

Chapter 2: Justice and Virtues

Getting Started

Introduce the concept of the virtues to the teens by summarizing, in your own words, the material found on page 47 of the Teacher’s Manual, “Introducing the Chapter.” Optionally, have teens read about the virtues on pages 35–39 of the Student Text. Then have them read the following story.

The Story

At the age of 12, Craig Kielburger and his friends launched “Kids Can Free the Children,” a Toronto-based organization dedicated to ending child labor in developing countries. Today, it is the largest network of children helping children in the world. In just seven years, the youth volunteers raised enough funds to build more than 300 primary schools in 21 countries, bringing daily education to more than 20,000 children worldwide. Their work earned Kielburger and Free the Children a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. In an interview with GlobalTribe, Craig talks about what he has learned about youth and life as an “active citizen.”

CRAIG KIELBURGER ON ENDING CHILD LABOR AND BEING AN ACTIVE CITIZEN

By Amy Eldon

CRAIG KIELBURGER: I was twelve years old when I first became involved in human rights. One morning, when I was getting ready for school, I began to search for the comics section of the newspaper. On the front page was the picture of a young boy from Pakistan who had been sold into slavery as a carpet weaver when he was four years old. According to the story, he worked 12 hours a day tying tiny knots to make carpets. He lost his freedom to laugh and to play. He lost his freedom to go to school. When he was twelve years of age, the same age as I at the time, he was murdered. I had never heard about child labor and the differences in our lives shocked me. I was able to relate to him because we were both the same age. . . .

Access the rest of this story at www.pbs.org/kcet/globaltribe/voices/voi_kielburger.html from the PBS series *Global Tribe*.

Discussion

Lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions:

1. What, if anything, did you find most surprising about this story?
2. Which of the theological and cardinal virtues are illustrated in this story?
For example, love motivated Craig and his friends to take action on behalf of child laborers; hope enabled them to believe that they could make a difference despite their youth; fortitude enabled them to persevere against great odds; justice guided their actions on behalf of the child laborers.
3. What role do you think these virtues played in the success of Craig’s activism?
4. The Church calls Christians to perform acts of charity, but also to pursue social justice. In what ways do Craig and the other members of Free the Children perform acts of charity?
For example, providing school kits or medical supplies to needy children.
What are some examples of how Craig and Free the Children work for social justice?
For example, by working to change or establish child labor laws, by offering leadership training to young people, and by building schools to provide educational opportunities to young people.
5. What aspects of Craig’s message did you most strongly agree or disagree with, and why?

Take Action

VIRTUES AND THE NEWS

- For this activity, you will need a variety of newspapers or news magazines, enough to provide at least one for every participant.
- Remind the teens that Craig Kielburger was motivated to take action in response to an injustice that he read about in the newspaper. Explain to them that they will be examining the news for stories of injustice that might spark a similar reaction in them.

- Have the teens form groups.
- Allow the teens some time to review their newspapers for stories of injustice; allow the teens to discuss these stories with one another.
- Ask each group to select one story. Explain that each group should discuss how young people of their age might respond to the injustice described in the story, listing specific actions that young people could take. Each group should also discuss the virtues that would be necessary to successfully undertake their proposed actions.
- Have each small group present their story to the large group, along with ideas for how young people might respond and the virtues that would be necessary to make the response successful.
- As the teens make their presentations, deepen the discussion by asking how the story and their responses relate to the principles of Catholic social teaching.

Additional Activities

- Have teens develop the skits described on page 53 of the Teacher's Manual (Creative Learning, a).
- Have teens complete the worksheet, "Charity and Justice Compared," from page 199 of the Teacher's Manual.
- As homework, have teens investigate Catholic social teaching documents using the information in the activity on page 48 of the Student Text as a guide. Ask each teen to bring three interesting quotes from the Catholic social teaching documents to share with the group at the next session.
- Have teens write letters to their elected representatives on a justice issue of importance to them, using the information on pages 50–51 of the Student Text as a guide. Bring envelopes, stamps, and a list of addresses so the letters can be mailed when the letters have been written.

Additional Resources

For additional books, videos, and websites related to this topic, see pages 47–49 of the Teacher's Manual.