WPC YOUTH

SOLIDARITY

WEEK 2
WHAT IS SOLIDARITY?

STANDING WITH, FOR, AND AGAINST

Standing in solidarity with your neighbor means taking on their needs as your priority. Sometimes this may require that you stand against — or protest — whatever is harming them, whether that's a person, an institution, or a system.
Caring for the Unhoused

Photo by Jon Tyson on Unsplash
Read Matthew 25:31-46.

Pay special attention to the two groups of people in this passage, the sheep and the goats. Jesus speaks very harshly against "the goats" in this passage, he protests their actions in the strongest terms imaginable. Jesus stands in solidarity with the oppressed, but true solidarity brings him into conflict with those who would harm "the least of these."
THINK ABOUT SCRIPTURE

- We often think of Jesus as loving and kind, but here Jesus is presented as judge of the world. Why do you think the writers of Scripture depicted Jesus in this way?
- How is Jesus' love and kindness shown in this passage?
- Can conflict ever be a good thing?

TAKE A DEEP BREATH

Take some time to meditate on these verses from Matthew's Gospel. Break out your journal or sketchpad, go for a walk (with parental permission!), listen to some music that helps you think, or spend some time in prayer. Take note of any thoughts or feelings that arise in you as you contemplate the words of Christ. Don't worry if you have questions or doubts. Welcome them. Let them guide you to new questions and new ways of thinking.
4.2 MILLION U.S. YOUTH GO UNHOUSED EACH YEAR
LGBTQ youth are 120% more likely to experience housing insecurity than their non-LGBTQ peers.

THE UNHOUSED ARE NOT "LAZY"
According to research, housing insecurity is created by a lack of affordable housing and policies which keep people in poverty. Many unhoused individuals have jobs.

PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE MOST AT RISK
Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and Black Americans are most likely to experience housing insecurity. This is due in part to the ongoing systemic racism that deeply affects minority groups in the US.
"UNHOUSED" VS "HOMELESS"

The preferable term to refer to those without shelter is unhoused. Words have meaning, and those meanings shift over time. While the term "homeless" is still widely used, it has many negative connotations. For instance, it can imply that those without shelter are "less than" those with shelter. It also puts the responsibility on unsheltered individuals to claw their way out of their situation, which is often impossible. Unhoused, on the other hand, assumes that housing is a right for all people, and that we are socially responsible to provide care for our unhoused neighbors through individual and collective action. Never use the term "hobo", "vagrant", or "bum" to refer to an unhoused person. These are deeply derogatory terms that strip away the humanity of our unhoused neighbors.
Discuss

What are some ways that people are forced out of their homes?

If you were unhoused, where would you go for help?

Why do you think that LGBTQ youth are more likely to experience housing insecurity?

How can you begin to stand against greed and the rampant lack of care for our unhoused neighbors?
ON YOUR OWN

- Educate yourself about the lives of unhoused people. Make sure to look for resources that tell their stories, in their words. This article is a great place to start.

- If you hear someone talking negatively about the unhoused – in love and with grace – stand against such talk. This will take courage. Be sensitive to those who are merely speaking out of ignorance. Try to educate them. But, stand firm against any speech that is hateful toward the unhoused.

- Find regular times to pray for the unhoused. This doesn't have to be a long prayer. Try this, "God of love and justice, help my unhoused neighbors." Pray this prayer:
  - Whenever you walk on a sidewalk, knowing that that for many the sidewalk is the only home they have.
  - Whenever you lie down on your bed, knowing that many do not have access to the comforts we often take for granted.
  - Whenever you open your front door, knowing that many have never had a place to call their own.
GO AND DO

WITH YOUR FAMILY

• Parents, brainstorm with your students ways to better support the unhoused and to treat them with dignity and compassion.

• As a family, plan for how you will safely engage the unhoused once shelter-in-place has ended. When you walk by an unhoused person on the street, look them in the eye, say hello, ask if there's a way you can help them. Remember, many experiencing housing insecurity are families with children.

• Support projects like PATH and other groups that are building affordable and supportive housing for our unhoused neighbors.

• Support Project Roomkey, which is currently trying to stem the spread of COVID-19 amongst our unhoused neighbors by securing rooms at empty hotels and motels.