

Community Education Resource

Social Justice Statement 2014–2015

A Crown for Australia:

STRIVING FOR THE BEST IN OUR SPORTING NATION

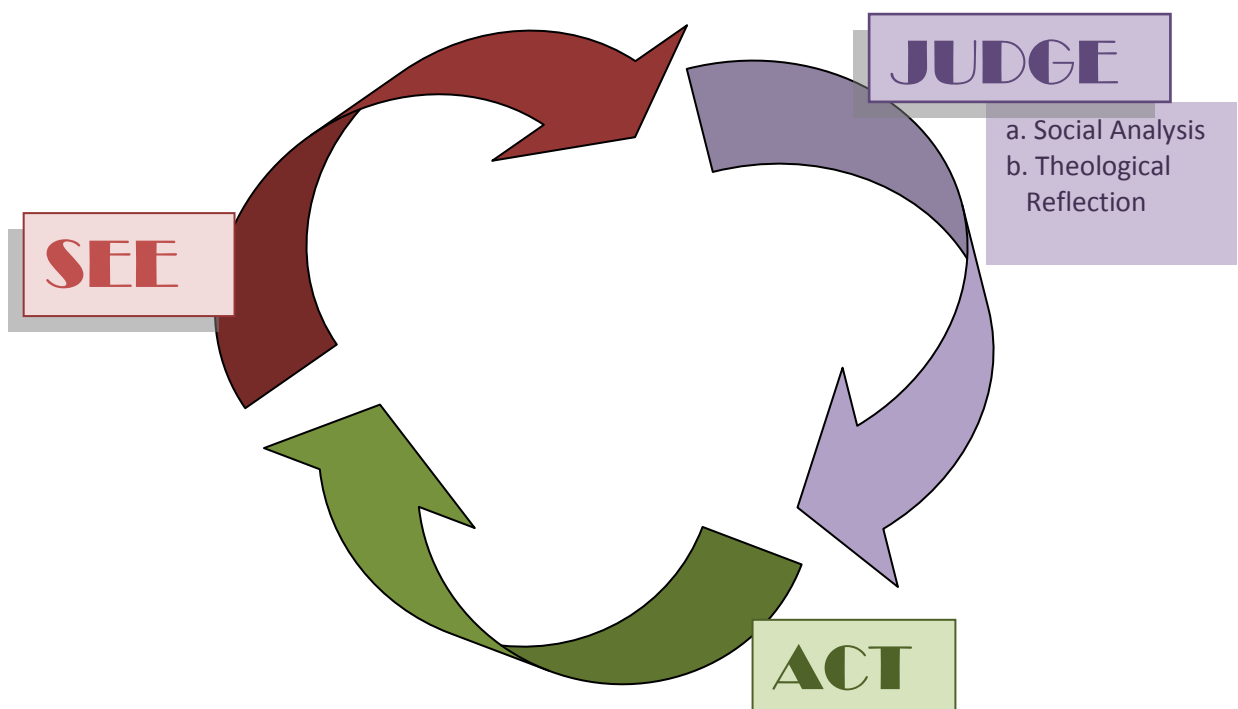
This resource is for social justice groups, YCS groups and senior secondary students. It offers a process to engage with issues related to sport, based on the Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement 2014–2015. In the introduction to the Statement the Bishops say:

In this statement, we the Catholic Bishops of Australia want to celebrate the gifts that sport brings to our country and to encourage all that is best in it. Those gifts are gifts from God. But we also need to look at another reality: the times when sport and sports people abandon their ideals, when other interests turn people into commodities, or when sections of our community are excluded from opportunity and joy.

When sport loses sight of that human good, we need to think hard about it. What do those failures tell us about ourselves as individuals and as a society? (P. 3)

Using the *See, Judge, Act* process, this resource provides ways to *See* the positive aspects of sport and instances where the true value of sport is undermined: a 'win at all costs' attitude, the undue influence of money and the exclusion of some people on the basis of gender and skin colour. We can then make an informed judgement on the situation and take action to celebrate what is good and to change what can and should be changed.

For each phase of the process, there are references to the Social Justice Statement and suggestions for further resources and research.





Social Justice Statement 2014-15 References

Introduction page 3
Part 1 The Majesty of Sport, pages 4-8
Part 2 A crown of thorns, pages 9-12

In the Social Justice Statement the Bishops name the following as concerns:	Resources in the Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The majesty of sport<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal development and the love of sport• Sport is a community builder• Sport for wellbeing and social inclusion	See notes 2-20
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A crown of thorns<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Winning at all costs• Big business, big money• Who's in? Who's out?	See note 21 See notes 22-24 See notes 25-34 See notes 35-41
See for yourself!	Other resources
What is your experience of these issues?	
<p>Select <u>one</u> of these issues that particularly concerns you.</p> <p>Name the aspects of this issue that inspire or concern you.</p> <p>Use the notes in the Statement to find out more about it.</p> <p>Which organisations address this issue in your state/local area?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caritas Australia• Aus Catholic Migrant & Refugee Office• State Dept of Sport & Recreation• Disability services• Sports clubs' website - community• See web references in the 10 Steps Leaflet
<p><i>After this research, what question or questions do you now have regarding this issue?</i></p>	
<p><i>Take this question to the next stage.</i></p>	



JUDGE

- a. Social Analysis
- b. Theological Reflection

a. Social Analysis helps us to obtain a more complete picture of the social situation by exploring its historical and structural relationships. In this step, we attempt to make sense of the reality that was observed in Step 1. Why does this situation exist? What are the root causes?

Look at and discuss the concern you researched in terms of the following factors.

This deepens our understanding of our experience by asking: 'Which of these areas is this issue really about?'

Economic factors – Production, distribution, patterns of ownership and decisions about property and resources.
 Who owns? Who controls?
 Who pays? Who gets? Why?
 What part do economic factors play in the disadvantage faced by some families?

Political factors: Totality of people's participation in decisions that affect their lives.
 Who decides? For whom do they decide?
 How do decisions get made?
 Who is left out of the process? Why?

Social Factors: How people relate to one another – social, class, ethnic, racial or age groups.
 Who is left out?
 Who is included?
 Who is overrepresented?
 Why?

Cultural factors: Sum total of ways of believing, thinking, feeling and acting, which constitutes what people call 'their way of life'
 What values are evident?
 What do people believe in?
 Who influences what people believe?

Religious factors: Religion is the expression of humanity's ultimate concern – the articulation of longings for a centre of meaning and value, for connection with the power of being.
 What religious beliefs or practices support this practice?
 What religious beliefs or practices challenge it?

Historical factors: Past events form the current reality.
 What past events influence this situation today?
 Trace the social and economic forces in your family – e.g., parents' & grandparents' work, wages, housing, education, entertainment ...

*By the end of this step, the group will have constructed a wider and deeper picture of the issue or focus. The underlying cause begins to emerge.
 For example, is it predominantly a social, political, cultural, economic or religious issue?
 In light of the analysis the group renames the issue/question and takes it to the theological reflection*

b. Theological Reflection explores the experience and its deeper analysis, in dialogue with the religious tradition. From this conversation we gain new insights and meanings. Two important sources of this tradition are the Scriptures and Catholic Social Teaching.

Quotes in the Statement	
<p>What Scripture passages can help us to make meaning of this experience?</p> <p>How do the Scriptures enable us to see this reality in a different way?</p>	<p><i>Do you not realise that, though all runners in the stadium take part in the race, only one of them gets the prize? Run like that – to win. Every athlete concentrates completely on training, and this is to win a wreath that will wither, whereas ours will never wither. So that is how I run, not without a clear goal; and how I box, not wasting blows on air. I punish my body and bring it under control, to avoid any risk that, having acted as a herald for others, I myself may be disqualified.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(1 Corinthians 9:24–27)</p>
<p>What does Catholic Social Teaching say about this issue?</p> <p>What key principles from Catholic Social Teaching apply to this situation? For example: human dignity, the common good, human rights, the option for the poor.</p>	<p><i>It should come as no surprise that the church has so much to say about sport. It is because sport is an integral and fascinating part of our society. Indeed, many aspects of sport resonate strongly and perhaps even embody some of the key principles of the Church's social teaching. 2014-15 Social Justice Statement p13</i></p> <p><i>... the Incarnate Word, Light of the world that illumines man in all his dimensions, including sports. There is nothing human – except sin – that the Son of God by becoming man did not give worth to. He 'worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved', as the Second Vatican Council reminded us ... in Gaudium et Spes (n. 22)</i></p> <p><i>'The bond between the Church and the world of sport is a beautiful reality that has strengthened over time, for the Ecclesial community sees in sports a powerful instrument for the integral growth of the human person. Engaging in sports, in fact, rouses us to go beyond ourselves and our own interests in a healthy way; it trains the spirit in sacrifice and, if it is organised well, it fosters loyalty in interpersonal relations, friendship, and respect for rules.</i></p> <p>Pope Francis To European Olympic Committee 2013</p>
<p>What insights emerged for you?</p>	
<p>What do you see more clearly?</p>	
<p>What ideas for action emerge from your insights?</p>	



From your information [Seeing]

... and analysis and theological reflection [Judging]

... what **ACTION** needs to be taken

- to change the situation?
- to address root causes?

Challenges presented in the statement are:

- Develop an attitude of enjoyment of sport
- Use sport to build community
- Resist an attitude of winning at all costs
- Resist and challenge bullying and verbal abuse
- Be inclusive – especially of those on the edge
- Resist use or approval of performance enhancing drugs.
- Challenge the high cost of tickets and equipment
- Question excessive players fees

What challenges emerged for you?

What action can you take? (See the 'Ten steps' below – also available as a leaflet from the ACSJC)

If no action is clear, what additional research is needed?

How would you transform the structures and relationships that produce this situation?

How can you act to empower those who are disadvantaged in this situation?

What practical help can you offer?

How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your action?

Some useful websites:

ACSJC: www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

Church social teaching: Spring Hill College Theology Library www.shc.edu/library/

Caritas Australia <http://www.caritas.org.au>

Jubilee Australia <http://www.jubileeaustralia.org>

TEN STEPS TOWARDS BEING A GOOD SPORT

Following are ten steps – *actions* – we can take personally, locally and nationally to **being a 'good sport'**

1. Personal action – get active!

Each individual and family has a role to encourage participation in sport for personal development, where the discipline of training is rewarded with the satisfaction of performance, where competition is balanced with comradeship, and where observance of the rules encompasses also a spirit of generosity.

It hardly needs saying that walking, running, swimming, stretching, cycling and so on are critical to cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and flexibility. In today's stressful and busy world, sports and exercise can help provide a healthy distraction, and reduce anxiety and depressive symptoms. (Social Justice Statement 2014–15)

Sports lovers or not, we can all make an effort to make the best use of the bodies God has given us by exercising regularly: walk jog, swim, ride a bike ...

2. Teach someone a skill

It might be as simple as teaching a son or daughter, niece or nephew or a neighbour how to throw or catch a ball, ride a bike, swim, or catch a frisbee.

3. Watch a game in your local area!

Local communities are called to harness the love of sport and the contribution of players, volunteers and spectators for the good of all and with a welcoming spirit that reaches out to people who are excluded and in need. (Social Justice Statement 2014–15)

Go and watch a game of footy, netball or cricket in your local town, suburb or school.

4. Research and support sports clubs in your local area

Sport is a wonderful socialiser: it enables people to gather in healthy, supportive environments. This has special benefits for young people, who need to interact with their friends. And when such interactions offer fun, competition, skills and goal-setting, there is a fertile environment for personal development and also the involvement of the local community. (Social Justice Statement 2014–15)

You may be surprised at how many clubs and associations there are in your local area. They may get a surprise when you join the pool of volunteers who help them! Many sports have community programs. Google the clubs in your area to see what they have to offer – and what you might be able to offer.

Over two million people – 14 per cent of adult Australians – volunteer their time and effort to sports and physical recreation organisations. Without them, our sporting events would not be a success and, indeed, many of the 26,000 local sporting clubs around Australia would not exist. (Social Justice Statement 2014–15)

Play, coach, mark lines, umpire/referee, cheer from the sidelines, help with catering.



5. Help challenge bullying, racism and sexism in sport

It is not uncommon to witness a fanatical 'win at all costs' mindset; violence on the field, on the sidelines or in the street; racist taunts, communal conflict and exclusion of minorities; abuse and exploitation of women; and greedy opportunism that turns social good into business opportunities for a few. (Social Justice Statement 2014–15)

Too often, we see sport used as a way of bullying or exploiting others. It can happen in schools, in sporting clubs or at elite sporting levels. It can happen among fans or even in the media. It may not be easy to stand up to bullies personally, especially when they feel they have a majority behind them. But we can let club managements or media organisations know that we have no respect for people whose actions betray instead of strengthening the ideals of sport and the society around it.

6. Who's on the edge? Build inclusiveness

Participation in sports can be a means for those at the margins of society to move from the edges to the centre. (Social Justice Statement 2014–15)

Find out who is not included in local sports activities: migrants, refugees, women, girls, low income families, people with disabilities. What needs to happen to enable them to be involved? Help someone in your street or your parish to obtain sports gear or join a club. 'Whatever it takes' could mean something different!

Sport has a role to play in fostering inclusiveness and reconciliation, working to prevent youth suicide, and promoting reconciliation. Research some stories that show how sport has helped achieve these goals.

Some websites:

Reconciliation Australia:

<http://www.reconciliation.org.au/news/a-step-forward-for-reconciliation/>

WA Department of Sports and Recreation – Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

<http://www.dsr.wa.gov.au/reconciliationactionplan>

NATSICC Cross Cultural Sporting Program

http://issuu.com/thenatsicc/docs/may_2011_natsicc_news

Caritas Australia: Sports Justice

<http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion/stand-with-mdf>

7. Challenge the high costs

There are many groups whose participation in organised sports and recreational activity has been affected by the commodification of sport, the merchandising of equipment and higher prices. (Social Justice Statement 2014–15)

You may not be able to influence the oversized fees some sportspeople are paid but you can influence local and even national clubs. Ask them if the constant changes to club jumpers, for example, are for good reasons or just for financial gain. If you have sports equipment you no longer

use, hand it on to someone else. Ask yourself if the new equipment being bought for clubs or personal use was manufactured under fair conditions. Look for **Fairtrade** products, which do not use child or exploited labour.

Some websites:

<http://fairtrade.com.au/farmers/fairtrade-sports-balls>

<http://www.etiko.com.au/#>

8. Support sports people who show positive values

There are many examples of sports men and women who have been a force for change – working to ensure that sport is inclusive and seeking to transform us into a truly sporting nation. (Social Justice Statement 2014–15)

Many sports people have become community leaders supporting health and inclusiveness, campaigning against violence and discrimination, and working for equality and poverty relief.

Support players at local, state and national level who show positive values: send them a text or email, go and watch them, ask them to come and talk at your club or school.

9. Challenge over-commercialisation, drugs and gambling

There continues to be public concern about alcohol advertising in sport and its effect on young people and the wider community. Most recently, there has been a public outcry over the dramatic rise of sports betting, particularly the intrusion of advertisements for online bookmakers. The impact and language of betting are reaching a wider public than ever before – and affecting the young. It is commonplace to hear children predicting the outcome of a match by quoting odds rather than analysing players' form. (Social Justice Statement 2014–15)

Companies that sponsor sporting clubs are making a valuable contribution to the community. But often, sport can become a commercial enterprise in itself and lose sight of the good it should be doing for society. Similarly, clubs may turn a blind eye to drug abuse and the growing influence of gambling. Make your views known to individuals and clubs that exhibit that downside: unfair play, excessive gambling, drugs, or a win-at-all-costs attitude.

10. Understand that not everyone loves sport

Not everyone may share your enthusiasm for your particular sport or team – or for any sport at all. Some people have very strong personal reasons for being alienated from sport – for example, experiences of bullying, exclusion or sexism at school or in later life. Respect their choices and be sensitive in expressing your own enthusiasm.

