

Check List for Getting the Most out of Your Appalachian Experience

(inspired by "A Check List for Analyzing your Food Drive"
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Charity will never be true charity unless it takes justice into account . . . Let no one attempt with small gifts of charity to exempt themselves from the great duties imposed by Justice.

Pope Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, #49

- Are students learning about the connection between the needs they observe and policies made (or abandoned) at the state and federal levels?
- Are students aware of the similarities between poverty in their campus community, their home community and Appalachia?
- Do students consider structural questions? "To what extent is the public sector responsible for providing a minimum of protection and care?" Are governments at all levels shifting that responsibility to "compassionate do-gooders"?
- Are you avoiding "the 'hero' mentality and instead reinforce[ing] the equal dignity of all and the mandate of faith as an ethic to care?"
- Are you taking advantage of any opportunities to build sustained relationships with those in need? Are they sharing mealtimes and other "down time" with local people?
- Have students had the opportunity (maybe before the trip) for experiential learning? Have they "put themselves in someone else's shoes" by experiencing hunger, lack of heat or proper clothing, or lack of transportation, even for a day?
- Are students learning from those who live it, about the causes and consequences of poverty?
- Are you including discussions on your trip about the connection between local, national, and international poverty or environmental threats?
- Do you integrate advocacy into your Appalachian immersions?
- Is the immersion experience building the students' sense of discipleship and responsibility for their neighbors?
- Do students learn how this service relates to Ignatian spirituality and Catholic Social Teaching?
- A week or more after completing the trip, do you take time to have each group reflect, journal, or discuss the immersion experience and the insights they have gained?