



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Beyond the Boundaries?

Beyond the Boundaries is an Archdiocesan initiative to address economic, ethnic, racial and social inequities through raising awareness and facilitating advocacy. A distinctive difference in Beyond the Boundaries is addressing the causes of inequities to achieve economic, ethnic, racial and social equity.

Why is equity in these areas important to us?

We are dependent on one another. If one area is not healthy, all areas are affected. Addressing the causes of inequities is a critical step.

Catholics are, along with their fellow citizens, continually called upon to reflect upon the circumstances of their particular region, city, nation, and world, and to ask the question whether justice and charity are being enhanced by or being diminished by public policies which are already in place or which may become the subject of the legislative process.

Bishop Gordon Bennett, S.J.

Who directs the Beyond the Boundaries program?

Brother Jerry O'Leary chairs the Steering Committee, which includes pastors and laity in key positions to strengthen connections for this program.

How does Beyond the Boundaries raise awareness?

Beyond the Boundaries overviews Catholic Social Teaching, in an Introductory presentation, and our role to give life to these teachings in our family life, work, and community. A discussion series follows to raise awareness by addressing equity issues affecting this region and connecting our values with actions in our daily lives.

What is an Introductory Presentation?

The Introduction to Beyond the Boundaries provides an overview of Catholic social teaching, the evolution and demographics of the Baltimore Metropolitan region, our role in reflecting Catholic teachings in our lives and responsibility to work for justice. The Introduction is a good orientation before beginning a Discussion series.

What is the Discussion Series?

The series of structured discussions explores Catholic Social Teachings and our personal and collective responsibility to live out these teachings through working for the common good of all. The discussion group identifies challenges that contribute to inequities, collaboratively develops solutions, determines the priorities to focus our work, and advocates for economic, ethnic, racial, and social equities. Discussion topics include: Catholic Social Teaching; Charity, Justice, and Equity; The Poor, Vulnerable and Disenfranchised; Discrimination and Racism, Social Equity and Our Role, and Taking Action to Advocate for Equity.

How is the Discussion series conducted?

A parish facilitator leads the session, following the format in the Discussion Workbook. Each session includes an opening prayer, scripture readings, reflection questions, discussions or interactive activities, and closes with prayer. Participants select an action related to the topic to work on before the next session.

How can one take part in Beyond the Boundaries Discussions?

Parishes sponsor Beyond the Boundaries; all are welcome to take part. People from other parishes frequently join in discussion series. The most successful groups incorporate diversity to broaden perspectives and experiences in their discussions through partnerships with other parishes or churches. Partnerships are either initiated by a parish or arranged by the Beyond the Boundaries office. Occasionally, a parish may initially conduct discussions within their own parish to form a core group and then join with other parishes or churches to repeat the discussion series and develop collaborative advocacy actions.

How can a parish begin a Discussion Group?

The Beyond the Boundaries office helps parishes plan for Discussion Groups. A brochure titled “Establishing a Discussion Group” is available from the office of Bishop Denis J. Madden, Neumann Vicar(443/286-4731) or on the web page (www.archbalt.org/beyondtheboundaries).

What is a parish partnership?

A Beyond the Boundaries partnership is an informal arrangement with two parishes to equally sponsor and administer the Discussion series. Partnerships bring together parishioners of varied socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds to build understanding, relationships, and community.

Why do parishes partner with another parish for Beyond the Boundaries?

Beyond the Boundaries participants find that a partnership brings greater diversity for a richer dialogue and fuller understanding of the challenges. As members get to know one another, meaningful relationships are developed that lead to collaborative and more viable approaches for social equity initiatives in this region. A sustained relationship among partner parishes enhances long-term commitment to work toward systemic change.

How does Beyond the Boundaries facilitate advocacy?

Beyond the Boundaries links participants with opportunities to influence planning, policy, and legislative advocacy to achieve social equity focusing primarily on the region. Beyond the Boundaries makes connections with other groups working on issues to benefit people in the Baltimore metropolitan region and disseminates this information via newsletter, web page, speakers, and other means.

Is Beyond the Boundaries only for Catholics?

Although it began as an Archdiocesan program for parishioners, Beyond the Boundaries welcomes the opportunity to join with people of other faiths to broaden awareness and improve the effectiveness of advocating for the common good. An interfaith or ecumenical group is the most effective means to address community issues.