

Campaign for Human Development
What is Poverty?
AD4 3320

What is Poverty?

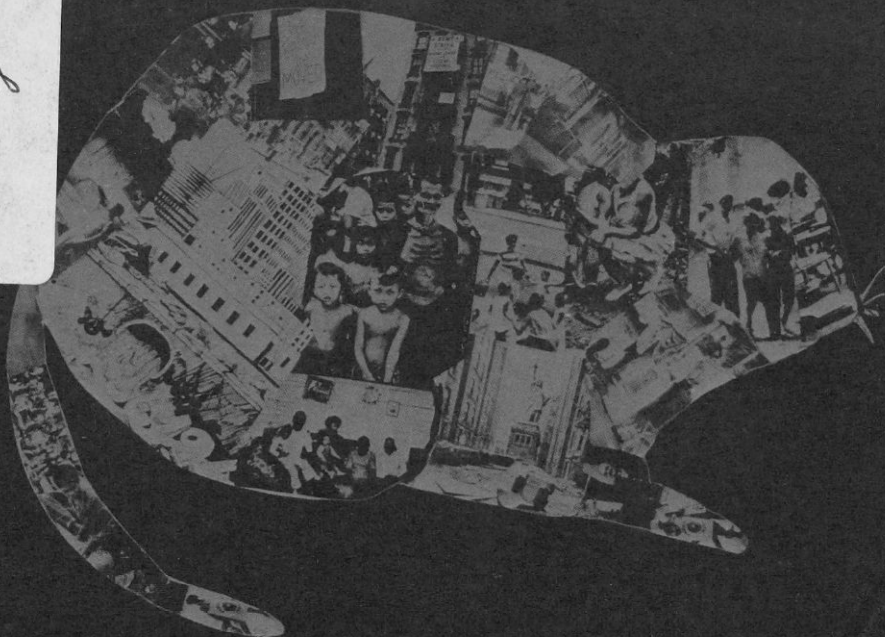
UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
MEMORIAL LIBRARY

FEB 15 1979

COLLEGE LIBRARY

Poverty



TEACHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Americans and other peoples of the world agree that poverty is one of our greatest social evils. Unfortunately, we don't agree about what poverty actually is. When we use the term "poverty," most of us mean economic poverty. Therefore, our response to what we see as poverty usually involves funding a program or some other form of economic aid. The fullest application of this reasoning presupposes that, if we stuff enough money into poor people and poverty areas, we will efficiently solve the problem of poverty. Thus we will be able to erase the evil of poverty itself.

The episode on poverty produced by the Campaign for Human Development can hopefully serve as the seed for a comprehensive educational experience about poverty in the United States, and the need for human development.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENT ACTIVITY:

The subject matter of each module will lend itself to creative student projects. A few general suggestions for engaging student creativity are listed below:

1. **Using pictures for study:** (Poverty: urban, rural, southern, northern, eastern, western, suburban; Black, white, Indian, Spanish Speaking, etc.) Build a library of pictures which students take themselves or which they clip from any source. Some can be used for bulletin board displays of the subject. Each picture should illustrate some experience of the poor. Each can be used for discussion purposes or merely for indirect influence by proper and strategic placement with short comment, or title, or quotation.

Photographs can be obtained from St. Mary's College Press, Winona, Minnesota, and from Abbey Press, St. Meinrad, Indiana 47577. Ask for lists of photo sets.

2. A partial listing of books on poverty and the cultural experience of different minority groups is given in the *Materials About Poverty* booklet, published by the Campaign for Human Development.

3. **Feature films:** Classic feature films, if playing locally or obtainable by the school, would be excellent for general discussion. Student ideas about the applicability of contemporary films might also yield excellent suggestions.

Citadel, The. A doctor's fight against disease and ignorance.

Citizen Kane. The poverty of a very wealthy man.

Country Girl. Self-pity tries to destroy a man and his family.

Death of a Salesman. The meaning of life.

Grapes of Wrath. Story of poverty, injustice, despair, compassion and responsibility.

Last Angry Man. A poor doctor, rich in human qualities, fighting to alleviate human suffering; urban ethnic.

Last Hurrah. Minority politician becomes political boss and



works his way up to mayor. Is this a model for minority advancement?

Nothing But a Man. Black poverty in America; individual dignity.

Raisin in the Sun. Black poverty in America; individual dignity. (Available for school distribution; refer to *Materials About Poverty* booklet, in this Campaign for Human Development series.)

4. **Book reviews:*** Book reports in a formalized written manner are often unsatisfactory. It is suggested that the following questions be substituted for the formal book report. Student response to these questions may be written or oral.

INSIGHTS:

What *new* ideas or clarification of old ones came to you from reading this book?

Why do you approve or disapprove of people's behavior and of their attitudes toward life as seen in this book?

How does this book deal with questions of *right* or *wrong*? Is any light thrown on moral, ethical, or spiritual problems? Do you agree with the stand taken in the book?

In what way does this book give the reader any special understanding of human psychology — of how people think and act? Are factors like ambition, greed, hate, love, or the will to serve others demonstrated? How? What influence do they have?

PEOPLE:

A person's character is revealed by the way he deals with a crisis, a problem, an obstacle, or a handicap. What instances of this kind did you note?

Is any character in this book changed by his experience? How does he improve or deteriorate? How would you evaluate the main character(s) as to his (their) influence on others?

TIMES:

How are the people in the book shaped by the particular times in which they live? How do these times appear to be like our times?

How do the patterns of living in this book differ from your own? How are they like yours?

PLACES:

What place or places play a part in this book? Why?

Did you notice any details that especially interested you: language, dress, money, products made and used, other features?

GENERAL INFORMATION:

What benefits can the knowledge of this book give you?

* Adapted from Sister Michael Doherty, IHM, *Dynamic Approaches to Teaching High School Religion*. (New York: Alba House, pp. 96-97), with the permission of the publisher.



EVALUATION:

What is the major appeal of this book? Has this book changed you in any way? To what persons would you recommend the book? Why?

What is Poverty? is designed to awaken all of us to the fact that:

1. Poverty is a complex reality which is multiple in kind and multiple in level.
2. In order to define poverty, we must know what it *is*, as well as what it *is not*.
3. One can be economically poor and, at the same time, wealthy in many other ways.
4. We need to examine our hierarchy of values to determine where we place the true worth of individuals.
5. We must look to the *who, where and why* of poverty in order to truly understand what poverty is in America today.

PROCEDURES

1. Overview:

- a. Pre-test to be duplicated for students (see Appendix). Explain that the test is not an exam, but an "overview" to establish the need to study the question of poverty.
- b. Do not correct or discuss test results in the same class session in which you have given the test. Let sufficient time intervene, so that students will have compared ideas and discussed areas of uncertainty. It is expected that there will be considerable disagreement concerning what is the *correct* answer. It is important that the teacher not give *the* correct answer. Let the students discuss areas of disagreement for as long as it takes the group to come to some common feeling about poverty. If the group is not able to reach a common ground, this method will at least make the areas of disagreement evident. It is hoped that a considerable amount of feeling will be generated in discussion. For the benefit of the teacher, it may be interesting to know what the tester had in mind as responses to these questions (maybe *you* will not agree): 1,b; 2,a; 3,c; 4,b; 5,c; 6,b; 7,b; 8,e; 9,e; 10,c; 11,c; 12,b.

2. Rationale for the Study of Poverty:

- a. *Purpose*: The purpose of this section is to motivate students to realize the need for awareness of the public and private, written and spoken, implied and overt "ripples" concerning the problems of the poverty which surround us.
- b. *Activities*: Have students bring in clippings pertinent to poverty issues. Read, discuss and post these. List television reports and special programs. Give students an opportunity

to watch by lessening written assignments on that date. On the date of specific programs, posters throughout the school should remind the entire student body.

c. *Student Opinion*: Ask the following:

- (1) Is poverty an area that needs to be studied? Why?
- (2) What are the signs of poverty?
- (3) In what ways do you think you are personally affected by poverty?
- (4) In what ways do you think poverty affects the U.S.? the world?

d. *What Others are Saying*: Read and discuss the following:

- (1) *"Millions of Americans are simply too poor to feed their families properly. For them there must be sufficient food income."* (Richard Nixon, Message on Hunger, 1969)
- (2) *"The real problem of the world, the thing which creates misery, wars and hatred among men, is the division of mankind into rich and poor. The reality and the depth of this problem arise because the man who is rich has power over the lives of those who are poor.... More important are social and economic systems supporting these divisions and constantly increasing them so that the rich get even richer and more powerful while the poor get relatively poorer and less able to control their own future."* (President Nyerere of Tanzania; address in New York)
- (3) *"The poor live shorter lives, succumb to ailments more often, and lose their minds more often than do the affluent... The poor are caught in a vicious circle, they live in a culture of poverty."* (Michael Harrington, *The Other America*. New York: Macmillan, 1962)
- (4) *"Poverty is widespread in every section of the United States. The scandal of affluence is the fact that millions of poor people live in our midst without hope, some because of poverty, some because of race, and some because of both!"* (Msgr. Geno Baroni, Director, Program Development, U.S.C.C. Task Force on Urban Problems, 1969)
- (5) *"The race question cannot be settled without a profound change of heart, a real shake-up and deep reaching metanoia on the part of white America. It is not just a question of a little more good will and generosity: it is a question of waking up to crying injustices and deep seated problems which are ingrained in the present setup and which, instead of*

getting better, are going to get worse. The only way to prevent the generation of the worst hatred and violence is to share the benefits of our society with the Negro as far as we can, that is to give him equal opportunity in everything." (Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Destruction*. Copyright 1964 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York; reprinted with permission of the publisher)

ASSIGNMENT:

In order to broaden individual horizons on the issues of poverty, ask each student to choose at least one of the following books (or others) to be read by the end of this module of study, which could perhaps take two months.

Michael Harrington: *The Other America*; Macmillan, New York, 1962.

John Kenneth Galbraith: *The Affluent Society*; Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1969.

Thomas Merton: *Seeds of Destruction*; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1964.

These are books about the general condition of our society. At a later date students will be asked to read at least one other book about a specific condition and area of poverty.

Somewhere toward the end of this module the teacher should have the students plan a Round Table Discussion of what these authors say about the general condition of American life today. Intellectual and emotional reactions to the books should be discussed, as well as agreement and disagreement with analysis of the conditions under which Americans live.

3. Before the students begin research, study and define their philosophical attitudes and concepts concerning poverty.

a. *Approaches* to this investigation may vary, but should not include research material.

(1) *Role-playing*: Ask volunteers to act out any examples of poverty which they may have experienced. When the volunteers have finished, have the other students analyze the attitudes, feelings, and events. The following sample questions may be useful: *Ex.* Who was really poor in this situation? Why would a person react to that particular situation in the way you did? Do you think there could be a more real and honest reaction to that situation? What were the indications of poverty in this play? Did the player have the same feelings as the onlookers? Is this a kind of poverty that many people have to face? Who would be most likely to face such a situation?

- (2) *Discussions* which are student directed and informal.
- (3) *Other Approaches* which are student initiated.
- b. *Written Group Culmination*: The class should prepare one large outline to be displayed on a bulletin board. The outline could be surrounded by original poetry or art on the subject of poverty. Pictures should be categorized under the headings used in this study, e.g., moral poverty, economic wealth, etc. The culminating activity should pose the following questions:
 - (1) *What is poverty?* Ex. Def: the opposite of wealth: state of being in need, owning little or nothing.
 - (2) *What are the different kinds of poverty?*

Economic	Educational
Social	Health
Moral	Legal
Psychological	Etc.
 - (3) *What are the levels of poverty?* Ex. Economic poverty levels = poor, underprivileged, low standard of living.
- c. *Written Culmination by Individuals*:
 - (1) Have students chart a comparison of poverty and wealth in the following manner:
 - (a) Ditto or mimeo copies of chart outline in Appendix. Include only names of categories. Leave each category blank for student to define that type of poverty or wealth.
 - (b) Or have students make up their own chart of categories which they feel have relevance to poverty and wealth today.
 - (c) Use these categories for later discussion or debate. *Note*: The chart in the Appendix has been partially completed for teacher reference.
 - (2) Students may keep scrap books in which the categories of poverty are presented in pictures or words.

4. Film Study:

It is suggested that the following films, or other films suggested by the students which are based on the problems of poverty and other social ills, be shown to concretize what has, thus far, been discussed in a theoretical manner: *Nothing But a Man*, *The Last Angry Man*, *A Raisin in the Sun*. In the session after the film has been shown, one of the following written or oral assignments could be made:

- a. Identify and compare the areas of poverty and the areas of wealth shown in this film.
- b. Compare the "wealths" and "poverties" of any two characters from the film (students free to choose).

Examples:

- (1) *Nothing But a Man*: Compare the poverties and wealths of father and son.
- (2) *Nothing But a Man*: Compare the poverties and wealths of the husband and his boss.
- (3) *The Last Angry Man*: Compare the poverties and wealths of the two doctors.
- (4) *The Last Angry Man*: Compare the poverties and wealths of the doctor and the young convict he helps.
- (5) *A Raisin in the Sun*: Compare the poverties and wealths of the husband and his mother.
- (6) *A Raisin in the Sun*: Compare the poverties and wealths of the husband and the real estate representative.

- c. Tell whether you think the film has any basis in fact today. Could it happen somewhere in the U.S. today? Where? How many people do you think are affected by this type of poverty? Who would these people be?

5. Long Term Student Project:

a. *Object*:

- (1) To identify wealths and poverties of local community or city.
- (2) To identify needs of local community or city.
- (3) To actively respond to these needs (this to be achieved in later module).

- b. *Overview*: To know a neighborhood or a city, it is necessary to have close personal contact with real people and real things. This can be achieved on an introductory level by a *walking tour*. Visit numerous areas which represent what seem to be all areas of the community or city, such as residential, business, affluent, middle-class and slum sections, white and non-white, inner-city and suburban. Sometimes a visit to the local Chamber of Commerce can save time in the planning of your tours. It should be remembered that large groups of "tourists" often make neighborhood residents suspicious. Care should be taken to travel inconspicuously, and any interviewing should be done in a respectful manner. Most desirable would be to arrange the tour under the auspices of a local authority, such as a civic association or local city councilman.

c. *Activity (Walking Tour)*:

- (1) "Walk the Beat" as much as possible from street to street.
 - (a) What does the area look like?
 - (b) What do the people look like?

- (2) Note external signs of poverty and/or wealth — industry, religion, race, nationality, etc.
 - (3) On first tour of area stop at such public places as
 - (a) Drug Store (d) Ball Park (f) Park
 - (b) Bus Stop (e) Train Depot (g) Gas Station
 - (c) Taxi Stand
 - (4) If you strike up a conversation, you should identify yourself and your business:
 - (a) Tell person to be interviewed that you are studying the neighborhood for a school project.
 - (b) You would like to know what this person thinks of it. How would he describe neighborhood? Could he suggest what is good/bad about it? Does he like living here? Why? How could this neighborhood be improved for the benefit of inhabitants? If person doesn't like this neighborhood, where would he like to live?
 - (5) Second visit (and thereafter) — interview local group representatives:
 - (a) Ministers.
 - (b) Business executives, and employees.
 - (c) School officials.
 - (d) Police or firemen.
 - (e) Citizens or community organizations.
- d. *Success Factors in Walking Tours:*
- (1) Prior preparation and planning.
 - (2) Attention to what you see and hear on tour.
 - (3) Accuracy in reporting results of your tour.
- e. *Planning:*
- (1) Chart the areas to be visited on a wall map of your local community or city. See Appendix.
 - (2) List names of those in each group and dates of tours. *Note:* It takes *time* to get to know people and things, so it is suggested that groups and the areas that they visit remain stable throughout the semester. Continuity, purposefulness and meaning are more apt to result from a prolonged study of a geographically small area and its people. Whether the people in your area are predominantly young or old, rich or poor, working or unemployed, white or non-white, they will all exhibit strengths and weaknesses, riches and poverties, needs and fulfillments. The slow building of meaningful relations with individuals who are particular persons will help you to really understand the universal meaning of *richness, poverty, need and fulfillment.*
 - (3) After the class has been divided into teams of 2 or 3

- (but no more members in any team), arrange that 2 or 3 teams visit each charted area.
- f. *Size of Groups*: The reason for restricting each group to no more than four members is that after that number, a group becomes conspicuous, and it is unlikely that practical personal relations can easily be established.
 - g. *Parents*: In order to make sure that parents feel included in this project, they should be involved from the beginning. They should be invited to participate as far as possible with the teachers and students in total planning, touring and evaluating.
 - h. *Interviewing*: If interviews are undertaken, they should be undertaken with care not to inconvenience or offend the respondents. No interviewing should be done without permission from local authorities, such as civic associations or community organizations. Perhaps letters of introduction could be obtained from these authorities. It would be advisable, if such a research process is undertaken, to plan to carry it out in cooperation with the local leaders of the community.
(In interviews, be careful to note all answers as completely as possible; you might use a tape recorder. Be sure the person being interviewed consents. Record interviews on the spot, and add your observations as soon as possible.)
 - i. *How to Report Findings to Class*: Teacher should allow each group sufficient time to make adequate tours of its area and to edit the collected materials. Each group, in turn, should be given time to present its findings to the class. This can be done in several ways. Some suggestions:
 - (1) *Skits*: Each group can arrange an original skit which typifies significant reactions and feelings of the people interviewed.
 - (2) *Edited tapes of interviews* can be played to class with comments by the members of the group involved. *Note*: It is important that the reporting of results indicate what was really seen and heard. For example: lack of job opportunities, racial discrimination, fear that low-cost housing will spoil a neighborhood, anger, frustration with living conditions, boredom, hope in the young, filth, heat, cold, pedicured poodles, rats, etc.

6. Second Film:

Since this module will take at least two months to complete, it is suggested that a showing of a second film not used in 4 be offered to the entire class *after*:

- a. at least a month has elapsed since first film;
- b. students have begun their "Walking Tours."

Evaluation should be made of this film. The same methods of evaluating may be used as in 4, or a less formal evaluation may follow this second film.

7. Culminating Activity:

Each student may choose one of the following:

- a. Poem typifying the culture of poverty and the culture of wealth.
- b. Short story or essay explaining culture of poverty and culture of wealth.
- c. Series of original drawings (or some other art form) depicting the culture of poverty and the culture of wealth.

Appendix A

PRE-TEST:

1. Personal economic poverty is:
 - a. Always a personal evil.
 - b. Sometimes a personal evil.
 - c. Always something "to be cured."
 - d. a and c.
 - e. b and c.
2. Of the following, the greatest evil in the world today is:
 - a. Social injustice.
 - b. Economic poverty.
 - c. Personal wealth.
 - d. Malnutrition and starvation.
3. Which of the following is most basic to life:
 - a. The ability to love oneself.
 - b. Protection of one's private property rights.
 - c. The ability to accept oneself.
 - d. Leisure time.
 - e. The ability to love others.
4. Of the following the greatest poverty a person can know is:
 - a. Lack of living friends.
 - b. Lack of personal freedom.
 - c. Lack of good health.
 - d. Lack of leisure time.
5. One who is in the state of economic poverty can
 - a. Be morally wealthy.
 - b. Be socially wealthy.
 - c. Both a and b.
 - d. Neither a or b.
6. Life must include:
 - a. Lack of economic poverty.
 - b. Presence of an active basic spirituality.
 - c. A good formal education.
 - d. a, b, and c.
 - e. Only b and c.
7. The wealthiest man in the following group would be:
 - a. The man who is able to exert the most power over others.
 - b. The man who has loyal friends.
 - c. The man who has amassed sizeable real estate.

- d. The man who is surrounded by abundant natural resources.
8. Every human being needs:
- a. Leisure time. d. a, b and c.
 b. To be accepted by others. e. Only b and c.
 c. To live in love and freedom.
9. One is apt to run into the problem of drugs:
- a. In the ghetto d. In only a and b.
 b. In the homes of the wealthy. e. In a, b and c.
 c. In the homes of the middle class.
10. Of the following, which would be the most basic to educational wealth?
- a. Ability to learn from experience.
 b. Access to educational resources.
 c. Esteem for learning.
 d. Good teachers.
 e. Educationally sound school systems.
11. Of the following which would be the greatest personal evil for a human being?
- a. Social Poverty. c. Psychological Poverty.
 b. Economic Poverty. d. Legal Poverty.
12. Personal economic wealth is
- a. Always a personal evil. d. b and c.
 b. Sometimes a personal evil. e. None of these.
 c. Always something to be "cured."
 "cured."

Appendix B

CHARACTERISTICS OF POVERTY AND WEALTH:

CATEGORIES	POVERTY	WEALTH
Economic	Lack of things money can buy.	Abundance of things money can buy.
Social	Lack of friends and relatives. No leisure time; imminence of crime, drugs, revolution, violence; lack of status in community; lack of hospitality or loyalty from others.	Opposite.
Moral	Ignorance of God and his love. Living in constant hatred, fear, danger. Inability to change self, others, environment.	A personal faith relationship with God.
Psychological	Lack of power and control in life. Frustration, demoralization, neglect, humiliation, overcrowdedness, lack of privacy, need to get away.	Acceptance of self, others, environment, while trying to change what needs to be changed. Being able to cope (an extraordinary achievement for those economically poor).

CATEGORIES POVERTY

WEALTH

Educational	Inaccessibility of resources, learning, quality schools, teachers and materials. Incomplete education; inability to learn from experience or to value education.	Opposite.
Health	Lack of prenatal, postnatal care. Lack of ongoing medical, dental care. Rats, filth, poor plumbing. Lack of insurance.	Opposite.
Legal	Ignorance of rights and law. Law discrimination against color, race, socio-economic level, etc.	Knowledge of law and rights, and protection by law in business and private life.

Appendix C

MODEL PLANNING CHART FOR WALKING TOURS OF CITY OR COMMUNITY:

SECTION I: Map of areas of city.

SECTION II: Outline of groups, dates, tours, neighborhoods.

<i>Area</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Dates of Tours</i>	<i>Interviews</i>
Gun Factory Area C St.N.W. to 18th St. N.E.	1. Mr. Moore John Moore Gene Sutton	Oct. 1, 1972 9:30-12 noon	1. Lady at bus stop. Little league coach. Mother with small child. Taxi driver.
	2. Kay O'Connor Helen May Mike Dubcik	Oct. 9, 1972 1 P.M.-3 P.M.	2. Teenager in group. Man at bus stop. Man sitting on porch. Lady coming out of store.
Low-Income Housing Develop- ment. S.W. P St. to Y St.	1. Joe Hert Lou Smith	Oct. 10, 1972 10:30-1:30	1. Student on street. Mechanic on duty.
	2. Mary Jones Sue Qualls	Oct. 15, 9-12	2. etc.

Notes

1. The first part of the report discusses the importance of community planning in the development of a city. It highlights the need for a comprehensive approach that involves all stakeholders in the process.

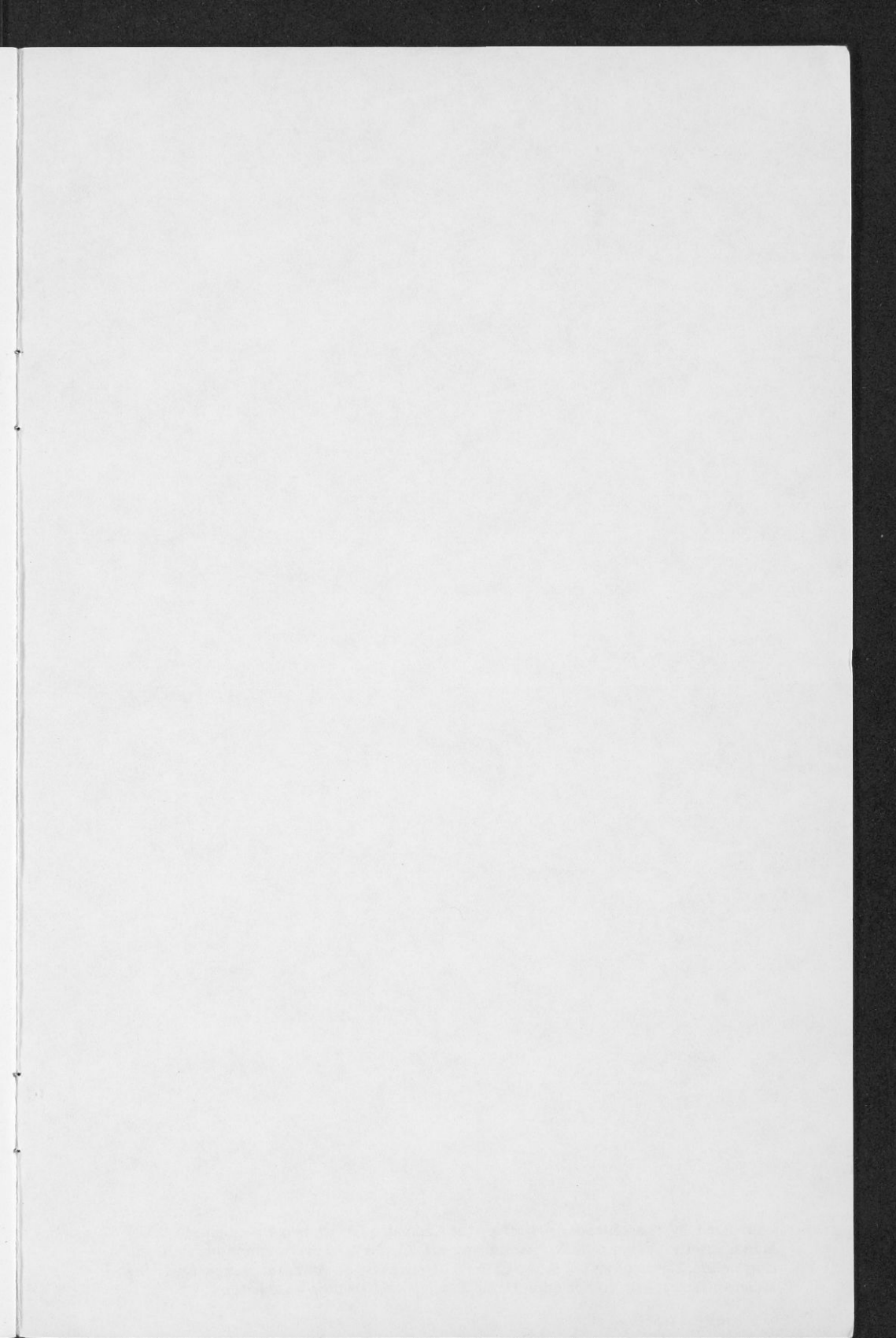
APPENDIX C
MODEL PLANNING MODEL FOR WALKING TOURS
CITY OF OMAHA

- 1. Social Policy
- 2. Economic Policy
- 3. Environmental Policy
- 4. Cultural Policy

The following table provides a detailed overview of the various components and objectives of the walking tour model. It outlines the key areas of focus and the specific goals for each component.

Table 1: Key Components and Objectives of the Walking Tour Model. This table details the structure of the tours, including the duration, route, and the specific educational and experiential goals for each segment.

The model is designed to provide a comprehensive and engaging experience for participants. It includes a mix of historical facts, cultural insights, and practical information about the city's infrastructure and services. The walking tour format allows for a more intimate and interactive learning environment compared to traditional classroom-based instruction.



Prepared by the educational staff of the Campaign for Human Development, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005, in conjunction with the Curriculum Development Center, Catholic University of America. Design by Irving Miller of New York; composition by NC Publications, Inc., of Washington.