

# CST Assembly Notes

## Community and Participation



### SLIDE ONE – HOLDING SLIDE

#### TEACHER'S NOTES

This presentation lasts up to 20 minutes. **We recommend you deliver the whole assembly but please feel free to use the slides and script as time and circumstances allow. To reduce time, omit extension tasks.**

These assemblies reference 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](http://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk)

#### START OF PRESENTATION

### SLIDE TWO

This assembly 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.

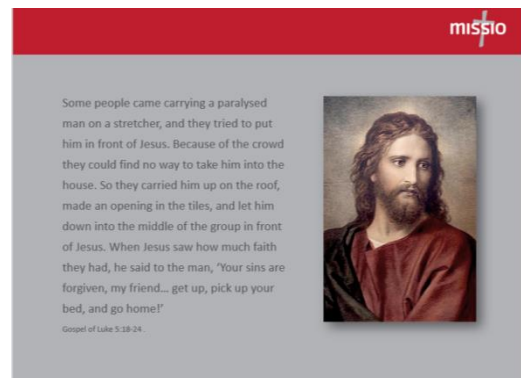
‘Be dreamers [who] believe in a new humanity, one that rejects hatred between peoples, one that refuses to see borders as barriers’ – Pope Francis.

To know how best to do this, the Holy Father and the Catholic Church encourage us to turn to the Scriptures, especially the Gospels. In the Scriptures we learn how God desires us to live. We see this most clearly through the words and actions of Jesus, God made man.

What lessons can we find in passages like this from the Gospel of Luke? *(next slide)*

### SLIDE THREE

Some people came carrying a paralysed man on a stretcher, and they tried to put him in front of Jesus. Because of the crowd they could find no way to take him into the house. So they carried him up on the roof, made an opening in the tiles, and let him down into the middle of the group in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the man, ‘Your sins are forgiven, my friend... get up, pick up your bed, and go home!’ – **Gospel of Luke 5:18-24** (abridged)



**Question** – What do you think are the lessons we are to learn from this passage, about community and participation?

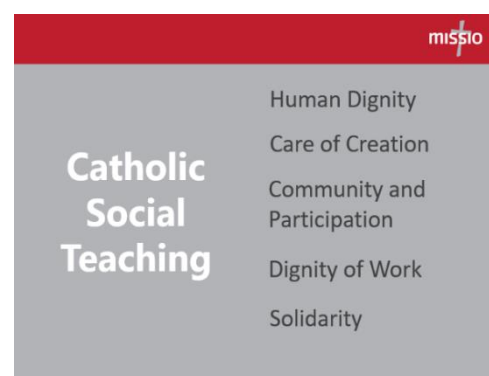
**Answer** – The Scripture reminds us of the importance of getting involved, working together, and finding solutions to end the suffering of others.

**Answer** – It also reminds us of the importance of faith in Christ. By trusting in God’s love and inspired by it, humanity can work together to bring about healing and restore hope.

### 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)**.



**EXTENSION – 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.

CST 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 **Community and Participation**.

## SLIDE FIVE

The word 'community' is linked with the word 'communion', both share the same origin, meaning 'fellowship' and 'shared by all'.

Catholic Social Teaching stresses both these meanings and reminds us of the importance of the words written in the book of Genesis, where the Lord says, 'It is not good for humans to live alone.'

God has made us to live with others. It is in relationships and community that humans flourish, discover who they are, learn to love and learn to live. Developments in science and psychology have evidenced this too, as studies show humans are healthier and happier when their lives are shared with others.



**EXTENSION** – Ask pupils to consider the example of a baby; how they are dependent on their carers to stay alive and how they learn everything through imitating others, how to walk, talk, eat, show care.

Catholic Social Teaching states that as followers of Christ, who shared his life freely with everyone, we must imitate him and build welcoming communities where all are supported, especially those in need, and where we allow ourselves to be supported too.

This requires the involvement and effort of us all. A community of one person doesn't exist. It is our responsibility to participate and work together to build strong societies that benefit all.

Catholic Social Teaching also emphasises the importance of **participation**. God calls all of us to get involved in whatever way we can to help build a better world. This might mean sharing our skills and talents, volunteering and, when we are old enough, taking part in politics.

Catholic Social Teaching stresses that all must be able to participate. We deny a person's dignity when we take away their opportunity to help build a better world. That is why the Church supports the organisation of unions, free speech, equal rights.

We each have a role to play in making our homes, school, town, country, world, better places for all. It is not an option to sit back and expect others to do things for us and we can't just complain about the way things are. We must take action ourselves.

## SLIDE SIX

It is this thinking that motivates Fr Khalil Jaar, a Catholic priest from Jordan in the Middle East. Fr Kahlil's parish in Jordan is near a large refugee camp in which there are a number of Christian refugees from Iraq. Sadly, these refugees did not feel safe in the camp and sought help from Fr Kahlil. Recognising his responsibility to this community, Fr Khalil welcomed the refugees into his own. [Click to reveal image.](#)

Fr Khalil turned his parish hall into a makeshift camp.

Here the Christian refugees receive the security and help they need to stay safe and hopeful.

To further strengthen links outside the church refugee camp, Fr Khalil also arranges community lunches to unite refugee Christians with Muslims who live near the church. He wants to remind Christians and Muslims of their shared identity as children of God.

In response to the problem of refugee children who were missing out on their education, Fr Khalil also established a temporary school. [Click to reveal image.](#)



The school couldn't operate without the participation of the community. Some adult refugees who had worked as teachers help run classes. Others act as teaching assistants. Further help comes from members of Fr Khalil's parish, missionary nuns, and **Missio**, which helps Fr Khalil through prayer and provides financial support for the camp and school.

## SLIDE SEVEN

Fr Khalil is dependent on people doing what they can to make their community a place where God's love is shared and felt by all.

This is what it means to be a missionary. **A missionary is someone who chooses to deliver God's love to others, especially to the most vulnerable and forgotten in our world.**

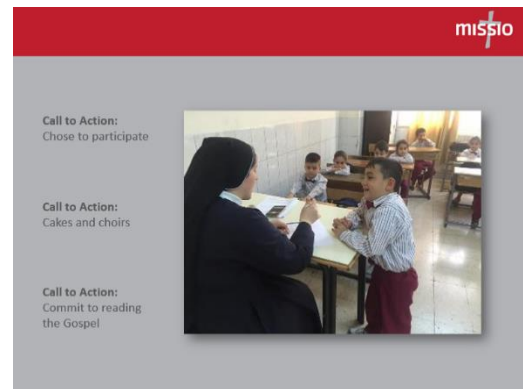
There are many ways you could also take steps to be a missionary of God's love. Here are three simple actions you could take today:

[\*Click to reveal the 'actions' in sequence.\*](#)

**Choose to participate.** When we're asked to help at school, do we let others do it, or do we offer to help? If we see that something needs putting away at home, do we wait to be told to do it, or do we do it ourselves? If we are old enough, could we visit an elderly neighbour or volunteer for a local charity?

**Consider how you could support Missio** and help millions around the world who live in hardship. Two ways to bring people together are eating and singing. Maybe organise a fundraising **Bake-Off** event in school. Or ask your music teacher to help put together a **Pop-Up Choir** and charge a small fee for the challenge of learning a song in under an hour.

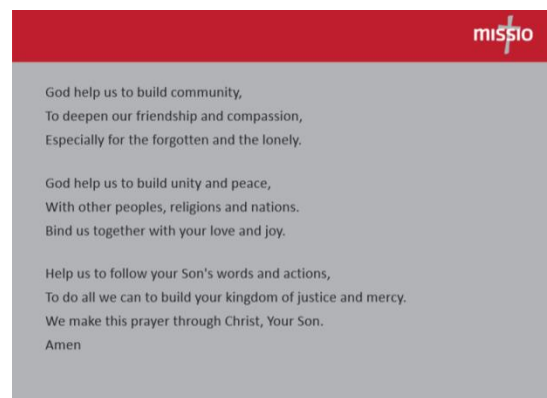
**Commit to reading the Gospel.** Community and Participation and other principles of Catholic Social Teaching are inspired by the example set by Christ. Get to know Christ yourself through reflecting on the Gospel and through prayer.



## SLIDE EIGHT

Mindful of the power of prayer, let us close our assembly with a reflection on **community** and **mission**.

Think carefully about the words of this prayer as we say them together.



**God help us to build community,  
To deepen our friendship and compassion,  
Especially for the forgotten and the lonely.**

**God help us to build unity and peace,  
With other peoples, religions and nations.  
Bind us together with your love and joy.**

**Help us to follow your Son's words and actions,  
So that we might all do what we can to build your Kingdom of justice and mercy,  
We make this prayer through Christ, Your Son.**

**Amen**