

Activity: Solidarity: A Vision of One Human Family

(60-75 minutes)

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FACE THE FAST

Objective

Through this activity participants will understand how they are connected to our global community.

Activity Summary

Participants will be assigned to a community, and be asked to discern what that community provides to the rest of the communities. They will be able to see how communities are interdependent.

This activity is followed by *Reflection: Solidarity – Why Not?* which provides participants time to reflect more deeply on the concept of solidarity.

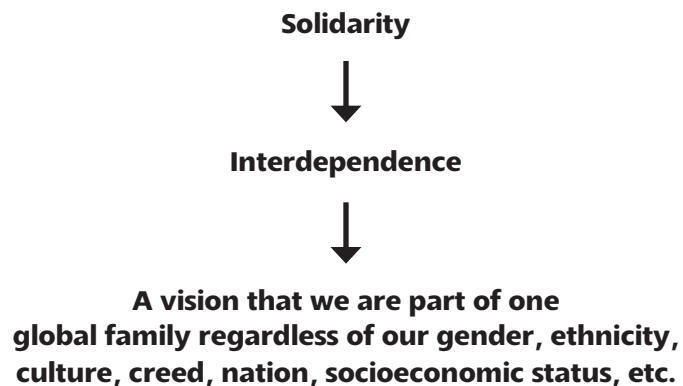
Materials Needed

- Gathering space should be open and large
- Activity needs to take place in close proximity to a wall upon which newsprint can be posted and easily read
- Newsprint
- Tape
- 5 markers of different colors

Preparation

On 5 sheets of newsprint write the following labels, one per sheet: Family, School/Church/Local, City/State, Nation, and Global Community. One sheet will be provided to each group.

On another sheet of newsprint draw the *Solidarity Diagram*.



Post the *Solidarity Diagram* on the wall and cover this newsprint so that it cannot be read until later in the activity.

It is always effective and powerful to invite someone, particularly a young person, to share a personal story or talk about some experience that helped break through his/her prejudices and biases and led to a deeper awareness of the connectedness all humans share. You might consider inviting someone who has traveled to a developing nation to share the impact of that experience on his/her life.

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Procedure

Part I: Community

Divide participants into groups of varying sizes to create a sense of proportion with respect to the increasing size of the level of each community.

- Group 1 (2-4 people): Family
- Group 2 (4-6 people): School/Church/Local
- Group 3 (6-9 people): City/State
- Group 4 (9-12 people): Nation (U.S.)
- Group 5 (12 or more): Global Community

Assign each group a particular level of community as noted above. Obviously the proportions are not realistic, but are simply meant to reinforce the notion that we are part of something much bigger than what we often choose to acknowledge.

Give each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker. Each group should pick a “secretary” to take notes.

Instruct each group to consider carefully its assigned level of community and brainstorm what that level of community strives to provide for us.

- 1 What does this community provide for us? For instance, what do we gain by being part of that level of community?
- 2 Include both concrete (e.g., clothing, food, oil, etc.) and abstract (e.g., security, love, freedom, etc.) examples
- 3 List things, conditions and qualities of life that characterize the reality of being part of that level of community. The list may not necessarily be all positive, but also may present challenges and struggles.

Allow 10-15 minutes (or whatever time might be suitable) for the groups to work on the task. Consider assigning to each group a peer or adult leader who can help keep the group on task.

Part II: One Human Family

Invite each group to share its list in the following order:

- 1 Invite the “Family” group to report first. When the group has finished, ask if there are questions from those listening. Post the list on a wall. Instruct the group to sit in a small circle on the floor in the center of an open area.
- 2 Continue the same process with the “School/Church/Local” group. When this group has finished, post their list and instruct them to sit in a circle around the family group.
- 3 Follow this same pattern with the “City/State” group, “Nation” group and “Global Community” group, so that participants are sitting in a formation that is somewhat close to a series of concentric circles. Be sure to keep the process moving relatively quickly to maintain participants’ interest.

Note: If the total group of participants is somewhat small, you may want to map out the concentric circles in advance using string, masking tape or markers; then, invite representatives from each group to stand in their appropriate circles.

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After all groups have reported and the concentric circles have been created, continue by focusing the attention first on the lists posted on the wall. Ask participants to review the lists and to describe what they notice about the patterns or relationships between each level of community. Possible answers might include the following:

- Each list is unique or contains unique items.
- There are similarities between each list, thus indicating a mutual support across the levels of community. For instance, “security” might be indicated in some fashion (e.g., protection from parents, policemen, armed forces, security from attack, etc.).
- The items listed in the smaller level of communities may be more intimate or personal, while the items in the larger levels may be more general and widespread.

Be sure to help participants identify the interdependence and mutuality between the communities by exploring the following conclusions:

- 1** Stand in the middle of the circles and point out that each of us are part of ALL these communities and that none of us can separate that from who any of us are. As you stand in the middle, name your families, your church/school/local community, your city and state, and so on, demonstrating this reality in your own life.
- 2** Point out the unique resources and opportunities you have gained from each level of community that helped you to both survive and thrive. Give examples from the lists.
 - Note that our parents provide food for us, but that the food we eat may come from local farmers and, most definitely if we are shopping at grocery markets, from farmers and providers from around the world. If you are holding Food Fast during the winter months, you can stress the idea that because of trade agreements with other countries, many of the fruits and vegetables we eat during the winter are grown in other parts of the world.
 - Ask participants to look at the shirt tag of someone sitting nearby and to call out the country where the shirt was made. Inevitably, there will be several countries mentioned. Highlight the idea that much of what we use has passed through the hands of people around the globe, sometimes in situations that are just and that promote dignity and life, and many times in situations that are completely unjust and destructive, as in sweatshops or unsafe factory conditions.
- 3** Discuss how each level of community impacts other levels encouraging participants to explore how we sometimes fail to see beyond the levels of community closest to us. Explore the attitudes and biases that can develop from such a view.
- 4** Discuss how some people indeed understand this reality of who we are in relation to the world and use this knowledge to either foster life or exploit and ultimately destroy life. Through discussion, help bring out some of the following examples:
 - Terrorists understand this reality. They may attack a nation or city, and fear sets in at all levels of community.
 - Consider the impact on a small community or on a family when a national government breaks down. If a government is not committed to protecting its people, it becomes very difficult for parents and local communities to do so as well. Use examples from war-torn areas where human rights have been violated and describe how families and communities have been forced to leave in order to find safety and refuge.

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- Consider the impact of someone like Pope John Paul II who traveled to more countries than any other human in history. The Holy Father also understood the reality that we are part of all these levels of community. He used this understanding to foster life, bridge communities and lift up the dignity of people from all walks of life.
 - Consider the example of Catholic Relief Services and other international agencies that use the wealth of resources from one country to help people in emergency situations in other parts of the world.
- 5 Reiterate that we are part of each level of community, part of *One Human Family*, and that we cannot separate that from who we are individually.

Part III: A Vision of Solidarity

Uncover the *Solidarity Diagram* to introduce the Catholic social teaching principle of Solidarity. Begin by reminding participants that we are never fully independent even though we like to think we are. Introduce the notion of **interdependence**. Describe that although we may strive to get to a point where we can be self-sufficient and create a path for our own lives, we CANNOT do that alone; each of us needs others, depends on others, to both survive and thrive.

- 1 Ask participants to name people closest to them who have helped them to get to this point in their lives. Follow this by asking how they are connected to people in other parts of the city, country and world.
- 2 Reinforce the Catholic social teaching principle of solidarity as a vision that recognizes an inherent truth about who we are: we are always in relationship with each other, that we are part of a global family regardless of the unique qualities we often use to distinguish ourselves.
- 3 If you have invited someone to share a personal reflection or story, introduce the person at this point and allow him/her to speak.

Conclude by challenging participants to think about the vision of solidarity for the rest of the Food Fast. Challenge them to consider what this vision means for their own lives as it may be a different way of seeing who we are in relationship to all people and all of creation.