

Catholic Relief Services CRS Campus Connection

"Migration Action Opportunities"

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM: To have participants select their "next step" of involvement with migration concerns.

GATHERING PRAYER:

All: Loving God, we thank you for bringing us together. Help us learn how to better to serve you and your people. Please bless our conversation, and grant us the gift of your wisdom.

In Christ's name we pray,
Amen

Reader 1:

The previous discussion guides have given us an opportunity to learn about migration and its complexity. The challenge, as always, is "What now?" Are there concrete actions we can take individually or as a group, to act on the issue to bring justice? Can things actually change? Can we make a difference?

Reader 2:

We face many challenges as a society and as a Church on the issue of reforming US Immigration policy so that it reflects more greatly the human dignity of both the immigrant and the host community. It will take a good deal of political will in order for Congress to enact legislation that reflects the principles outlined and promoted by the US Bishops Conference and immigrant advocates. This political strength will need to come from many sources including small Catholic communities, and other like-minded people throughout the United States.

Reader 3:

In our society, political power can come from a variety of economic, political and social sources, including the power of committed and organized citizens. If we hope to advance justice for immigrants we will need to strengthen the impact of organized people around the nation to create the political will for change.

(Please read the following options, and decide which one is the best fit for you and your group.)

Opportunities for action include:

- **Educate Your Community**
- **Join the CRS Legislative Network**
- **Organize a Border Immersion Trip**
- **Join the "Justice for Immigrants" Campaign**

Educate Your Community – Spread the word! Together, our goal is to develop a greater sensitivity in the U.S. towards migration issues. That way, when specific actions are needed, your community will be educated, informed and ready to move.

- Write an op/ed piece for your campus newspaper and for other media outlets in the community.
- Hold an international festival or a world music benefit concert where you can get the message out.
- Hold a panel discussion among faculty members where you can discuss the issues.
- Consider taking this series of discussion guides and offering them to other faith groups and secular groups on your campus, or area parishes.

Join the CRS Legislative Network – Here's a quick one! It's hard to stay on top of all international issues that go through Congress. CRS can help keep you up to date when you join the CRS Legislative Network.

- Through the CRS Legislative Network you will receive timely updates about legislative activity regarding migration and other issues affecting the poor overseas. You can sign up online at: <http://capwiz.com/catholicrelief/mlm/>
- You can also visit the **Action Alerts** page by the USCCB Migration & Refugee Services. Go ahead and talk straight to the migration policy makers (or at least their staff). It's challenging, energizing, and extremely important. Visit: <http://www.usccb.org/mrs/actionalerts.shtml>

Organize a Border Immersion Trip – Learn First Hand! Sometimes the best way to learn about something is to experience it in person. Discuss with your campus ministry, social justice office, or university service-learning team, the possibility of organizing an immersion trip to Latin America or a U.S. border community. You could focus the experience on migration issues.

Join the “Justice for Immigrants” Campaign – Go National! Imagine the major Catholic social agencies in the United States working together for immigration reform. Well, it’s happening, and here’s who’s doing it!

Catholic Relief Services is joining with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), in particular, Migration and Refugee Services, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Domestic Social Development, International Justice and Peace, and the Office of Hispanic Affairs; the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC); the Catholic Health Association (CHA); Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA); the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW); the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA); the U.S. Jesuit Conference; the Leadership Conference of Women Religious; the Conference of Major Superiors of Men; the National Association of State Catholic Conference Directors (NASCCD); and The Roundtable Association of Diocesan Social Action Directors.

It’s called...

Justice for Immigrants: A Journey of Hope The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform

(Official kick-off date is May 1st, 2005!)

The Campaign has four primary objectives:

- (1) to educate the public, especially the Catholic community, including Catholic public officials, about Church teaching on migration and immigrants;
- (2) to create political will for positive immigration reform;
- (3) to enact legislative and administrative reforms based on the principles articulated by the bishops; and
- (4) to organize Catholic networks to assist qualified immigrants obtain the benefits of the reforms. It is anticipated that a multi-year campaign will be necessary to achieve these objectives.

Information on the “Justice for Immigrants: A Journey of Hope” campaign will be posted on the USCCB Migration and Refugee Services Website <http://www.usccb.org/mrs/>

**To get on board with the campaign right away contact:
Chris West (CRS Community Organizer)
410-951-7454 ♦ cwest@catholicrelief.org**

AN OPPORTUNITY COMING SOON!

Organize a “Justice for Immigrants - Core Advocacy Team”– Take on the big challenge! Consider how amazing it would be to work with universities and parish groups from around the country on immigration issues as a Core Advocacy Team. Staffers connected to the “Justice for Immigrants: Journey of Hope” campaign are getting ready to provide groups of 6-12 participants training, guidance and support on advocating on immigration issues. For more information today contact: Chris West (CRS Community Organizer) at cwest@catholicrelief.org.

Sending Forth Prayer

All: Creator God, as your spirit moves through us, may our hearts be opened to those who find themselves far from their home communities, and unsure of their future. In your loving name we pray...Amen.

This program has been developed by staff members of US Operations at Catholic Relief Services
For comments or questions, please contact Kevin Kostic at campus@catholicrelief.org.