

Instructions for Use of These Documents

Intended as starting points for using the [critical concerns of the Sisters of Mercy](#) as a focus or gathering point in instruction, these documents are a resource for units planned by many kinds of unit-organizing principles: concept, essential question, individual work, or time period.

Each document begins with a **Definition** of the critical concern that briefly indicates why it is an essential need or call to action in today's world in accordance with Catholic social teaching.

The definition is followed by a **Characteristics** section which explains how each critical concern is a form of violence--against women, immigrants, races, or the earth. Violence, be it physical, institutional, relational, or policy, is the lens through which all of these problems are viewed. This section ends with an elaboration of the stand taken on each issue by the Sisters of Mercy.

The **Essential Questions** are suggested inquiries into the topics aimed at eliciting enduring understandings about the critical concerns. Statements that result from these questions can also be used as starting points for statements of inquiry. Of course, the questions listed are by no means exhaustive; consider them as fire-starters for individual creativity.

Breakdowns of possible lesson ideas can be found in **Recommended Topics**. These suggestions are the ones that immediately come to mind when approaching each topic and may be complete units in themselves or subunits.

Recommended Resources consists of organizations and reliable sources that are nodes or collections for information about each of the concerns or give further resources based on concepts that exploration into the areas reveal.

Possible classroom material--fiction, nonfiction, film-- are housed in **Recommended Readings**. One may find a work already in the subject area curriculum on this list or perhaps a companion piece to something in the curriculum.

Finally, a **Table of Lesson Plans** available on the web providing starters for English and social studies units completes each critical concern resource page.

Please treat this as a living document as all curricula are. Each individual teacher breathes with it and gives breath to it through use and expansion through personal creativity and knowledge. Use one resource or many. Take from it what you need. Add to

it when you can. Let it lead to something else as we grow in our commitment to keep Catherine McAuley's mission alive and re-creating itself in the classroom and the world. And please consider [signing up for email alerts from the Sisters of Mercy](#) on issues related to the Critical Concerns so that you can add your voice to ours.