

Poverty Quiz: Test Your Knowledge

(Based on 2010 Census Results)

Source: Jane Deren at www.educationforjustice.org. More resources for catechists, public and Catholic school teachers, and students: www.povertyusa.org (English and Spanish sites).

Directions: Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. See how much knowledge you have regarding some basic elements of poverty in the United States.

Fill in the Blank:

- The U.S. Government counts any family of four making \$ _____ or less as being in poverty.
- 19 million Americans live in extreme poverty. This means their family's cash income is less than half of the poverty line, or less than about \$ _____ a year for a family of four.
- The number of people in poverty in 2009 is the largest number in the past _____ years.
- One in _____ children in the United States live in poverty. Almost _____ of these children live in extreme poverty.
- The U.S. poverty rate is now _____ among the developed nations of the world.
- More than _____ million Americans have now qualified for Medicaid, the U.S. Government health care program for citizens in poverty.
- The number of Americans receiving SNAP food stamps in 2010 is _____.

True/False: Facts:

- In 2009 in the U.S., 43.6 million people were poor, up from 39.8 million in 2008 and 37.3 million in 2007.
- Over 12% of our citizens were at or below the nation's official poverty income in 2009.
- The Federal Minimum Wage Act ensures that all working people make an adequate income to keep them out of poverty.
- The number of the working poor, people with jobs but without a high enough income to afford necessary food, clothing, shelter and medical care, is growing.
- Small children without adequate nutritional food can develop learning problems that last a lifetime.
- 10 million low-income households either paid more for rent and utilities than the federal government says is affordable or lived in overcrowded or substandard housing.
- The number of people without health insurance increased to 50.7 million in 2009, up from 46.3 million in 2008.
- The Food Stamp program, now the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides aid to households with low incomes; 75% of all participants are families with children; one third of participants are elderly or disabled.
- The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program that provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children from low income families; it now reaches over 50 million children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level.

- The number of Americans on SNAP food stamps has set a new all-time record.
- As Catholics, we are challenged by our faith to give charity for the poor, but not to work to change the structures and systems that create and sustain poverty.
- Advocating for a higher minimum wage, working to create jobs in your community, and helping to provide safe and clean housing for everyone are examples of working to transform present structures and systems so we have a more just, and less poor, society.
- Catholic Social Teaching promotes a special concern and option for the poor.

Answers:

- \$21,834. A family trying to live on \$22,000 is not counted as poor.
- \$11,000 for a family of 4.
- 51 years.
- One in five children live in poverty in the U.S. Almost half live in extreme poverty.
- The third worst among all developed countries.
- 50 million U.S. citizens receive some form of Medicaid.
- 40 million.
- True.
- False; over 14% of all Americans live on less than \$22,000.
- False. The Federal Minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour, which would not provide enough income to keep most workers out of poverty. [Washington State's minimum wage is \$8.55 (as of December, 2010).]
- True, more and more people working are falling below the poverty line, the highest number since the 1960s.
- True; the damages caused by lack of food often last a lifetime, even after the child moves into a more secure food situation.
- False, 16 million households were impacted by high rent and utilities, in substandard housing.
- True.
- True.
- True.
- False, it reaches 30 million children from these families.
- True. "What you do to the least of these, you do to me," Christ declared; Christians have always had a special concern for the least of these.
- False. All Catholics are called to work for long-term justice as well as to provide charity for immediate needs.
- True.



"The obligation to provide justice for all means that the poor have the single most urgent economic claim on the conscience of the nation."

— U.S. bishops in *Economic Justice for All*,
www.usccb.org/jphd/economiclife