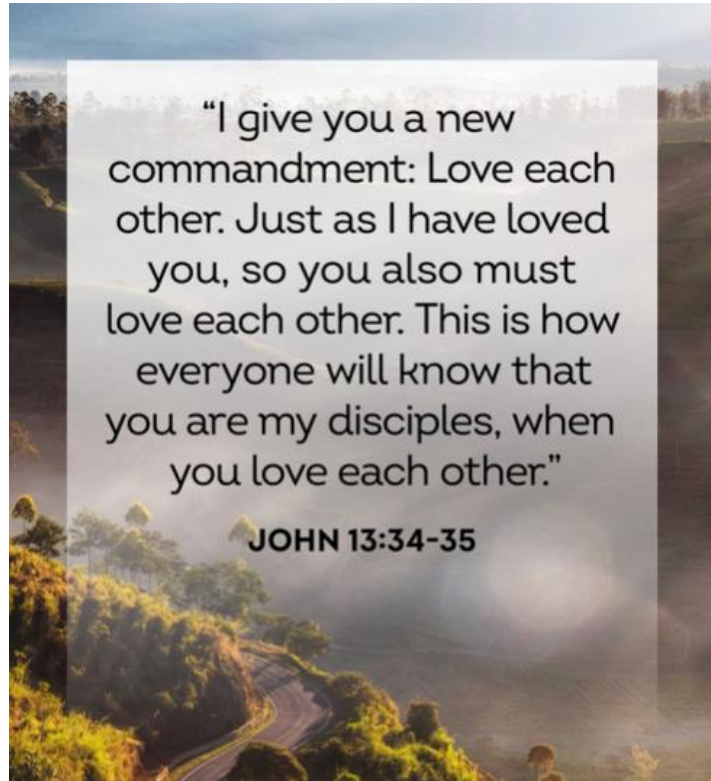


God Matters: Supplementary Guidance

Early Years: Catholic Social Teaching



‘And Jesus concluded, “In your opinion, which one of these three acted like a neighbour toward the man attacked by the robbers?” The teacher of the Law answered, “The one who was kind to him.” Jesus replied, “You go, then, and do the same.” Luke 10:36-37

Rationale

The focus for this unit is an introduction to the Church’s teaching on social justice. Catholic Social Teaching calls us to work for the common good, help build a just society, uphold the dignity of human life and work and work for justice and the dignity of all our brothers and sisters, especially those in greatest need.

Theology

The teachings come from the Gospels and words and teachings of Christ, Papal statements and encyclicals, and statements from Catholic bishops. The teachings can be summed up with the commandment to *‘Love one another, as I have loved you.*

A PROFILE OF THE EARLY YEARS CHILD IN RE

AT1: KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING ('learning about')

Developing Knowledge and Understanding

- Children are developing a familiarity with the stories in the Bible, with the Church's story, the church building, with how and when we pray, and with God's Creation.
- They are able to listen to and talk about religious stories and respond to what they hear with relevant comments.
- They hear, listen and talk about key people in the history of the people of God, for example, God, Jesus, Mary.
- Emphasis is not on a written account but on the children experiencing the key learning through an appropriate range of activities, e.g. role play, creative activities, speaking and listening, exploring the environment, singing, dancing and making music, to express religious stories and represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings about religious stories.
- Children develop their own narrative and explanations of religious stories based on what they have heard, by connecting ideas or events to the scripture source used.
- Children begin to read and understand simple sentences from scripture or from their own religious stories and share religious stories they have heard and read with others.
- Children are beginning to write simple sentences about religious stories using words or phrases which can be read by themselves and others.
- Children listen, talk about and role play similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, church communities and church traditions.
- Listen, talk about and role play similarities and differences in relation to places they have read or heard about family, church communities and scripture stories.
- Children listen, talk about and role play how people behave in the school, local and wider church community, for example, 'what does a priest do?', 'who is the Bishop, who is the Pope?', set up 'church' in role play area, role play baptism.
- Assessment is through observation and dialogue.
- Recording is primarily through a Class RE Book, with individual comments acknowledged, also some individualised evidence to be found in pupils' learning journals.
- Children are introduced into the prayer life of the school and the key prayers (for example, sign of the cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, morning, lunchtime and home prayers), words and rituals associated with these. A sense of reverence is encouraged from day one.
- Following modelling by staff and when ready, pupils are encouraged to verbally offer their own prayers.
- Children listen and talk about religious signs and symbols used in worship, including the celebration of the sacraments, using religious signs and symbols in role play.

Religious and Specialist Vocabulary

- Children are able to decode key religious words appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Children are able to use key religious words which are appropriate to their age and stage of development.

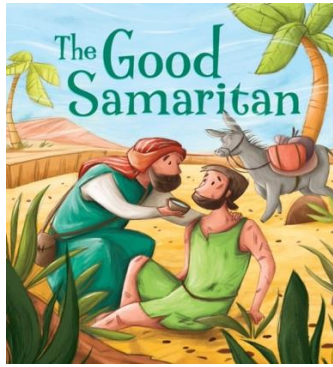
AT2: ENGAGEMENT AND RESPONSE ('learning from')

Meaning and Purpose

- Children are led and encouraged to reflect on their understanding of the stories they hear and the message for them.
- They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to religious stories or events, for example, 'would I make a good disciple?', 'can I be a follower of Jesus?', 'what do the miracles tell me about Jesus' love for me?', 'what does that tell me about Jesus?', 'what does Jesus want me to do?'
- Children are given real life opportunities to wonder, for example, hatching of chicks, caterpillar life cycle.
- A class Big Book, or equivalent, is used to record thoughtful answers.

Beliefs and Values

- Children are given opportunities to:
 - Show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings.
 - Talk about how they and others show feelings.
 - Confidently speak in a familiar group and talk about their ideas.
 - Express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs.
 - Give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately.
 - Talk about their own and others' behaviour and its consequences. The Teacher models where this links to faith, scripture and following Jesus (discipleship).
 - Talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members.
 - Know that other children don't always enjoy and share the same feelings and are sensitive to this.
- Associate the meanings of prayers to everyday life, e.g., 'forgive us our trespasses' links to children falling out.
- Use stories from the Bible to make PSHE/EPR points, for example, the story of Jesus in the Temple, helps them think and talk about that it is ok to be angry if something is not fair. This can lead onto looking at reconciliation – dealing with our anger and moving on.
- Talking about good choices and bad choices.
- Find opportunities to talk about how the school mission statement can help them in how they relate to others.
- Provide opportunities for outreach, e.g. local nursing homes, CAFOD projects – help them see and be God's love in action.



EARLY YEARS: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Introduces the Church’s social teaching.

Explores how we are called to be loved and to share our love with others, particularly those in need.

Explores links between Catholic Social Teaching and parables told by Jesus.

Key Scripture

- A New Commandment (John 12:34-35)
- Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)
- I have called you by name (Isaiah 43:1-3)

Key vocabulary

Catholic Social Teaching - Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is based on a tradition of episcopal and papal writings on political, economic and social issues facing our time. CST provides us with a structure on how to encompass and apply these reflections to our daily lives. More importantly, it guides us on how we should respond to our faith as individuals, and actively respond to God’s call to work towards a common good.

Resources

- [CAFOD website](#)
- [CAFOD – CST Project – Teachers Notes](#)
- Caritas
- *The Smartest Giant in Town* by Julia Donaldson

Commandment – a divine rule

Parable – a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, as told by Jesus in the Gospels.

Poor - lacking sufficient money to live at a standard considered comfortable or normal in a society. People can also be poor in other areas, e.g. spiritually poor.

Solidarity - mutual support within a group.

Stewardship - recognising that everything we have and everything we are is a gift from God and being grateful and generous with those gifts.

Vulnerable - in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.

Key and Supplementary Questions

Key Question: *Who needs our love?*

- How do we show love to our family, ... friends, ... school, ... community, ... the world?
- What can we do in our class to make the day better for everyone?
- Who can you pray for today that needs our help?
- What small thing could you try and change to make someone happier?
- What does it mean to respect everyone?
- What does it mean to be fair?
- What does it mean to put someone else first?
- Who can you work/play with today that you haven’t worked/played with before?
- What can I do at home, at school, to look after God’s Creation?
- What do I have that I can share with someone else?

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Catholic social teaching calls us to work for the common good, help build a just society, uphold the dignity of human life and work for justice and the dignity of all our brothers and sisters, especially those in the greatest need.

So what is Catholic Social Teaching?

Catholic Social Teaching Catholic social teaching (CST) is deeply rooted in the Catholic tradition. Pope John Paul II wrote, “The Church’s social teaching finds its source in Sacred Scripture, beginning with the Book of Genesis and especially in the Gospel and the writings of the Apostles. From the beginning, it was part of the Church’s teaching.

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic social teaching is social. Pope Benedict XVI wrote, “No man is an island, entire of itself. Our lives are involved with one another, through innumerable interactions they are linked together. No one lives alone.

No one sins alone. No one is saved alone. The lives of others continually spill over into mine: in what I think, say, do and achieve. And conversely, my life spills over into that of others: for better and for worse.”

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic social teaching is an expression of the Church’s ministry of teaching. The Bishops call Catholic social teaching a “constitutive” part of the Church’s mission to the world. It is not only the prerogative of the institutional church, but of the entire community. “It is the expression of the way that the Church understands society and of her position regarding social structures and changes. The whole of the Church community—priests, religious, and laity—participates in the formulation of this social doctrine.”

The Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

1. Dignity of the Human Person

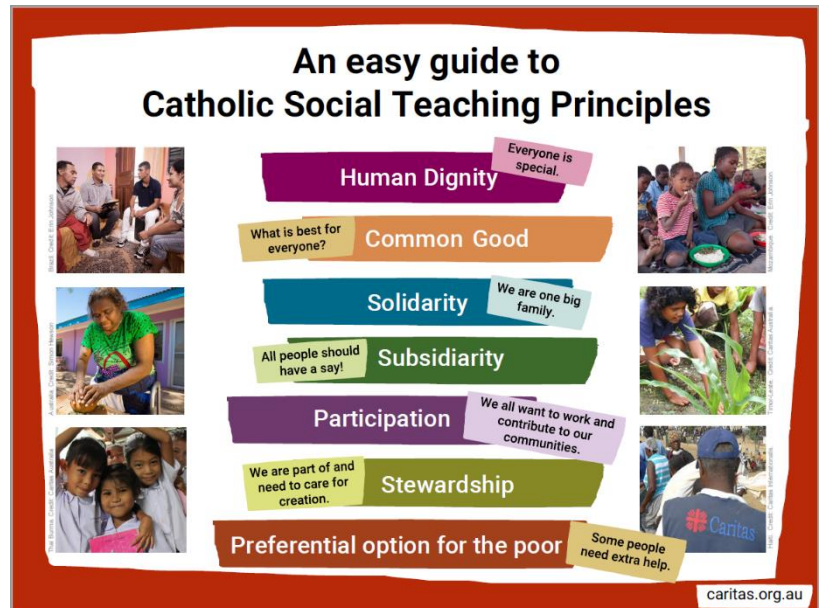
Every human person is created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, every person’s life and dignity must be respected and supported from conception until the end of their natural life on earth. The basic dignity that each person possesses comes from God; therefore all forms of discrimination are always wrong. People take precedence over things and structures. Systems are meant to serve people, and people are meant to serve and care for one another. Scripture tells us repeatedly of God’s love for us. We are called to see every person through the eyes of God and to love them because God loved them (and us) first.

2. Call to Family, Community and Participation

THE COMMON GOOD

We believe in working towards the common good and looking beyond our own personal interests.

The human person is not only sacred, but social. How society is organised be it socially, economically, legally or politically has a direct impact on the dignity and growth of every human person and community. Marriage and family should be supported and strengthened. It is in the community that we are shaped and formed. It is through the community that the dignity of every individual is realised. And it is out of the community that we are sent to love and serve the world.



HUMAN DIGNITY

Every person is created in God’s image. All human life is sacred. We believe in the dignity of each person.

Every person has a right to work to support themselves and their families as well as the building up of the common good of all.

3. Solidarity

We are all the People of God, one family. As Christians, we are as St. Paul reminds us, *one body*. Therefore, what happens to one has an impact on all, locally, nationally and globally. Love of neighbour has global dimensions in our rapidly shrinking world.

SOLIDARITY †
We are part of one human family. We have a responsibility to help each person achieve their full potential.

At the heart of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Our love for all calls us to work for a peaceful and just society where everyone has a fair share of the goods needed for a sustainable life, and opportunities for growth and development are offered equally. The dignity of every person is respected.

Peace is more than a lack of conflict. Peace, or in Hebrew, *Shalom*, means literally 'right relationship'. The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers: that we live in right relationship with others, ourselves and God. Pope Paul VI taught, '*If you want peace, work for justice.*' Our love for our entire human family demands that we work for justice and for peace, that we promote God's *shalom* in our world.

4. Dignity of Work

ECONOMIC JUSTICE †
Everyone has the right to access the means to support themselves and their family.

not the end goal.

Work is a way in which we can continue to participate in God's creation. Work gives dignity to life and must be carried out in such a way that the basic rights of workers are respected. Everyone has the right to productive work, to fair and liveable wages, and to organise and join a union. The economy must be conducted so that it serves the needs of the people – it is a means to an end,

Work should promote the dignity of the worker. Our economy exists to serve people, not vice versa. Our faith calls us to demand justice for all workers and a just economy that serves the life and dignity of all. Likewise, our work contributes to the good life of our brothers and sisters.

5. Rights and Responsibilities

Every person has a fundamental right to life. It is this right that makes all other rights possible. Everyone has the right to food, health care, housing, education and employment. We all need to strive to secure and respect these rights for others both locally and globally.

PARTICIPATION †
Every person can be the architect of change in their own life.

Corresponding to these rights are responsibilities. Because we are created in the image of the Triune God, we must respect the rights of others and care for others according to God's commandments and example.

6. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR †
Prioritising women, men and children most vulnerable to extreme poverty and injustice.

Society is judged on how it cares for and stands with the poor and vulnerable – our brothers and sisters. Just as a parent gives more care and resources to a sick child, in order that the child might become healthy, so we as Christians are called to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. Those with the greatest need require the greatest response.

We read in Scripture how God has a special concern for the oppressed, poor, vulnerable and those forced to the margins of society. The Church calls us to respond to the cry of the poor and put their needs first. This preferential option for the poor and vulnerable must be seen in action in our daily lives and government policies.

7. Stewardship

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth and set humans as his stewards to care for his creation. Care for God's creation was God's fruitful commandment to humanity and a fundamental requirement of our faith.

The world that God created has been entrusted to everyone and we are responsible and accountable to God as stewards of the earth. The world had been given to us as a gift, to enjoy and care for so that future generations can enjoy it too. We are called to honour and protect our planet and its people—to live in relationship with all of God's creation. It is in caring for creation that we show our love and respect for its Creator.

STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION †

Stewardship of the
Earth's resources is vital
for the common good of
people.