

## ***Civics: A Christian Worldview. “Christians and the Poor” News Article Rebuttal (10–15 minutes)***

### **TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY**

#### **Instructions (“Christians and the Poor” News Article Rebuttal)**

1. **Objective:** Students in groups of 2 or 3 will rebut a news writer’s claim that Christians are heartless and unaware of what the Bible says about caring for the poor.
2. Hand out a copy of Page 2 to each student, printed front and back.
3. Put students in pairs/small groups and tell them they have 10 minutes to (A) write down rebuttal ideas on the blank spaces provided, and (B) discuss their answers in their pairs/groups.
4. When students are finished, discuss **as a class**. Ask for volunteers! Bring up these key points:

#### **Key Points**

1. Obviously Christians should care for the poor—and they do, and have for thousands of years. BUT that doesn’t mean that they agree that **government** should take over charitable giving and taking care of the poor.
2. There is a difference between voluntary giving and “charity” forced upon taxpayers.
3. Jesus and the OT and the apostles’ words on the poor refers to VOLUNTARY giving, not government programs.
4. Government welfare programs have been extremely ineffective at getting people out of poverty; instead, these create a dependent class that relies on government handouts and gets used to not having to work for a living.
5. A huge chunk of government welfare programs goes not to the poor, but to operations (employee salaries, buildings, materials, etc.) Several studies have shown this to be around 70-75 percent, meaning that only about one-fourth of taxpayer money that’s supposed to “help the poor” even GETS to the poor.
6. Tell students that we’ll talk more about the issue of poverty during the last week of Civics class.

## ***Civics: A Christian Worldview. “Christians and the Poor” News Article Rebuttal***

You’re flipping through some news articles, and you come across this editorial/opinion piece:

It’s because of people who call themselves “Christians” today that we’re having so much trouble with poverty. These so-called “Christians” often oppose programs to help the poor, like free food for the poor, free housing for the poor, and free medical care for the poor. Apparently these “Christians” have never read what the Bible says about the poor. Here are just a few examples, first from the Old Testament:

- “If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren... thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him” (Deuteronomy 15:7-8).
- “Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard” (Proverbs 21:13).

And look at what the New Testament says:

- Jesus said unto [the rich man]; “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Matthew 19:21).
- “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John 3:17).
- “Give, and it shall be given unto you... For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Jesus in Luke 6:38).

I’d like to hear those “Christians” explain how they can still oppose government assistance to the poor, or call it “plunder,” after reading those verses! What are we supposed to do about the poor, if not this?

How could you respond to this writer’s claims? Jot down a few ideas below, then discuss these with your partner/group members.

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