

**Dinner with Ivan Illich – Discussion Questions**

1. Who are you? Why are you here? What do you hope to accomplish?

2. What do you think Illich meant when he stated that the only thing volunteers could legitimately volunteer for is “voluntary powerlessness” and/or “voluntary presence as receives”?

3. What is this “hypocrisy” Illich is talking about?

4. Why does Illich argue the there is “much worse poverty” in our own communities relative to the “newly discovered poverty south of the border”?

5. What are some of the ways that volunteers can “pretentiously impose themselves on Mexicans”?

A. Pretension: “The idea that every American has something to give, and at all times may, can and should give it, explains why it occurred to students that they could help Mexican peasants “develop” by spending a few months in their villages.” (p. 5)

6. Is it true that there is “no common ground whatsoever” for a volunteer and someone in poverty to meet on? (p. 4)

7. Read p. 4 about volunteers going to a ghetto in the United States and ask “Why do you think Illich poses different responses for those living in US poverty versus those living in poverty in Mexican villages?”

8. Explore the motivations of the “foreign priest”

9. Read the section titled “stay with your riots at home” p. 5