

# The difference between Charity and Social Justice

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## 1. Read

Civil Rights campaigners want equal opportunities for citizens everywhere, because there is still not a good level of social justice in our society: some people don't have a place to live, some people don't have enough money for food and there are still children who cannot go to school. Social prejudice, discrimination, racism, sexism, corruption, addiction and violence all contribute to society's problems.

Often we try to help people by giving them money, or old clothes, or maybe even a place to sleep for the night. These acts of charity help people AT THE TIME but they are not a permanent solution to their problems. To try and really help people we need to fight for social justice. What does that mean? It means that we need to ask our governments to change their policies in areas like housing, education, employment and poverty.

When we think of charity, we think of poor people who need our help. When we think of social justice, we see everyone as equal members of society who deserve equal opportunities to have an equal chance at happiness.

## 2. Look at these activities. Write 'C' for charity or 'SJ' for social justice next to each one.

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| a. Giving clothes to an association. | d. Giving money to a homeless person.                 |
| b. Volunteering in a soup kitchen    | e. Writing a letter to a local politician.            |
| c. Taking part in a protest.         | f. Voting for a socially responsible political party. |

**3. Write four examples of social injustice that exist in your town/city/country.**

**4. Talk to a partner. What can you do to bring more social justice to your town/city/country?**



## Teacher's Notes

1. Lesson warmer: Ask students about any charity work they or their families are involved in. Ask them to outline the good things about charity (people get help) and the bad things (it's only temporary).
2. Write 'C' for charity or 'SJ' for social justice next to each activity.
  - a. Giving clothes to an association. **C**
  - b. Volunteering in a soup kitchen **C**
  - c. Taking part in a protest. **SJ**
  - d. Giving money to a homeless person. **C**
  - e. Writing a letter to a local politician. **SJ**
  - f. Voting for a socially responsible political party. **SJ**
3. Before **exercise 3**, you can do the following activity: put students into small groups and give each group a lemon. Ask them to examine their lemon and remember what it looks like. Then collect all the lemons in one basket/box and mix them up. After a few minutes, ask each group to come up and find their lemon in the pile. Students should be able to do this easily. Let them discuss how they were able to identify 'their' lemon, then all together, discuss how, like their lemons, people also come in different shapes, sizes, colours, etc.  
Now peel the lemons and put them back in the basket/box. Mix the lemons up and ask each group to try to identify their lemon: they probably won't be able to. Why? Because inside, lemons are all very similar to each other, just like people are.  
  
After this discussion about how people can be different on the outside but very similar on the inside, ask your students to come up with examples of social injustice in their town/city/country.  
  
Source: Adapted from Stern-LaRosa, C. M. (2001). Talking to Your Child About Hatred and Prejudice, Anti-Defamation League.
4. For **exercise 4**, students can brainstorm their ideas in groups and then share their ideas around the class.

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