

Ten steps towards eradicating poverty

1. Listen and respond to the call to be Christian

The call to be Christian is expressed in the invitation to love God and neighbour. Responding will affect not just what we do, but who we are and how we think and what we value.

2. Contribute towards building a just and Christian society

Jesus calls us to build a just society and to work together to ensure poverty is eradicated and that all are able to live with dignity. Those with means have a special responsibility to ensure that those who are vulnerable are clothed, housed and looked after.

3. Be aware

Consumerism and aggressive marketing can cause self-interest and competition for material things to take precedence over building a society where we are all in service to one another. This constant desire to produce and consume goods places unsustainable demands on the earth's resources, leading to pollution and waste. Before purchasing, we can ask ourselves:

- Do I really need this or do I just want it?
- What impact will this purchase have on my life, on others, on the environment?

4. Differentiate between our wants and our needs

No matter how much money people have, they often believe they need more. Our society has seen a rise in expectations about what is required to live a satisfying life. Products that yesterday were seen as luxury items are today thought of as necessities. This confusion between wants and needs can cause a feeling of being deprived, based on the expectation of wealth rather than the experience of real need.

5. Live simply

It is a challenge to reflect on our lifestyles and to choose to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor, identifying what we need rather than grasping for more and sharing rather than hoarding. By living simply, we can help create a world in which each human person is respected and everyone can reach their full potential, ensuring true progress rather than economic growth alone.

6. Notice the poor and marginalised

In Australia, particular individuals and groups still endure great poverty and inequality. The challenge to us is to see the face of the poor and oppressed in our society and to stand with them giving voice to their plight and working for change.

7. Challenge structural poverty

None of us likes to believe that our lifestyle is in conflict with the greater public need. When it comes to deep-seated poverty, however, it is not easy to see that what is also needed is a change in our attitudes and those of our society. Many causes of poverty and inequality are structural. It is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that the basic conditions and opportunities exist for all people to provide for themselves, to be freed from poverty traps and not to be welfare dependent.

8. Become action-oriented

In today's increasingly interdependent global society, each of us is being called upon to put energies into personal change as well as social change.

9. Helpful resources

- Social Justice Sunday Statement 2008: [*A Rich Young Nation: The challenge of affluence and poverty in Australia*](#)
- The National Council of Churches ecumenical resource for Social Justice Sunday
- 2008 Social Justice Diary provides prayers, reflections and ideas on the reality of poverty here in Australia and throughout the world. These resources are available electronically on the ACSJC website, or as hard copy from the ACSJC.

10. Prayer

Use the accompanying [Prayer Card](#) prepared by the ACSJC for personal prayer, in schools and parishes, and for family and group prayer time.

