



**How did two New Jersey girls make a connection with a volleyball team in Cuba?**



**AIM:** To inspire students to think of ways they can use their time, talents and interests to connect with others.

**TIME FRAME:** One class period plus homework.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** January/February 2017 MARYKNOLL magazine.

**LESSON PLAN**

**DO NOW:** Ask students to spend a few minutes thinking of connections they have made with others through a shared interest, such as a sport, the arts, literature, etc. Ask them to draw a diagram that places the activity in the center and the people they have met through this activity on the periphery connected by lines to the center. Have students share their diagrams with one another and explain how this activity allowed them to make these connections.

**MOTIVATION:** Tell students they are going to learn how two teenage girls from New Jersey used their love of volleyball to connect with teens with the same interest in Cuba.

**ACTIVITY:** Have students read "Game on!" on pages 52–54 in the January/February 2017 MARYKNOLL magazine and answer the Reading Worksheet. **Possible answers:** 1. Catherine and Ava wanted to bridge the gap between Cuba and the United States by fostering new friendships through the sport of volleyball. 2. The U.S. teens discovered the Cuban teens were proficient volleyball players even though they played on a dilapidated court and that these teens were friendly and eager to meet people from outside Cuba. 3. Catherine hopes to have the entire Red Bank team go to Cuba next year and to eventually bring the Cuban team here to play.

**CONCLUSION:** Facilitate a discussion on how sharing interests can foster friendship and understanding between people. Ask a student to read this quote from Catherine on page 54: "If you can help people in one way, like sharing a sport, then you can connect on another level." Have students return to the diagram they made earlier, and in light of what they just read, take a few minutes to imagine how they might use that interest to do something similar to what Catherine and Ava did, either locally or globally, and share their ideas with their classmates. Have them add these possibilities to their original diagram.

**HOMEWORK:** Red Bank Catholic was the first high school to join the Maryknoll Affiliates, whose mission statement says, "Maryknoll Affiliates challenge one another to witness to mission as a way of life by going beyond borders, locally and globally, walking with the poor and excluded, and striving for peace and justice for all of God's creation." Write a reflection answering these questions: In what ways can teenagers today live out the ideals of this mission statement? How can teens move beyond borders, physical or psychological, to reach out to others? Who are the poor and excluded in your community and abroad? Who are the people most in need of peace and justice?

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

1. Have students go to the Maryknoll Affiliates website (Maryknoll Affiliates.org) and identify the four pillars of an Affiliate chapter. As a class, discuss what the pillars stand for. Ask students to come up with a plan to incorporate these four pillars into the life of their school community. What activities are they already doing that support the four pillars? What activities could they add?
2. Form a committee of students interested in investigating the possibility of starting a Maryknoll Affiliate chapter in your school. Contact Robert Short, executive coordinator of the Maryknoll Affiliates, at [rshort@maryknollaffiliates.org](mailto:rshort@maryknollaffiliates.org) for information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was Catherine's and Ava's motivation for going to Cuba? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What was the result of the trip? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What does Catherine hope the future will bring for the Cuban and Red Bank students?

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