Class Activities for Chapter 1: The Social Work Profession

**Class activity #1**

Break the class into groups and have them discuss their own individual reasons for taking this introductory level social work class. Do they want to be social workers? If not, what area do they want to pursue, and how does this class relate? What makes some of them feel social work might be the right profession for them to enter? What sort of individual factors do they have in their own lives that may impact their ability to be an effective social worker, whether positive or negative?

Ask the small groups to notice any common threads and to bring any difficult questions about the social work field to the larger full group for discussion. What are some of the most common reasons for students considering pursuing social work as a field?

**Class activity #2**

Have your class break into groups. Make sure at least one person in each group has a device that can access the Internet. Have the groups see how quickly they can identify the following:

1. What is the nearest university (perhaps other than your own) that offers a master’s degree in social work?
2. What is the nearest university that offers an advanced standing program for their MSW degree?
3. Can they find two local agencies or employers that have social work jobs available? What are the requirements for those varied jobs, and what are the salaries for those positions?

If groups struggle, you may want to direct them to specific websites like cswe.org, simplyhired.com, or other job sites, where they can find some of this information. Obviously, you should also know the answers to the first two questions and have done some recent research on the third one before this class.

Provide some sort of reward or recognition to the group that is first to turn in three correct answers. Discuss all the groups’ findings as a whole class.

**Class activity #3**

Have the class individually write down the first 5-6 adjectives or descriptive phrases that come to mind when they think of social workers. What are some of the stereotypes, both positive and negative, that they have of social workers?

After giving them sufficient time to come up with their individual lists, break the class into small groups and have them share their lists, looking for commonalities and discussing unique responses as well. Then have them report back to the class.

Discuss where these ideas come from, and whether or not they are really accurate. Why do some people have such negative views of social workers? Why do some of the students in class want to work in this field, despite having knowledge of the negative views many people may have of social workers?