

# JUSTICE EDUCATIONS DAYS WITH/FOR CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## **Background:**

Pax Christi USA, in its desire to offer a Justice Education program to local Catholic high schools (there are 17 in the Archdiocese of Washington, DC which includes students living in DC, MD and No. V.) sought and received a grant to do so. Planning began in late September for a program that was held April 2, 2017 (Sun.) and April 3, 2017 (Mon.)

We present to you how we organized and implemented the program as **one possible model/template** should you like to plan for a similar outreach to the local Catholic High Schools in your area.

## **Beginning Stages:**

- ❖ Get a listing and website address of all Catholic High Schools in your area
  - Visit each website to find e-mail contact to someone/s who either teach peace studies, religion teacher and/or campus minister
  - E-mail each of these contacts asking for their level of interest in planning and participation in such an event (Appendix A)
  - Set up a mechanism (e.g. Doodle Survey) for those who respond to your e-mail to figure out a good time for an initial Conference Call
    - Of the 17 schools we contacted, 9 were returned as 'Undeliverable' which led to phone calls to find a contact in those schools, which was unsuccessful. Five schools responded positively while 3 would need to speak with colleagues
  - Initial Conference Call with a contact in 5 of the schools was set up along with the names of the students from each school who would be on the call
  - Preliminary agenda was formulated (Appendix B) and call was held on Nov. 17, 2016
  - Students for each school did not like the medium of a conference call as a planning method...they preferred Skype so that we could all see each other. We used Skype for all future communication. Regardless of method used be sure to work out technological glitches ahead of time if at all possible.

## **Next Steps:**

What needed to be ascertained	Our experience
What students wanted	Students created a survey (Appendix C) for certain classes to determine issues of importance for students.
Results	<p>Students wanted more information on both immigration and environmental issues as they impact communities of color in this DC area.</p> <p>Also, they were clear about wanting to learn how to do lobbying and to have an opportunity to do so.</p>
Format of the day/s	<p>It was decided to do a 2 day program. One day for in-put and another day to do lobbying.</p> <p>Many students work on Sat. so a Sun. was chosen and students requested that it include a Mass at the end of that day.</p>
Dates	In looking at both academic calendars and the Congressional/City Hall calendars, the dates of April 2 and 3 were chosen.
Workshop Presenters	We looked in the local DC area for presenters on the 2 topics (For Immigration, it was decided that an undocumented Mom, a DACA student and an immigration attorney be the panel for that topic) and (For the Environment we selected 2 women from WE ACT for Environmental Justice organization) Two young adults from <u>Network</u> did the presentation on lobbying (Schedule of the day is found in Appendix e).
Registration	<p>We created a Google doc and faculty on the Planning Group entered the info (name, e-mail address, zip code, and if student was participating on both days). Students could not participate on Mon. if they had missed the Sun. experience.</p> <p>The reason we needed zip codes was to</p>

	<p>match the elected official with the student’s residence for lobbying. (Keep in mind that DC is not a state so students needed to know what Ward they lived in order to visit their City Council Rep. at City Hall. Those lobbying in Congress needed to know the representative in their district.</p>
<p>Logistics</p>	<p><u>Numbers:</u> Initially 80 + students registered (mostly Seniors, a few Jrs., 1 Soph.) 65 actually attended Day 1 and 55 on Day 2. 7 schools actually participated.</p> <p><u>Space Needed:</u> Breakfast &amp; lunch, 1 lge. room for General Session and Mass, along with 2 smaller classrooms for workshops. One school could readily accommodate.</p> <p><u>Food:</u> We provided donuts, juice and coffee for Breakfast upon arrival. Lunch was burritos from Chipotle, cookies. Water and iced tea were available during the day. On Day 2 we provided pizza for lunch.</p> <p><u>Eucharist:</u> One school took the responsibility for the Mass, getting celebrant, readers, music, etc., students organized a ‘pop-up’ choir, did readings, offertory petitions, etc. Pax Christi USA did a commissioning at the close of the Mass. (Appendix D)</p>
<p>Faculty Advisors</p>	<p>Faculty was <b>strongly</b> encouraged by Pax Christi that students coming from each school <b>HAD</b> to include a racial/ethnic mix.</p> <p>Faculty advisors were asked to attend both days, if possible, so that they could continue to process the experience when the students returned to school. They also had to get parental permission slips for missing classes on Mon. for lobbying.</p>

	<p>The 3 initial Faculty Advisors on the Planning Group were invaluable in setting up appointments for students with their elected officials, getting their students prepared to do registration on the day itself, accompany students to their meetings, and help process the experience.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 1</b></p>	<p>Name tags had been prepared in advance and blank ones for the few who came and had registered late. Students took care of the registration process.</p> <p>At registration, each one received a folder with pen, schedule of the day, blank paper for notes. We knew they were going to receive handouts throughout the day, thus a place to keep them.</p> <p>We <b>insisted</b> that students mingle with others that they did not know throughout the day, to introduce themselves and to begin a conversation. This was repeated at every session.</p> <p>The Opening was a 10 min. address by Sr. Patty Chappell (Exec. Dir. of PCUSA) affirming students in their quest for justice.</p> <p>Workshops were impactful: <u>Immigration</u>: Hearing first-hand the struggle of real people because of our broken immigration system and current presidential repressive policies was very meaningful for the students. <u>Environment</u>: A simulation exercise based on actual facts of toxic dumps in neighborhoods where communities of color live. This was a powerful and thought provoking workshop.</p>

	<p><u>Lobby workshop:</u> Students were given very specific information about lobbying and a worksheet to fill out about details (who speaks first, who does introductions, who thanks, who keeps conversation focused, what you will leave for the person you are visiting for them to consider about immigration and the environment, etc.) The security checks in the buildings they will enter were very specifically explained, and it was stressed that no backpacks were to be worn. School uniform or professional dress was to be worn.</p>

<p><b>Day 2</b></p>	<p>Students and Faculty Advisors had previously planned where to meet before actually going to do lobbying</p> <p>We had contacted a local Catholic Church within walking distance of Capitol Hill and City Hall asking if we could meet in the parish hall following their lobbying visits for lunch and processing the experience. They had graciously set up tables with tablecloths and chairs for us to meet and did not charge us for the hall. As mentioned previously, we had ordered pizza for lunch.</p> <p><u>Process Questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How was the experience for you? (Responses: Very, very positive was the overwhelming response).</li> <li>2. Did anything surprise you? (Responses: Surprised that they were listened to and affirmed by the people they visited with, that their requests were taken seriously and that they were thanked for taking their responsibility as</li> </ol>
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	<p>voters (or future voters) to the point of lobbying for what they believe in).</p> <p>3. Were these 2 days worth doing? (Response: Overwhelmingly 'yes').</p> <p>4. Would you ever think of lobbying again if you felt strongly about an issue? (Response: Very strong 'yes').</p> <p>5. Other comments: "We did justice today, not charity, and It felt right."</p>
<p><b>Final Evaluation Session</b></p>	<p>A month after the event the 3 faculty advisors and someone from Pax Christi USA had a Skype call. The 2 questions that we addressed were: "What did we learn from the experience?" and "What could be improved upon?"</p> <p><b>Our greatest learning:</b> Schools seldom, if ever, have opportunities to meet each other except in the arena of competition. Students very much enjoyed coming together around an issue of justice and mutual learning. One faculty advisor commented that in her many years of teaching this was the best integrative exercise she has experienced.</p>

## APPENDIX A

Dear (personalized E-MAIL),

Pax Christi USA, (the National Catholic Nonviolent Peace with Justice Movement) would like to plan a day in the spring of 2017 for high school students in the DC area.

We are envisioning a day with a Justice theme, with in-put in the morning, an opportunity for a Public Witness somewhere in the area, working with a local community in some direct capacity, and a ritual to either begin or end the day.

I am hoping you are the right person to contact. Would you be interested, along with a couple of students from your high school, to be a planner and/or participant in this sort of event?

Please respond to this e-mail by Nov. 1, 2016, with either a 'yes' or 'no' to being a planner...and a 'yes' or 'no' if your high school would be interested in participating in such an event.

Once I have names and contact information, we can schedule a conference call to work out further details.

If you are not the person I should be asking, please forward this and/or let me know who that contact person would be.

Thank you for being committed to Justice Education for our young people.

Sr. Anne-Louise

## APPENDIX B

### JUSTICE DAY CONFERENCE CALL

Thursday, Nov. 17, 2016

3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

**(Please have your Academic Calendar available)**

Preliminary Agenda (in no particular order) for the Conference Call

- ❖ Welcome
- ❖ Introductions
- ❖ Purpose of this conference call
- ❖ Note-Taker: (Any volunteers?)
- ❖ Prayer: (Anyone want to volunteer for today's prayer?)
- ❖ Title and theme for the day (suggestions)
- ❖ Date for the day
- ❖ Format of the day
  - Prayer Ritual? (beginning or end of the day) Mass?
  - Keynote?
  - Workshops? (Panel of young people?)
  - Lunch?
  - Public Witness? (Where?)
- ❖ Committees (based on the format of the day)
- ❖ Budget (Grant)
- ❖ Site
- ❖ No. from each school to participate
- ❖ Future Planning meetings (conf. call and/or face-to-face)
  - Frequency
  - Date
  - Time
  - Place
  - Agenda
- ❖ Other?

# APPENDIX C

## Student Survey

(crafted by students and sent to all schools)

Currently, students from a number of D.C. Catholic schools are planning a Justice Day. The goal of the Justice Day is to gather students to acquire knowledge and skills to work for justice. After the Justice Day, students will lobby on Capitol Hill and DC City Council. The purpose of this form is to determine what issues are important to high school students. Please fill out this form by indicating your top 3 choices for what issues you would like to work on and if you are able to take part in this special event. We hope you will be able to participate in the Justice Day.

Thank you for your participation!

1. Of the following topics, which one interests you the most and should be addressed at the Justice Day?

- Immigration Reform/Deportation
- Climate Change/Environment
- Health Care for All
- Nuclear Weapons
- Mass Incarceration/Death Penalty
- Fracking
- Poverty/Hunger
- Refugees
- Mental Health
- Bystander Intervention Workshop
- Racism
- Gender Equality
- LGBTQI Rights
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is a 2nd topic you are highly interested in and should be addressed at the Justice Days? (List above repeated)

3. What is the 3<sup>rd</sup> topic? (List above repeated)

4. Are you interested in attending the Pax Christi Justice Day on Sun., April 2?

5. Are you interested in attending the lobbying day on Mon., April 3?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your participation demonstrates your desire to be involved in making positive change!

## **APPENDIX D**

### **COMMISSIONING**

**Sr. Patricia:**

**You have promised us, God, that when we gather in your name, you are among us. Help us to trust that you do answer our prayers, even if it is not in ways we expect. Help us to trust at all times in your presence, guiding us along the way of peace. Remind us that all you ask is that we “do justice, love tenderly and walk humbly with you.” (Micah 6:8)**

**Side 1: Give us courage O God, to never be silent when and where we see injustice. Open our eyes and hearts to feel for one another and to realize that when one person is de-valued, we are all de-valued.**

**Side 2: Give us tenderness O God, to love deeply and not allow our hearts to be hardened when we see the immensity of pain and sorrow that people are forced to endure. Give us a love for the homeless, the immigrant and the refugee.**

**Side 1: Teach us to walk humbly with you every day of our lives. Open us up to learning daily about ourselves and each other. May we never take the beauty of the planet for granted, but rather lend our efforts to preserve and protect the integrity of creation.**

**Side 2: Bless those who shared their knowledge with us today in the workshops. May they and those they love experience a profound peace.**

**Sr. Patricia: God of Goodness, continue to make of us a Beloved Community...ready to begin each day of this amazing life that you call us to live with the passion of Jesus, the Christ. AMEN**

# JUSTICE DAYS

**“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter most.”  
(Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)**

**Catholic High School Students in the Archdiocese of Washington DC**

**April 2, 2017: A Day of Teach-In**

**April 3, 2017: A Day of Lobbying**

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**Pax Christi USA invites you to LEARN and to ACT for JUSTICE**

## **April 2, 2017**

**Archbishop Carroll High School  
4300 Harewood Rd. NE  
Washington, DC 20017**

### **TOPICS:**

**Racism  
Immigration  
Environment**

**8:45 a.m. Arrival / Breakfast (Provided)  
9:30 a.m. Welcome, Introductions  
10:00 a.m. Presentations, Activities  
Workshops, Discussions  
12:30 p.m. Lunch (Provided)  
1:15 p.m. Teach-in on Lobbying, Role-  
plays, practice sessions on  
specific lobbying issues  
3:30 p.m. Eucharistic Celebration  
Commissioning  
Thank You**

## **April 3, 2017**

### **LOBBY DAY IN THE CITY**

**If you are a MD or VA resident you  
will visit law makers' offices on  
Capitol Hill**

**If you are a DC resident you will visit  
members of the City Council**

**Plan to meet and begin lobbying  
from 9:30 to 11 a.m.**

**1:00 p.m. Meet at St. Peter Church  
for lunch and to process the morning  
experience.**

**We are inviting 5 to 8 students from your High School to participate in these Justice Days. Please RSVP no later than March 15 the names and e-mail addresses of the students who will be attending. Send information to Sr. Anne-Louise Nadeau at [anadeau@paxchristiusa.org](mailto:anadeau@paxchristiusa.org) This information is needed for meals and planning purposes.**

**Planning Committee for these Justice Days are Students and Faculty from the following High Schools: Archbishop Carroll, Stone Ridge, and Gonzaga**

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