

# Chapter 17

## Death Penalty

### 17.1 *Dead Man Walking* – Questionnaire

1. What is the significance of the flashback scene of a group of children beating an opossum according to you?
2. Does the movie suggest that capital punishment works as a deterrent?
3. Does the movie suggest that capital punishment is unfairly distributed among the members of the society?
4. Does the movie suggest that capital punishment can promote a form of peace of mind for the victims?
5. Does the movie suggest that punishment can promote a form of rehabilitation for the criminal?
6. Does the movie suggest that capital punishment is a just retribution for the criminal's offense?
7. At one point Poncelet's lawyer says: "All we have to do is to present you as a person." What do you think he means by this?
8. In what ways do Sister Helen's motives come into question? Do you think she is right in choosing to help Poncelet?
9. What is Poncelet's explanation for why he is on death row? Does his explanation change? How?
10. What would you say is the most difficult moral judgment Sister Helen faces? Why?
11. What, above all, does Sister Helen seem to want to accomplish as Poncelet's spiritual advisor? Do you think she is right in doing so? Do you think she achieves her goal?
12. What are some of the ways that the film portrays denial as a moral failing?
13. Note anything not mentioned above that particularly strikes or moves you in the film..