

Handout 21

Charity versus Social Justice

Name _____

Definitions

Acts of charity differ from acts of social justice. As Catholics, we are obligated to do both charity and justice. Some differences are listed below:

Charity

1. Private, individual acts
2. Responds to immediate needs
3. Provides direct services—food, shelter, and clothing
4. Requires repeated actions
5. Directed at the effects of injustice

Social Justice

1. Public, collective acts
2. Responds to long-term needs
3. Promotes social changes in institutions
4. Addresses structural injustices (unjust public policies)
5. Directed at the cause of injustice

Identifications

Based on the definitions, identify the actions below as either acts of charity or acts of social justice.

1. Clean out your bookshelves and bring in all the books you no longer want for your school's annual book drive. Charity Justice
2. Invite local, elected officials to speak at your school regarding their voting record and thoughts on legislation affecting the working poor in your community. Charity Justice
3. Volunteer to tutor children in a shelter for the homeless population every Saturday morning. Charity Justice
4. Make Easter baskets for children in a low-income neighborhood. Charity Justice
5. Circulate a petition in your school, and present it to your School Board addressing the lack of handicap-accessible features in your school. Charity Justice
6. Choose not to purchase a piece of sports equipment by a company known for exploiting child labor. Charity Justice

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7. Investigate in what country your favorite shirt or jeans have been manufactured. Research if the clothing manufacturer is respecting the rights of its workers. If unfavorable, register a complaint to the company's president or a famous person who is endorsing that company's products. Charity Justice
8. Help your elderly neighbors by running errands or mowing their lawns with no charge. Charity Justice
9. Sign a petition urging the banning of the use of land mines worldwide. Charity Justice
10. Use your own money to purchase canned goods for the annual Thanksgiving Food Drive at your school. Charity Justice

Descriptions

Use the space below to describe an act of charity and an act of social justice that you have participated in. Please use an introductory paragraph, a paragraph each describing the acts of charity and justice, and a concluding paragraph.