

Challenge and Hope in Haiti

Session Outline:

Introduction

- ❖ Introduce the session as one that will focus on the country and people of Haiti. You might introduce the session by putting the following into your own words:
 - In our gathering today, we are going to take some time to look at the challenges facing the people of Haiti. Haiti has faced a devastating earthquake which only adds to the challenges this tiny country in the Caribbean is already facing. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and a disaster of this magnitude has enormous implications for a country that is already struggling so greatly. So, we will examine some of the realities facing Haiti, prayerfully explore how God might be calling all of us to share in their struggle and take some time to discern how we might respond.

Part I: The Challenges of Daily Life in Haiti

- ❖ Distribute *Handout #1: The Challenges of Daily Life in Haiti*. Invite students to take a few, minutes to fill out the column for the U.S. Even though they may not know the answers, tell them to give their best estimates based on what they already know about the U.S.
- ❖ Once participants have finished, use the *Answer Key* to go over the correct responses with students. Ask students to correct their own papers as they go. Ask the students whether they are surprised by any of the indicators. Did they think they would be higher or lower? Elicit a brief discussion on their reaction to the correct indicators.
- ❖ Next, have students fill in the column for Haiti. Explain that they may want to use what they now know about the U.S. to estimate the indicators for Haiti and to remember what they may have heard recently in the news.
- ❖ When students are done, use the *Answer Key* again to provide the correct indicators and have students correct their answers as they go. Ask students to compare the two columns for the U.S. and Haiti. Elicit some comments from the students as to their reactions upon seeing this information side by side. Continue with either the optional activity below or skip to Part II.
- ❖ *Optional Activity:* If time allows and you want to explore further the daily challenges facing Haiti, share a recent article that helps students understand the challenges facing Haiti. Be sure to provide stories that weave in hopeful responses in order to give the full picture and tell the whole story. You can find stories of response on the Catholic Relief Services website (www.crs.org). Either read the article(s) aloud or invite students to read the article(s) silently to themselves. As a large group, discuss how these stories broaden their understanding of life in Haiti.

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Part II: Putting the Challenges in Context

- ❖ Invite students to add to the list of daily challenges by exploring what they have heard recently in the news about life in Haiti and about the aftermath and effects of the earthquake on Haiti. List their answers on newsprint that they might see the full picture.

- ❖ Distribute Handout #2: Invite students to silently reflect on these questions:

How does a large disaster affect the people in a country already facing great challenges?

What additional challenges now affect their lives?

After a few moments, invite their responses.

- ❖ Turn their attention to the next item on Handout #2 and invite students to complete the phrase: If I lived in a society with this many challenges ...

Extension Activities:

- ❖ Encourage students to research the work of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) (www.crs.org) in Haiti and to explore how they might be able to join their efforts with those of CRS in responding to the earthquake.
- ❖ Encourage students to research how the U.S. government is currently funding in Haiti (through USAID -- the United States Agency for International Development -- and non-governmental agencies such as Catholic Relief Services). If it is difficult to do this research in a class, you may want to find out the information in advance from www.usaid.gov and present this to the class.
- ❖ Encourage students to compare these activities with what they identified in class as the major CRS Education: Going Global with Youth <http://education.crs.org> challenges facing the country. Do they agree or disagree with these activities as priorities for Haiti? Encourage them to defend their answers.
- ❖ If the large group hopes to rally the support of their wider school or parish community, encourage students to develop an awareness and information booth so that all may learn and see the progress of any projects undertaken.

Additional classroom questions:

- ❖ How does a large disaster affect the people in a country already facing great challenges?
- ❖ What additional challenges now affect their lives?
- ❖ If I lived in a society with this many challenges ...

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Handout #1: The Challenges of Daily Life in Haiti

	United States	Haiti
Per Capita Annual Income		
% of population below poverty line		
% of population unemployed		
Life expectancy		
Literacy rate		
Primary school enrollment rate		
Infant Mortality		
% of population that is HIV-positive		
% of population that uses the internet		
% of the land that is forested		

Handout #2 Answer Key

	United States	Haiti
Per Capita Annual Income	\$37,600	\$380
% of population below poverty line	12%	80%
% of population unemployed	4.8%	70%
Life expectancy	78 Male: 75, Female: 81	57 Male: 55, Female: 59
Literacy rate	99%	53%
Primary school enrollment rate	99%	65% (but of these only 30% complete primary school)
Infant Mortality	6 per every 1,000 infants die	118 per every 1,000 infants die
% of population that is HIV-positive	0.6%	5.6%
% of population that uses the internet	68%	6%
% of the land that is forested	33%	1%

Data gathered from the CIA World Fact Book, the World Bank and USAID/Haiti.