

ACTIVITY BUST SOME MYTHS!

Ask the students to stand in the middle of the room. When you share the following statements, get them to stay standing if they think it's a fact or duck down if they think it's a myth. Then share the correct answer.



- Everyone in Australia has the same life expectancy. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a life expectancy of over 8 years less than other Australians.* **myth**
- Indigenous people only make up 3.8% of Australia's population, but Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners account for 32% of all prisoners. **fact**
- 1 in 6 Australian children are growing up in poverty. **fact**

VINNIES SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACTION



The Society is committed to alleviating immediate need, but also to challenging structures and government policy that contribute to inequality. The Society advocates for policy reforms leading to a more just, compassionate and equitable society, with the aim of eliminating the root causes of poverty.

We begin by providing immediate assistance and building trusting relationships with the people we assist. This trust helps us to uncover the causes of disadvantage in order to offer a hand up to people in need.

The Society calls for solutions to injustice by engaging government, working with other organisations and raising awareness across the community. Your school can help with these initiatives.



TRANSFORMATION
Shaping a more just and compassionate society



IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE
Addressing urgent needs



HAND UP
Build trusting relationships



RAISING OUR VOICE
Empowering people to advocate for change

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Ask the group questions then discuss the facts.

WHAT DOES SOCIAL JUSTICE MEAN TO YOU?

What does 'safe' mean to you? What about 'secure' and 'adequate'?

Broadly, it means everyone has equal economic, social and cultural rights – like access to education, employment, safety, health and social fulfilment – regardless of their ethnicity, religion, class, disability, gender, sexuality, age or race.

WHAT SOCIAL INEQUALITIES HAVE YOU SEEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Local issues might include poverty, racism, ageism, or when someone is treated unfairly or denied access to opportunities because they are seen as different.

WHY DO YOU THINK SOCIAL INEQUALITY EXISTS?

Generally, social inequality falls into two groups that have two different causes:

- Unequal treatment of people by other people due to a personal belief about someone's race, sex, age, faith, etc, or;
- Unequal regulations and laws made by government that intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against a group, and leave them without the same opportunities and resources afforded to others.



ACTIVITY

SEE SIMILARITIES, NOT DIFFERENCES

Give a lemon to each student and ask them to “get to know” their lemons. Have them look for any identifying marks, shape, brightness of the lemon, etc. Then, take the lemons, put them in a basket/pile and have the students find their lemon. Students should not have trouble with this. The next day, peel the lemons and have the students attempt to find their lemons again in the basket/pile.

This will teach them that although we look different on the outside, we are the same on the inside. Discuss the ways in which people are similar on the inside and how our needs and goals are often very similar.

Place students in pairs and have them observe and interview each other. Have students list their differences as well as similarities. See if these attributes are external or internal, and discuss this with the class. Students should leave the activity realising that it's important to respect and celebrate human differences.

IMAGINING A BETTER WORLD

Thinking about social justice can often lead us to thinking about what our ideal world would be like.

In groups, think about your ideal world, and think about the following questions:

- Would there be rich and poor?
- Would there be any war?
- Would there be any racism?
- Would everyone be treated equal?

Draw a poster of your ideal world and how your world would run. Share your ideal world with everyone else, explaining how everything would work. As a big group, discuss how you could apply some of your ideas to the world we live in to help reduce inequality.

“You must not be content with tiding the poor over the poverty crisis; You must study their condition and the injustices which brought about such poverty, with the aim of a long term improvement.”

- Blessed Frederic Ozanam

“Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice”

- Nelson Mandela.

CHALLENGE

WHAT IS THE DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN?

Find the list online and pick three items to discuss as a group and how these rights are afforded to certain groups and not afforded to others groups. Discuss how some children in Australia don't get a chance to do things most children take for granted, such as going to school or having enough food.

As a group, decide how you can raise awareness about this issue. Could you make posters to display around your school and town? Could you call your local mayor to ask them to take action?

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

BE ADVOCATES

Talk to your family, friends, classmates, and community to help raise awareness about homelessness and fight stereotypes. Research the topic. See what Vinnies is doing in your local area, and how they're advocating to government. Collect signatures for a Vinnies petition, start your own, invite a local MP or Mayor to your school so your group can share your concerns with them – and let us know about it!

BE AWARE OF YOUR PRIVILEGE

... and how others aren't as fortunate. Think about how your actions could change to be more inclusive of others, and then change those actions.

CREATE A SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTION PLAN:

Visit the **Vinnies Key Event Calendar** and create a **Social Justice Action Plan** to help support minority groups: youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/YOUTH_KEY-EVENTS_CALENDAR_2024.pdf

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