSTICE TRIES TO MAKE SURE THE MESS ISN'T MADE TO BEGIN WITH.
Charity is private, individual acts.	Justice is public, collective actions.
Examples of charity: homeless shelters, food shelves, clothing drives, emergency services.	Examples of justice: legislative advocacy, changing policies and practices, political action.

2. Distinctions between advocacy and collaboration

- League advocacy reflects Catholics’ baptismal call to use their voices to speak for the poor and marginalized. It adheres to the seven principles of CST, such as the common good and care for the environment. It includes the education and mobilization of members so they can be informed about issues, take action and become involved in developing and promoting solutions for causes about which they care. It calls members to identify and be part of the changes that address symptoms and the underlying causes of injustice.
- Collaboration can help achieve goals when two or more members work together in faith to accomplish a common goal or create something for the common good. As members work together through collaboration, they become more successful by developing and engaging in ongoing partnerships with faith organizations and various levels of government. These alliances are built on respectful dialogue, constructive feedback and cooperation as members seek to build God’s reign on earth, working toward a more just reality for all God’s creatures.

Part Two

1. Exactly what do we mean by “Catholic Social Teaching” (CST)?

Slide – Discussion Time on the Video “What is Catholic Social Teaching?” questions:

- What did you learn that you did not already know about CST? Be as specific as you can.
- How far back does CST go in church tradition?”
- What are the three examples of CST shown in this video?”

2. What are the seven key principles of CST, and how do we “read the signs of the times” using these principles?

Slide – “The Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching” video questions:

- Which of the key principles speaks most strongly to you? Can you explain why?
- Why are these key principles only the first step on our journey to social justice?

What are the seven key principles of Catholic social teaching?

1. The Life and Dignity of the Human Person
2. The Call to Family, Community, and Participation
3. Rights and Responsibilities
4. The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
6. Solidarity
7. Care for God’s Creation

Slide – “Speaking Out, Speaking Up” questions:

- When and how do we say what is important to us?
- How does the relationship with the local media work (not only Catholic media)?
- Who speaks on behalf of the Christian community, and how are they chosen?

3. What exactly do we mean by advocacy? How do we live this daily as faithful disciples of Jesus and League women of faith?

What is faithful advocacy? It is:

- work that seeks to change laws, policies, practices, programs or services.
- an action and an effort to bring forth a more socially just, ecologically regenerative, and spiritually fulfilling society.
- part and parcel of living our lives as if the gospel, faith tradition, neighbours (especially the poor and oppressed), and the earth really matter!

What is League advocacy? League advocacy:

- is faith-based and reflects the baptismal call to be a voice for the poor and marginalized.
- adheres to the principles of Catholic social teaching. Two examples are the principle of the common good and Care for God’s Creation.

- includes the education and mobilization of members. It allows members to become informed about issues and causes they care about, take action and become involved in developing and promoting solutions.

How is advocacy linked to the League?

- It reflects members' baptismal call to be a voice for the poor and marginalized.
- League advocacy adheres to CST principles, such as the key principle of Care for God's creation or Life and Dignity of the Human Person.
- League advocacy has always included the education and mobilization of members.
- So that members can be informed about issues and causes they care about, take action and become involved in developing and promoting solutions.
- Connect the CST principles to your advocacy work at the parish, community, provincial and national levels! When considering a justice issue, ask yourself and others, "To which CST principles is the issue relevant?"

4. What are some specific guidelines to follow when advocating as a member and not representing the League?

*You are invited to add any specific points to help develop the answer to this question. These guidelines will be used to help individual women advocate by themselves for any concerns/issues they want to pursue personally. These concerns/issues will typically be small and local in nature. When the member advocates, she is **not** representing the League but will be acting out of a conviction that comes from her faith, social justice teaching, CST principles, core values of the League, etc.*

The following are some guidelines for League advocacy work at the parish council level:

- ensure the concern/issue aligns with Catholic social teachings
- reflect one or more of the League's core values—faith, service and social justice
- investigate if the League has addressed this topic in the past or is in the process of pursuing (resolutions)
- communicate with the diocesan/provincial president your concern/issue and intent to advocate/collaborate with government officials and at what level
- remain non-partisan in collaboration/advocacy activity
- clarify when you are writing a letter with a personal concern that you are not acting as a representative of the League. Do not use League letterhead or speak for anyone else.

5. What is the connection between advocacy and national resolutions?

The League has, since its origin, made a strong connection between advocating for the poor and vulnerable. This connection is reflected in resolutions submitted by members from across the country that are presented and adopted at national conventions. It will continue to set the League apart from other women's organizations as members highlight *justice* in their deliberations and actions, building God's reign on earth.

Part Three

Key components of this workshop:

- 14 steps to successful advocacy
- How to apply these steps on a specific topic/issue
- The process of “See, Judge, Act” to guide advocating

Seven key principles of Catholic social teaching:

1. The Life and Dignity of the Human Person
2. The Call to Family, Community, and Participation
3. Rights and Responsibilities
4. The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
6. Solidarity
7. Care for God’s Creation

14 Step Advocacy Plan:

1. Identify concern(s) and change(s) needed. Evaluate how this situation falls in line with Catholic social teaching. How do you think justice can be brought to this situation? What are possible changes needed to address this concern?
2. Humanize. Focus on stories rather than overwhelming others with adverse facts that make them feel hopeless. Do you have a personal story to share about this issue? How can we make this issue personal? For example, have you witnessed a special place defiled with plastic garbage? How did that make you feel?
3. Recruit others to assist with advocacy. A task shared is less of a chore than when working alone. Build relationships. Learn to be a collaborator. Can you think of any other ways to recruit others? Who might you approach?
4. Research the topic(s) so you are better informed. Expose yourself to other viewpoints. Divide up the research. Check government websites, international organizations, businesses, newspapers, journal articles and books.
5. Identify changemakers and those who are affected by the problem. Choose your focus—is it a federal/provincial/municipal government, business, church, corporation or an individual? Talk to people who are affected. Investigate some background information about targets. Who are the changemakers? Could it be your pastor or parish pastoral council? The local grocery store? A club that you belong to? Can you identify any specifics around those affected by the problem? Try to be as local as possible.
6. Set realistic goals and objectives. Make a checklist. Be very particular in describing the goals that you can reach within a specific time. Stick to your topic. Anticipate the resistance you might expect.
7. Plan ahead and work as a team! Create and develop your strategy using several tactics and put the plan(s) in writing. Are the plans in keeping with CST? Designate individuals or groups for specific tasks. Plan to collaborate. Can you envision yourselves implementing these steps as part of successful advocacy?

8. Recruit more people who are sympathetic to your cause. Prepare a short speech! Speak out. Ask! Make others feel needed. Don't be afraid to work with other groups.
9. Pray Again! Seek the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Pray to God for understanding, fortitude and patience. Practice a holy curiosity and ask courageous questions. See, then analyze, reflect and act.
10. Take further action! Fine-tune the ask! Who benefits; who loses? Do others share the same concerns? Write, stage a protest or event, phone or visit politicians or authority figures. Always show respect and invite a response.
11. Monitor and evaluate progress. Use your checklist. Set up alerts on your computer so you will be notified and up to date. Consult with the people who are affected to see if they have benefited. What are some additional ways in which you can measure your progress?
12. Report your progress. Make a written report of successes, failures and possible work needed. Prepare a financial report, if relevant. Record your progress in your parish council minutes and annual reports. Publicize to bring awareness to others who may also benefit from the changes. Can you think of other ways to report your progress?
13. Celebrate your successes. Although there may still be work to be done to reach your long-term goals, make time to celebrate your victories. It promotes enthusiasm among your team and encourages hope in the people who are affected by the issue. How might this step take place in your parish council?
14. Where do you go from here? There is no peace without justice. Repeat the steps in the battle to right an injustice if you have yet to reach your long-term goal. This issue may have been resolved, but many other issues can still use your input. God will likely nudge you gently—respond!

Slide following “How Advocacy Works” video questions:

- What key principle was illustrated for Robert? Why did you select this one?
- What key principle was illustrated for Koto? Why did you select this one?
- What key principle was illustrated for Ali? Why did you select this one?

Resources

Guides and Toolkits

Title, Publisher, Year	Link
<i>Catholic Social Teaching Scripture Guide</i> . United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2010).	usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catholic-education/campus-ministry/tools-for-action/upload/cst-scripture-guide-donna-update-matt2.pdf
<i>Advocacy Toolkit: Helping ordinary people make a difference</i> . Citizens for Public Justice.	cpj.ca/cpjs-advocacy-toolkit/
<i>Political Advocacy Toolkit for Teens</i> . Florida Youth Commission. (2012).	flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/childadvocacy/yc_toolkit.pdf
<i>Advocacy Skill Building Toolkit: Facilitator Guide</i> . Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities. (2017).	umt.edu/rural-institute/rtc/resources/advocacy-skill-building-toolkit/guides/facilitator-guide-pdf
<i>Youth Advocacy Toolkit</i> . UNICEF.	unicef.org.uk/working-with-young-people/youth-advocacy-toolkit/

League Resources (available from cwl.ca)

Resource	Item #
<i>Care for God's Creation Resources</i>	625
<i>Catholic Social Teaching Resources</i>	624
Community Life and Social Teaching (Notes)	806b
Community Life and Social Teaching (PowerPoint)	806a
<i>Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers</i>	629
<i>Existing Programs and Courses on Catholic Social Teaching</i>	631
<i>Personal Letter Writing Guide</i>	173

Short Films

Title, Year, Length	Producer	Link
<i>How Advocacy Makes a Difference.</i> (2020). 00:03:00	The Advocacy Project	youtube.com/watch?v=-EyL3lZBRyo
<i>What is Advocacy?</i> (2016). 00:01:23	Kate Mercer	youtube.com/watch?v=NnOk2tTz468
<i>Understanding Advocacy and Action.</i> (2017). 00:03:31	Learning to Give	youtube.com/watch?v=w0BYMqONzgM
<i>How to be an Effective Advocate.</i> (2019). 00:07:10	TxSayWhat	youtube.com/watch?v=ojryBLYFwuU

Websites

Website	Link
“Advocacy” Canadian Jesuits International	canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/outreach/advocacy/
Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice	jesuitforum.ca/

Other Resources

Resource	Link
Advocacy Bootcamp Ontario Council for International Cooperation (2020)	ocic.on.ca/online-advocacy-bootcamp-with-ocic-results-canada/
See, Judge, Act (PowerPoint) Development and Peace—Caritas Canada	www2.devvp.org/en/csp/see-judge-act
“Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time: A joyful vision of God’s reign.” <i>National Catholic Reporter.</i> (2022). Author: Mary M. McGlone	nronline.org/news/spirituality/scripture-life/twentieth-sunday-ordinary-time-joyful-vision-gods-reign