



## Supporting your work for Justice and Peace with young people

### Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the imaginatively titled 'BOVA'd?'. This newsletter is produced by Bosco Volunteer Action, the Salesians of Don Bosco's overseas volunteering organisation in the UK. It aims to encourage and support instances of development education within youth work; raising awareness of problems confronting developing countries and presenting actions which can be taken. Sent out 6 times per year and then available from [www.salesianyouthministry.com](http://www.salesianyouthministry.com), 'BOVA'd' will bring together information, links and resources relevant to justice and peace issues from a large number of charities and campaign groups. In time it is hoped that it will also include materials sent in by those on the mailing list.

Many thanks to all who have signed up (from across the world), but we want more! If you like what you see, please encourage others to join by emailing [bova@salesianyouthministry.com](mailto:bova@salesianyouthministry.com). Perhaps you could suggest it to confirmation catechists, youth group leaders, school councils, teachers, chaplains, Priests, Sisters and Brothers, justice and peace group secretaries or other interested individuals.

An explanation of the format:

Section	Explanation	In this edition
Hints and tips	Suggestions of best practice in development education	The '3 barriers to action'
Focus	An in-depth look at one particular issue, figure or organisation	Oscar Romero
Odds and ends	Other resources, events and links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons to be cheerful from Oxfam</li> <li>• Advance warning for 2 exciting events</li> <li>• The Nag</li> </ul>

Topics to be covered in future editions will include issues such as the arms trade, street children, debt (hopefully leading up to the national debt event in May), trade and climate change.

Our aim is to support you in your work, so please contact [bova@salesianyouthministry.com](mailto:bova@salesianyouthministry.com) with any feedback, suggestions or items for inclusion.

Best wishes

James

# Hints and tips

## The 3 barriers to action

In any attempt to encourage people to take action, there are three problems which must first be overcome:

### 1. A lack of awareness of the issue

This is obviously an extremely important first step – if they don't know, they certainly won't act. It is often surprising (and not a little depressing) to discover just how unaware people can be about issues relating to developing countries. In research I did in a youth club in Reading, some of the young people were convinced that poverty had been 'made history' in 2005; they were surprised to learn otherwise.

On the other hand it cannot be assumed that the giving of information will automatically lead to action; *"even if participants have high levels of knowledge about the problem and the community has invested in changing their attitudes through advertising or educational campaigns, behaviour is often unaltered"* (McKenzie-Mohr 2000, 'Fostering sustainable behaviour through community-based social marketing'). For this reason 'awareness-raising' alone is of limited value – whenever possible it should be linked to overcoming barriers 2 and 3.

### 2. The feeling that it has nothing to do with them

This is the 'So what?' stage: *"People far away are suffering – so what? What's that got to do with me?"*. Steps have to be taken to make a link between their lives and the issue, or even better between them and an individual who is facing the problem under discussion. Two approaches are often used here – responsibility and empathy.

Responsibility involves tracing the causes of the development issue back to your young people's lives. For example, in discussions about trade justice you could focus on the words of Martin Luther King: *"Before you've finished your breakfast this morning, you'll have relied on half the world"* or investigate where their clothing was made. Similarly linking back to the actions of governments or companies might be relevant, such as with subsidies for the arms trade or Coca Cola's actions in India. Empathy involves focussing on the things 'in common' between your young people and someone in the developing world. Big charities often use this method by explaining issues through the eyes of a person of a similar age. Another powerful method is to make more direct contact, either through 'simulation'/role-play games, first-hand communication via the internet or school/church/youth club 'twinning' or by second-hand via presentations by returned volunteers, people from that country etc.

### 3. The belief that there is nothing they can do about it

This stage is vital! It is no good simply depressing your young people. It also serves an educational purpose, making concrete what has been learnt; *"it is crucial real opportunities for involvement are provided. This is not only a logical outcome of the learning process, but a significant means of reinforcing new knowledge, skills and attitudes"* (Fountain 1995, 'Education for Development: A teacher's resource for Global Learning', 16).

There are two steps here: introducing relevant actions, and then convincing them that their actions are worthwhile. Actions might include writing letters, signing petitions, making posters (raising awareness counts as taking action), signing up to an email newsletter, prayer, making some kind of commitment or pledge and so on. The value of their actions could be affirmed by evidence of

previous campaign success, the support of campaign organisations/relevant opinion leaders, the starfish anecdote (see 'Why bother?' in the justice and peace section of [www.salesianyouthministry.com](http://www.salesianyouthministry.com), or the African Proverb "You think you're too small to make a difference? Then you've obviously never slept in the same room as a mosquito".

This stage should be as practical and immediate as possible (although it could lead to longer term involvement). In workshops I have previously used a hierarchy of outcomes:

At least	Knows more
	Takes an immediate action
	Commits to telling others (raising awareness)
	Commits to ongoing actions
At best	Commits to ongoing action and raising awareness

By keeping these "three barriers to action" in mind during the planning of any justice and peace orientated activity you can increase the possibility of them committing to action.

Next time:

*Images of the developing world and the risk of disempowerment*

## Focus

### Oscar Romero

The story of Oscar Romero has been told many times, and some of the materials below do a far better job than I could, so what follows is just a brief summary.

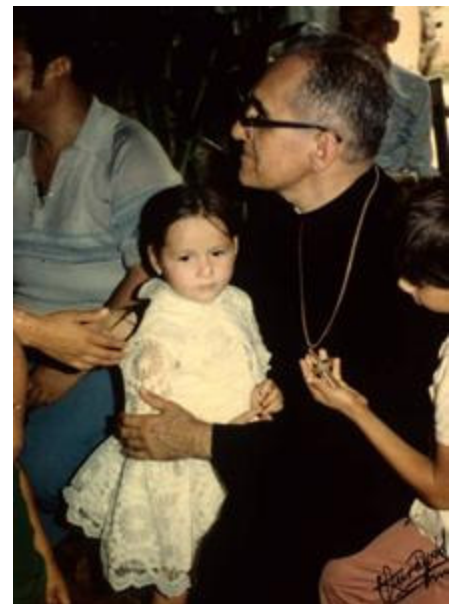
Oscar Romero was made Archbishop of San Salvador, the capital city of El Salvador, in 1977. At the time the Salvadorian Government was abusing its power, using violence and 'disappearances' to suppress people's organisations and questions about social justice. In Romero, they thought they had appointed a quiet, timid man who liked to avoid conflict. They hoped that he would control priests who were beginning to challenge social structures that benefited only the elite.

However, within weeks of his appointment he was shocked into a change of direction by the murder of his friend, a Jesuit priest called Rutilio Grande. Fr Grande had been living and working with the poor, helping them to organise and find the voice they needed to give them the hope of a better future. It became clear that he was killed by those in power; and so began Romero's quest to speak out about justice, forgiveness and peace.

Eventually, after many courageous sermons, articles, visits and radio broadcasts, Romero's voice was silenced. He was murdered while saying mass on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March, 1980.

### Why is he relevant?

The story of Oscar Romero is an extremely powerful one. His faith inspired him to become a hero to many, continuing to bravely speak out against injustice even though he knew the tragic consequences he would suffer. Thanks to the numerous resources available (see below) it is possible to present his story in a variety of ways – actual video footage of him, PowerPoint presentations, a Hollywood film,



photos, quotes etc. His example of faith in action can offer a positive role model for today's world – a man led by his beliefs to be a voice for the voiceless.

## Materials available

A Hollywood film was made about Romero. It's available in 11 parts online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sT2vbgJwGRU> or you can borrow my DVD if you ask nicely and don't live too far away ([bova@salesianyouthministry.com](mailto:bova@salesianyouthministry.com)).

CAFOD resource for use in secondary schools. Some bits are out of date but the activities are mostly still relevant

<http://www.cafod.org.uk/var/storage/original/application/php4vyzwh.pdf>

Video footage of Romero accompanied by a recording of a sermon given the day before he died (in Spanish) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHrjtJZC\\_Us&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHrjtJZC_Us&feature=related)

Passages from his sermons; a good taster of his message

<http://www.justpeace.org/romero.htm>

Plans for a prayer service themed around Romero

[http://www.osfphila.org/sp/pryr\\_svcs/prayer\\_romero.html](http://www.osfphila.org/sp/pryr_svcs/prayer_romero.html)

Good teaching activities, although many of the links from here appear to be dead

<http://www.cathnews.com/ozspirit/2005/103b.html>

Video footage of the massacre that took place at Romero's funeral

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQdlix\\_OVZo&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQdlix_OVZo&feature=related)

Video footage of Romero accompanied by U2 soundtrack

<http://www.romerotrue.org.uk/index.htm>

Video footage and biography (in Spanish) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNFfwzZsKR8&NR=1>

Longish article from 2007, reflecting on the meaning of Romero's death as a martyr

[http://www.cafod.org.uk/news\\_and\\_events/features/courageous\\_witness](http://www.cafod.org.uk/news_and_events/features/courageous_witness)

Excellent article, setting out the context and meaning of Romero's life and death

[http://ncronline.org/NCR\\_Online/archives2/2005b/041505/041505a.php](http://ncronline.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2005b/041505/041505a.php)

Interesting article for those involved in adult education or working with young adults (volunteers etc)

[http://www.infed.org/thinkers/oscar\\_romero.htm](http://www.infed.org/thinkers/oscar_romero.htm)

Detailed article about his life, written for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death

<http://www.johndear.org/articles/romero25.htm>

PowerPoint presentations:

I have one produced by the Salford Diocese Justice and Peace group – contact me for a copy

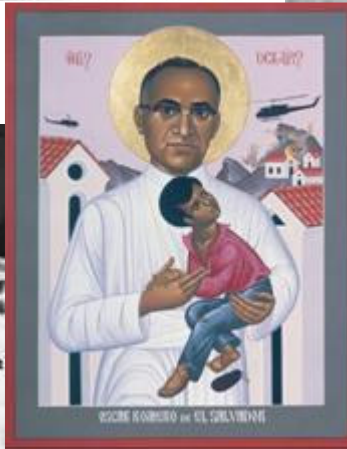
([bova@salesianyouthministry.com](mailto:bova@salesianyouthministry.com))

Others can be found at

[http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/svp/romero/ppt/sld001.htm](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/svp/romero/ppt/sld001.htm)

[www.romero-center.org/Oscar%20Romero%20-%20PPT.ppt](http://www.romero-center.org/Oscar%20Romero%20-%20PPT.ppt)

[http://www.caritas.org.au/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Multimedia\\_resources\\_and\\_downloads#Archbishop\\_op](http://www.caritas.org.au/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Multimedia_resources_and_downloads#Archbishop_op)



Next time:  
*Global debt*

## Odds and ends

### Good news!

[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam\\_in\\_action/what\\_we\\_do/ten\\_good\\_reasons.html?ito=2439&itc=0](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam_in_action/what_we_do/ten_good_reasons.html?ito=2439&itc=0)

### LiveSimply Event

Advance warning: **Liveit! the livesimply event.** 14-15<sup>th</sup> March 2008. New Century House, Manchester. LiveSimply is a Catholic movement which challenges us to “reflect, celebrate and take action in order to work for justice”. **Liveit!** aims to provide a chance to meet with others for lectures, workshops and stalls (including some kind of BOVA presence). See [www.livesimply.org.uk/event08](http://www.livesimply.org.uk/event08) for more details.

### Debt Event

Advance warning: National event about Global Debt - JOURNEY TO JUSTICE, Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May, International Convention Centre, Birmingham <http://www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/?lid=3814>  
Global debt will be the focus of a future edition – I hope to attend this event, possibly with a group organised by BOVA.

### The Nag

‘The Nag’ is a fantastic idea – a website that will “playfully nag” you once a month about something you can do to make a difference. Their strap line is ‘changing the world one lazy-assed mouse click at a time’. It provides simple information, with links to more in-depth stuff for those who are interested. Find out more and sign up at <http://www.thenag.net/>