

Social Justice Education and Programs

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- ***Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice (IFTJ)***

The Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice is the largest annual Catholic social justice gathering in the United States. Coordinated by the [Ignatian Solidarity Network](#), the Teach-In brings together Jesuit colleges, high schools, parishes, Jesuit Volunteer Corps, Jesuit Refugee Service, and other partners within the larger Church community to “learn, reflect, pray, network, and advocate together.” The IFTJ honors the lives of the [Jesuit martyrs of El Salvador and their companions](#) murdered in 1989. It is a place where people are empowered, re-energized, inspired, challenged, and supported by a community that sees faith and justice as integrally linked.

Keynote speakers address issues of great concern, such as racism, immigration reform, mass incarceration, and environmental justice – to name just a few. After two days of learning about justice issues, the 1000+ IFTJ participants will head to Capitol Hill to share stories and facts and to ask for more just policies with their elected officials.

The IFTJ takes place in Washington DC on a weekend in November. Students must apply to attend the event on Royal Sync and must meet program requirements. Look for this year’s event dates on Royal Sync.

- ***Poverty Simulation***

The Poverty Simulation is designed to help participants begin to understand what it might be like to live in a typical low-income family trying to survive from month to month. It is a simulation, not a game. The object is to sensitize participants to the realities faced by and increase understanding of low-income people.

In the simulation, participants assume the roles of different families facing poverty. Some are newly unemployed, some are recently deserted by the “breadwinner,” and others are recipients of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, formerly AFDC), either with or without additional earned income. Still others are senior citizens receiving Social Security or grandparents raising their grandchildren. The simulation takes place in a large room with “families” seated in the middle. Tables representing community resources and services for families line the perimeter of the room. After the experience, participants will discuss the simulation and share what they learned about people living in poverty. They will also discuss possible responses from participants as assessed through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching. Time commitment: 2-3 hours.

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Volunteers are needed...

...to take on the roles of the community resources that the families need to access within the course of their daily lives. Volunteers are preferably persons who have experienced the Poverty Simulation at a previous time.

- ***Refugee Simulation***

Put yourself in the shoes of a refugee fleeing their native home from war, persecution, discrimination, and/or intolerance. The Refugee Simulation will make you aware of the concrete problems which confront refugees and the psychological anguish caused by separation from loved ones. You'll reflect on what life would be like without the luxuries of three meals at the dining hall, 20-minute showers, and bedrooms of your own. You'll begin at a "border," where you'll receive an identity card featuring a story of a refugee from various countries.

It takes about 20 to 30 minutes to experience the Refugee Simulation, but you will be challenged to think about possible solutions to refugee problems. Hopefully, negative stereotypes of refugees will be squashed once you have a better understanding of what refugees go through and the reasons that motivate them to seek refuge in safe countries.

It is hoped that you can take this experience with you to advocate for change on behalf of displaced people. We'll give you the opportunity to do just that at the end of the Refugee Simulation – to write to your Congressional representatives at a laptop kiosk advocating for refugees coming to the United States.

- ***Food for Thought***

Food for Thought is a mini-fair designed to introduce students and others to the problem of food insecurity and related issues, particularly here in the Scranton area. Issues addressed include food insecurity, food deserts, information about local food/hunger issues, use of and access to local food pantries, difficulties of trying to eat nutritiously on a budget, and assistance available to those who struggle to feed their families. Presenters include: the University' Leahy Food Pantry and the Center for Health, Education and Wellness (CHEW); faculty and classes whose focus is food, nutrition, or access to food; and, local social service agencies such as the Weinberg Food Bank, Friends of the Poor, the Day Nursery Association and Safety Net.

- ***Justice on Tour***

Hop on the *Justice on Tour* bus and learn about Scranton's unique neighborhoods and diverse populations while visiting community organizations that serve Scranton's underserved communities. Students learn how to get involved in community-based service and research. Deeper awareness leads to greater understanding between our students and Scranton residents. A light meal is served after the tour upon returning to campus while reflecting on the experience.

- Want to learn more about Catholic Social Teaching? Check out the [Ignatian Solidarity Network](#).



CAMPUS MINISTRIES' CENTER
FOR SERVICE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

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- Become a [CRS Student Ambassador](#) – a student club on campus passionate about servant leadership, social justice, personal development, and educating others and oneself on the pressing issues in the world today. These student leaders coordinate many social justice events on campus, like fair trade sales and the Refugee Simulation. CRS stands for Catholic Relief Services, the humanitarian agency of the Catholic community that assists poor and vulnerable people throughout the world overcome emergencies, fight disease and poverty, and nurture peaceful and just societies. The University's CRS Ambassadors preserve and uphold the sacredness and dignity of all human life, fostering a faith that does action.