Who is Poor in America Today?

Learning About an Epidemic
Here in the United States, 40.6 million people are living in poverty.

That’s nearly one out of every 8 Americans.

…and nearly one out of every 5 children.
This presentation will review the facts about poverty and introduce some of the human faces behind the numbers.

Please consult your worksheet as you review the Poverty Quiz.
Poverty Quiz:
Question #1

True or False: If all the poor in the United States lived in the same state, it would be the largest state in the nation – the state of “Poverty, USA.”

TRUE
The state with the highest population is California, at 39 million. The number of people living in poverty in the United States is over 40 million.

While the average rate of poverty in the U.S. is 12.7%, the people in some states see much more poverty than those who live in other parts of the country.
### Top 10 States with the Highest Poverty Rate, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Poverty Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>20.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>20.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>19.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>18.50%</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>17.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>17.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>17.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>16.30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>16.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
True or False: Most Americans could get out of poverty if they only had a job.

FALSE
Most poor Americans are too young, too old or physically incapable of working due to illness or disability.

In fact, over two-thirds of all Americans living in poverty have to depend on someone else in the household to bring in money to live.
And children are more likely than anyone to experience poverty.
True or False: Nearly one of every five children in America lives in poverty.

TRUE
In 2016, children represented 32.6 percent of the people in poverty in the U.S., but only 23.0 percent of the population.

In the year 2016, 13.3 million or about 1 out of 6 children lived in poverty. Children in America have higher poverty rates than in many industrialized nations.
Poverty Quiz: Question #4

True or False: For the most part, people living in poverty do not work.

FALSE
In 2016, 8.7 million American workers live below the poverty line.
True or False: The government says that a family of four is poor if it earns at least $30,000 annually.

FALSE
The federal government puts the 2016 poverty line at $24,339 for a family of four with two children. However, researchers estimate that meeting basic needs for an average family of four would actually require about $42,400 annually.
Poverty Quiz:
Question #6

True or False: The federal minimum wage is now $7.25 per hour.

TRUE
The federal minimum wage increased from $6.55/hr to $7.25/hr on July 24, 2009.

But for a mother who works full-time at minimum wage to support one small child, that translates to annual earnings of only $15,080.
True or False: In a 36 month period almost one out of every three Americans lives in poverty at least two months.

TRUE
Many Americans tread just above the poverty line every year, barely hanging on.
Poverty Quiz: Question #8

True or False. Most people living in poverty are white.

TRUE
Most people living in poverty today are white — 17.3 million Americans.

However, this figure comprises only 8.8 percent of the total white population.
By comparison, in 2016, the rate of poverty for African Americans was 22.0%. That means that almost one out of four African Americans living in poverty.

For Hispanics, the poverty rate in 2016 was 19.4%.
Poverty Quiz: Question #9

True or False: Most people who live in poverty would not escape even if they doubled their income.

FALSE
Most of those who live in poverty would, in fact, escape if they doubled their income.

That being said, nearly half of those who live in poverty would remain in poverty even if they doubled their income.
True or False: Children of single mothers are more likely to experience poverty than the children of married couple families.

**TRUE**
Children under 6 years old are particularly vulnerable to poverty.

Children under 6 living under a female householder live in poverty at the rate of 49.1%, compared to 9.5% of children living in poverty in married couple families.
Poverty Quiz:  
Question #12

True or False: Approximately one in six people of with annual incomes of less than $25,000 had no health insurance in 2016.

TRUE
14.8% of people with annual incomes less than $25,000 were uninsured in 2016, compared to 7.4% of people with annual incomes of $75,000 or more.

The total number of uninsured persons was 28.1 million in 2016.
The numbers are overwhelming.

But there’s something we can do to help.
Join the Catholic Campaign for Human Development in working with the poor to overcome the barriers that keep millions of men, women and children living in poverty.
Find out more about what you can do to make a difference at www.povertyusa.org

Facts and statistics in this PowerPoint are from the U.S. Census Bureau website. https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/P60-259.pdf

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