

Catholic Social Teaching Workshop Notes Care of Creation



SLIDE ONE – HOLDING SLIDE

LEADER'S NOTES

This presentation lasts up to 30 minutes. **We recommend you deliver the whole workshop but please feel free to use the slides and script as time and circumstances allow. To reduce time, omit extension tasks.**

This is one of five workshops referencing the principles of **Catholic Social Teaching**. Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is based on Scripture, Tradition and Church Teaching as given by popes, bishops and theologians. It offers a set of principles to help us think about how we should interact with others, the choices we make, and how we view creation. For more information about Catholic Social Teaching please visit www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk



START OF PRESENTATION

SLIDE TWO

This workshop has been prepared by **Missio**, Pope Francis' official charity for overseas mission. Mission simply means being sent out to deliver God's love to others through our actions and words.

When we look at the world around us, it's clear that there's a great need for God's mercy and love. We can feel overwhelmed by news of terrible violence, unfairness, suffering.

The Church encourages us not to turn away in despair, but to look at how things could be. To ask ourselves: **What kind of world do I want to be a part of?**

Then to consider: **What can we offer, individually and as a community, to build it?**

Pope Francis has spoken to young people directly about how, through their desire to make the world a better place, they have the potential to be great missionaries of God's love.

The quotation on screen is one of many in which he encourages young people to make a difference.



'With you the world can be different. Unless you offer the best of yourselves, the world will never be different' – Pope Francis.

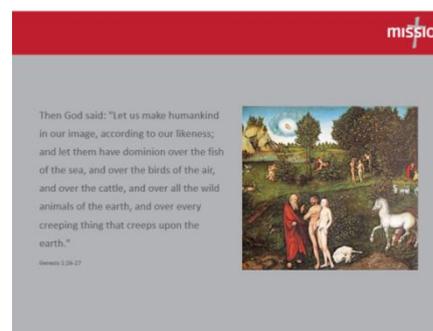
Question – What do you think of these words from Pope Francis? Do you approve of the message they communicate? Who is the motivation behind Pope Francis' message?

To know how best to live out this message, the Holy Father and the Catholic Church encourage us to turn to the Scriptures. In the Scriptures we learn how God desires us to live.

What lessons can we find in passages like this from the Book of Genesis?

SLIDE THREE

Then God said: 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' – **Genesis 1:26-27**



Question – What do you think are the lessons we are to learn from this passage about how we should view the world, ourselves and others?

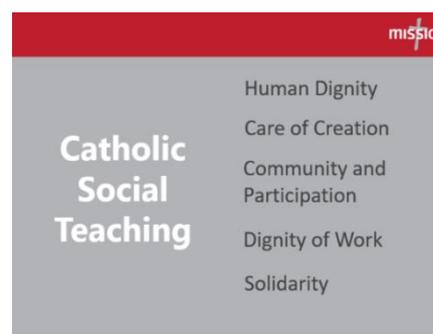
EXTENSION TASK – Copy and paste the scripture and question in the centre of Word document. Print onto A3 sheets and present to small groups of students (max 4). Ask students to brainstorm their responses. After a few minutes, invite groups to share their ideas.

Suggested response for leader – One of the greatest lessons communicated in this passage, is that humans are made in the image and likeness of God. As a consequence, all people have dignity and value.

Suggested response for leader – Another important lesson, is that God has entrusted humanity with the responsibility of looking after the earth and all it contains. This is called stewardship. Humanity, that includes you and me, is the steward of God's entire creation.

SLIDE FOUR

In addition to the Scriptures, the Catholic Church also guides its followers through its traditions and teachings, handed down and developed by popes and bishops over the centuries.



The lesson communicated by Jesus that all humans are made in God's image and so form one human family, forms the basis of an important set of teachings: **Catholic Social Teaching (CST)**.

Question – Has anyone heard of Catholic Social Teaching and can tell us something about it?

FURTHER INFORMATION: CST came about in the nineteenth century as a response to the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution caused huge changes in the lives of individuals and societies. Across the western world, millions moved from the countryside to find work in factory towns and cities. The Church recognised that governments and employers were putting profits before people and treating humans like machines. Unemployment was high, wages were low, many were desperately poor. There were no human rights, no free healthcare, no welfare, most schooling was minimal.

Catholic Social Teaching reminded the world that a person is not a thing to be used and cast aside, but a valued individual made in God's image.

Since its beginnings in the nineteenth century, CST has developed to respond to problems of the day e.g. over the last few years, teachings have focused on the environment and climate change. By responding to contemporary issues, CST continues to provide guidance as to how we can build God's kingdom on earth, where all people, not just Christians but people of other faiths and none, have the chance to develop into fulfilled and loving people.

CST reminds us that we each are called to build up God's kingdom and so asks us to pay close attention to the problems that people face; things such as poverty, loneliness, conflict, discrimination.

CST focuses on different principles through which **we** can consider ways to resolve these problems together.

The principles of **Catholic Social Teaching** include ([click to reveal in sequence](#)): Human Dignity, Care of Creation, Community and Participation, Dignity of Work, Solidarity.

Let's take a brief look at the principle of **Care of Creation**.

SLIDE FIVE

The Church has long taught that God's creation is a precious gift that we, its stewards, have been entrusted to care for and use well.



EXTENSION TASK – Ask pupils to imagine that someone they love and admire deeply has placed into their hands a precious and fragile gift and asked them to look after it carefully. Ask the pupils how they would treat the gift and why?

Catholic Social Teaching developed the lesson of stewardship by highlighting the deep connection between humans and creation, and stressing the effects our actions have on the planet and thus on our brothers and sisters around the world.

Over the last few decades, advances in science have helped us recognise what happens when people fail to pay attention to these factors.

FURTHER INFORMATION – A good example of the damaging effects humanity has had on the environment would be the deforestation of the Amazon. It's estimated that in the last 40 years, 20% of the Amazon has been cut down to satisfy the wants of people across the world e.g. to build mahogany furniture. Losing so much of the forest increases risks of global climate change as rainforests absorb considerable amounts of carbon dioxide.

Pope Francis has made great efforts to encourage all people to be mindful of the impact their actions have on the planet and thus on others.

He has urged people not to treat the world like a rubbish dump but to use the earth's resources wisely, not to consume more than we need, to throw away less and recycle more.

These lessons he laid out most clearly in a special letter (a Papal encyclical). In this letter, entitled ***Laudato Si'***, the Holy Father reminded the world that we all need to do what we can to take care of our common home. If we do not, the risk of global warming and conflict increases, as people struggle to gain access to water, food and safe places to live in.

Of care for creation the Holy Father has said: [Click to reveal quotation on screen.](#)

'Our throwaway culture affects the poor and quickly reduces all things to rubbish... Make a serious commitment to care for creation, to pay attention to every person, to combat the culture of waste'.

Question – What does Pope Francis mean by 'our throwaway culture'?

EXTENSION – Divide students into small groups. Ask each group to write on post it notes three ways to challenge a 'throwaway culture' 1) for individuals e.g. repair tears in clothes 2) for communities e.g. take unwanted goods to a charity shop 3) for countries e.g. ban the use of plastic food packaging. Group responses are to be presented to the whole class then stuck on a 'Ways to Care for Creation' display board.

Pope Francis also made clear that whilst being careless with the planet affects us all, those who suffer the most are the poor, often in ways we do not expect, like the Kenyan family we'll hear about next.

SLIDE SIX

Nairobi is the capital of Kenya. Like many capitals around the world it is a city of financial inequality where the divide between the rich and the poor is great. Not far from luxury office blocks are slum districts such as the one pictured here.

The lady on the right is called Miriam, she is pictured here with Sr Lydia, a catholic nun who works in the slums.

Miriam had lived in Kenya's countryside along with her husband and their children. But due to global warming and increasing droughts, they, like many others, were forced to move to the city. Work is hard to find and poorly paid. The family ended up renting this one-room shack with no running water, no electricity, no toilet. There are no street lights in the slums, there are no proper roads and pavements, no grass, no trees, just dirty alleyways littered with rubbish.



EXTENSION TASK – Ask the pupils to imagine how it must have felt for Miriam and her family to have moved from the countryside into the slums. What effect might this have had on the family?

[Click to reveal image of the family](#) – This is the family together. The little girl with the red socks is called Mary Ann. Like many children living in the slums she did not attend school as her parents couldn't afford uniforms, shoes, and books.

Mary Ann spent her days wandering around the slums and encouraged by some older children became addicted to industrial glue that's found lying around mechanics' shacks.

Thankfully, Mary Ann and her family were helped by a group of nuns. [Click to reveal image of Mary Ann at school](#). These missionary nuns manage a special school which receives some funding from **Missio**. Mary Ann was given a free place at the school. Here she is provided with education, healthy meals, clothing, healthcare, and the special support she needs to recover from her addiction.

Sr Lydia and her fellow nuns are fulfilling the role God assigned them and us: **to deliver his love to the world**. This is what it means to be a missionary.

A missionary delivers the love of God to others through their words and actions.

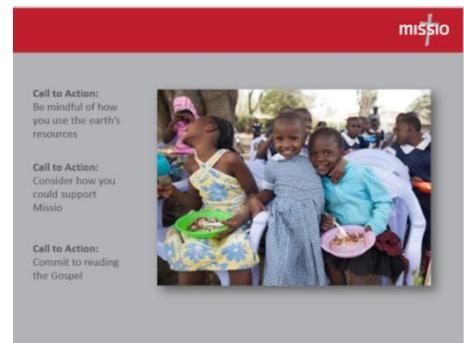
SLIDE SEVEN

There are many ways you could also take steps to be a missionary of God's love. Here are three simple actions you could take today:

Be mindful of how you use the earth's resources. Try to throw away less, to recycle more, to wear a jumper rather than turn up the heating!

Consider how you could support Missio and help millions around the world who live in hardship. Maybe organise a Scavenger Hunt. People pay to enter and each receives a list of items they need to scavenge (e.g. 5 discarded plastic bottles). Give a prize to the person/team who brings all the items to you first. You could even drop items off at your local recycling point.

Commit to reading the Gospel. Care for Creation and other principles of Catholic Social Teaching, are inspired by the example set by Christ. Get to know Christ yourself through reflecting on the Gospel and through prayer.



SLIDE EIGHT

Mindful of the power of prayer, let us close our time together with a reflection on creation and mission. Think carefully about the words of this prayer as we say them together.

[*Click to reveal the verses in sequence.*](#)

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
And to recognise that we are united with the whole of creation.

We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Amen

(An abridged version of 'A Prayer for Our Earth' by Pope Francis)

