

Assembly Notes

Lent Week Four



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.

Missio have produced an assembly for each week of Lent. The Scripture contained in each presentation corresponds with the Sunday Gospel reading for that week. The assemblies also 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 interact with creation. For more information about Catholic Social Teaching please visit www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk



ASSEMBLY BEGINS ON SLIDE TWO – SCRIPT OVER PAGE

N.B. This and corresponding Lenten assemblies are prepared by Missio, the Pope's official charity for overseas mission. Missio is the only Catholic charity which assists the 40% of the global Catholic Church too young or too poor to support itself. Its mission is to follow Christ's example – helping everyone in need, regardless of background or belief. Through lived examples in this assembly, pupils can see how Missio is supporting Church-based projects around the world that are witnessing to God's great love for us all, especially the poorest, the forgotten, the marginalised, and the most vulnerable.

SLIDE TWO

IF YOU HAVE USED MISSIO'S LENT WEEK ONE ASSEMBLY, OMIT THE FOLLOWING INTRODUCTION TO LENT AND MOVE DIRECTLY TO SLIDE THREE

On Ash Wednesday, Christians around the world enter into a special time of the year. Can anybody explain what time of year that is? **Lent**.

Can anybody explain what we are called to do in Lent and what these acts prepare us for?

Lent is a time of fasting, charity, and prayer. Lent lasts 40 days and prepares us for the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ at Easter.

There is an important action we are called to practise during Lent. If we were to do this, Jesus tells us that it would not only change our lives around for the better, but the lives of those around us, and the world too.

EXTENSION – Ask if anybody can guess the action. It isn't love, although love is closely bound up with it. An extra clue: the Bible tells us that John the Baptist referred to this action often and even shouted the word aloud in an effort to encourage people to practise it.

The action is **'to repent'** – [Click PowerPoint to reveal the word on screen.](#)

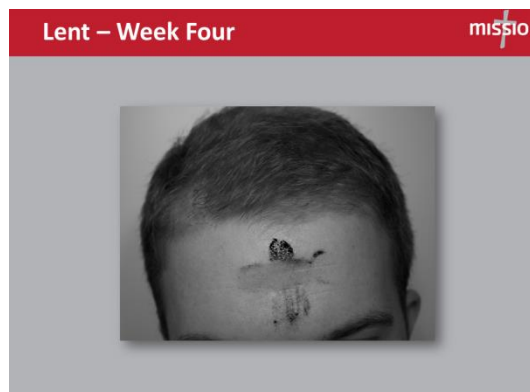
Many people think that repent means saying sorry, then doing something to make up for the offence you've caused. This description isn't wrong, but it only explains part of the meaning of repent. The full meaning challenges us to go even further than saying sorry and making amends. It calls us to change our way of thinking. This is where big changes are possible.

EXTENSION – Here is an example. Imagine if I acted unkindly towards someone I disliked, then felt ashamed of myself and said sorry. This might help the situation in the short-term and make me feel better, but unless I change the way I think about that person and how I behave towards them, the chances are that I would continue to be unkind to them.

When John the Baptist and Jesus called for repentance they were appealing for us all to:

- Recognise when we fail to show love
- Apologise and make amends *and then*
- Change the negative thoughts and behaviour that caused us to act without love in the first place.

Now look at the image on the screen: the ash cross Christians receive on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, symbolises to others that we are repentant, but actual repentance takes place behind the symbol, when we change our minds and hearts.



SLIDE THREE

[OMIT this first paragraph if you have used the introduction to Lent on Slide Two] – Hopefully, you will remember that in Missio’s first Lenten assembly we looked at a word referred to often in Lent, ‘repent’. We heard how repent means more than saying sorry and then doing something to make up for the offence you’ve caused. **The full meaning of repentance challenges us to go even further, it calls us to change our negative ways of thinking.** If we were to do this, Jesus tells us that it would not only change our lives for the better, but the lives of those around us, and the world too.

Changing the way we think about our abilities and those of others is an important way in which we can change lives for the better. All too often we don’t fully appreciate what people are capable of, particularly if we or others face challenges in learning or have a physical impairment. This was the situation for the blind man in the Gospel reading for the Fourth Sunday of Lent. Listen carefully to a shortened version of this Gospel. Pay attention to the reaction of others towards the blind man, Jesus’ response, and the reply of the blind man too.

Read scripture – you could ask a pupil to do this. [Click multiple times to reveal text on screen in sequence.](#)

EXTENSION – Following the reading, if time permits, ask pupils to share their observations.

In Jesus’ time, many believed that illness and physical challenges were God’s punishment for wrongs committed. Most thought it acceptable that people like the blind man spent their life begging. It was considered a form of rough justice.

But the Gospel is clear that Jesus who is God made man completely rejected this view. **In his response to the blind man we are shown that God never destroys, but rather heals and gives life.**


Once again the Gospel shows Jesus restoring a person’s dignity. Before the healing, the blind man was rejected by his community because of his suspected sinfulness. The observant among you will have noticed that at the end of the reading the people talk about the blind man as if he’s not there! But with his dignity restored he is strong enough to interrupt their chattering and answer for himself.

Jesus also understood that healing him would mean that the blind man wouldn’t need to beg any more. **With sight, the man could work and earn his own living. In turn, this too would help restore his dignity, as work provides a sense of purpose and allows us to support ourselves and others.**

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As Jesus was walking along, he saw a beggar who had been born blind. His disciples asked him, “Teacher, whose sin caused this? Was it his own or his parents’ sin?”

Jesus answered, “His blindness has nothing to do with his sins or his parents’ sins. He is blind so that God’s power might be seen at work in him.”



SLIDE FOUR

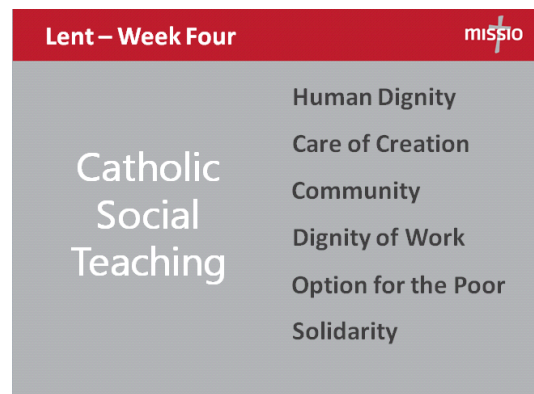
Reflecting on Bible passages such as the one we've just heard and trying to follow the example of Jesus can help us to look for the holiness and beauty around us. But the Church also encourages us to do this through **Catholic Social Teaching**.

Catholic Social Teaching provides us with lessons on how we can build a world in which all people, not just Christians but people of other faiths and none, have the chance to develop into fulfilled and loving people.

Catholic Social Teaching asks us to pay close attention to the problems that people face; things such as climate change, poverty, loneliness. It focuses on different principles through which we can consider ways to resolve these problems and build God's kingdom of peace, love, and justice on earth.

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

Let's take a brief look at the principle of **Dignity of Work**.



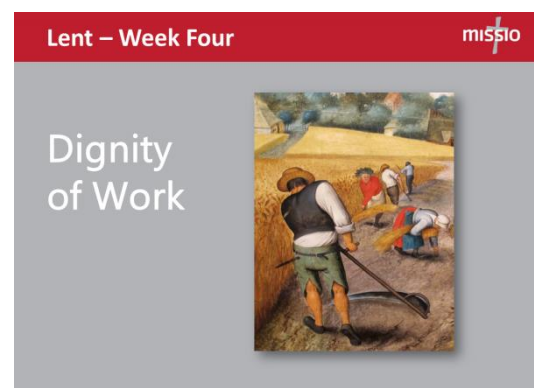
SLIDE FIVE

Catholic Social Teaching states that **all people should be enabled to work**, whatever their abilities. It also teaches that **workers should not be motivated by the quest for power and riches, but through work we should use our talents and cooperate with God in building a better world for all**.

The reading we have just heard reminds us of this. Jesus is God made man and so he was able to heal miraculously; but now through the hard work of scientists and doctors, we are also able to heal blindness. In this and many other ways, humans are creating God's kingdom of justice and peace.

For this reason alone, **work should be something we take pride in and something which we do to the best of our abilities**, whether that's as an eye surgeon or a service assistant at a local optician.

In the Gospels Jesus speaks a lot about work, about fair treatment and just wages for workers. This should remind us that Jesus spent most of his adult life as a carpenter. Today in Bangalore, in southern India, there is a school where Missio is helping train teenagers living in poverty to become carpenters and earn a decent living too.

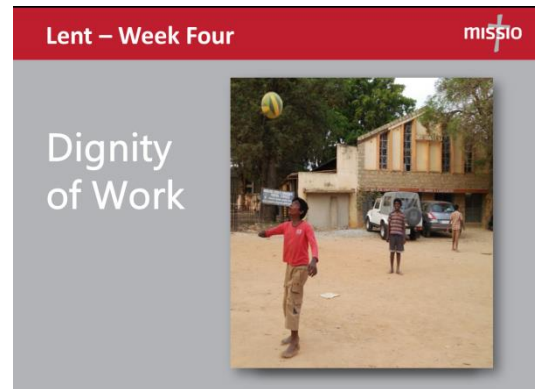


SLIDE SIX

This is Samuel. He is fourteen, and up until recently he lived in the biggest slum in the Indian city of Bangalore. Samuel's father died a few years ago and his mother is too ill to care for him, so Samuel moved into St Mary's orphanage and school.

Here Samuel is cared for and provided with education and training for work.

Some of you may have noticed that Samuel has no lower right arm. Had he remained in the slums, this injury would have made it very difficult for him to find a job. What is worse is that Samuel was born into a group of people known in India as 'the untouchables'. In some Indian cultures, being born into this group means you can't have any job you like; you can only ever have low-skilled and poorly paid jobs. Everybody knows who the untouchables are and consequently Samuel, like the blind man in the Gospel, would have been shunned and faced a life of begging.



EXTENSION: Ask the pupils to consider what alternatives there are to begging for the boys in the slums. Point out that many are forced into other means of earning a living such as ragpickers and pickpockets and that there is always the danger of drugs, trafficking and exploitation. Ask them to consider the impact of living such a life.

Through the support of St Mary's, Samuel is doing well in his studies, at sport, and in his carpentry training. [Click to reveal image.](#) Here he is practising his football skills. Samuel is a key player in the school football and hockey team. Just behind Samuel on this photo is the school's carpentry workshop.

SLIDE SEVEN

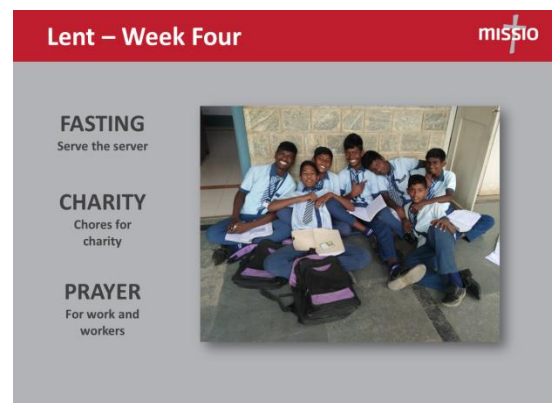
St Mary's orphanage is partly funded by Missio.

Working within it are **missionary priests, nuns, and teachers who devote their life to delivering God's love to all, and often to the most vulnerable and forgotten** in society. The picture shows Samuel with some other boys from St Mary's, many of whom also came from Bangalore's slums.

As Jesus showed us through his words and actions, these missionaries remind Samuel of his dignity and worth. A dignity which, as Catholic Social Teaching tells us, is not affected by a person's background or circumstances. **There are many ways this Lent you could also be a missionary of God's love**, and if you think that there's little difference you can make, then set yourself the task of changing that way of thinking. Repent!

Consider these three Lenten acts.

[Click to reveal words in sequence.](#)



FASTING – Fasting doesn't always mean giving up food. It can also mean putting someone else first. People who dedicate their lives to service roles – shop workers, cleaners, teachers – spend a lot of time giving out. It costs us very little to give back, so today serve your server. Clear a table in the canteen, put someone else's litter in the bin. Yes, technically you'll be doing a job that someone else is paid to do, but your helpfulness might be making someone's day a little less stressful.

CHARITY – Consider how you could fundraise for Missio and help millions around the world who live in hardship. Offer to do chores or any odd jobs at home, set a fee in advance and give the money raised to help people like Samuel.

PRAYER – Remember to pray, which, in a way beyond understanding, connects us to one another and to God, our source of strength and love.

SLIDE EIGHT

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

Think carefully about the words of this prayer as we say them together. [Click to reveal the verses in sequence.](#)

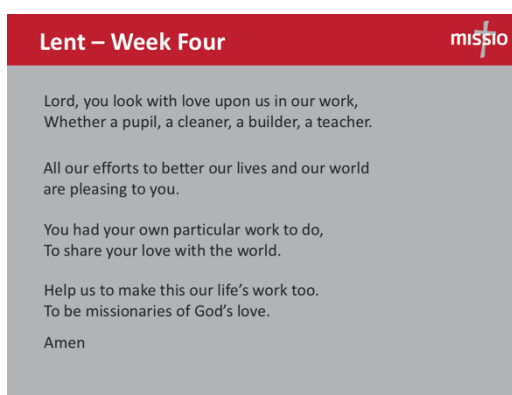
**Lord, you look with love upon us in our work,
Whether a pupil, a cleaner, a builder, a teacher.**

**All our efforts to better our lives and our world
are pleasing to you.**

**You had your own particular work to do,
To share your love with the world.**

**Help us to make this our life's work too.
To be missionaries of God's love.**

Amen



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Whether a pupil, a cleaner, a builder, a teacher.

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Amen

If you have any comments about this or any of our resources, or if you would like to invite Missio into your school to deliver a workshop or assembly, please email education2@missio.org.uk. Below is some feedback from some recent school visits:

‘You taught us how to try to become missionaries ourselves, about what it means to be merciful and what we thought it meant to have peace. I think that we have learned how to try and live out what Jesus told us to do, “Love your neighbour as I have loved you.”’ —Year 8 pupil

‘We would like to thank Missio for your visit. It was great. Many of my GCSE pupils are now using Missio as an example of how Christians can fulfil their vocation.’ —RE Curriculum Leader

‘The talk delivered from Missio was very interesting. I learnt about the meaning of peace and its true meaning – to restore a bond. I enjoyed working together creating our own definition of peace.’ —Year 9 pupil

‘THANK YOU so much for today. The students and I were really inspired! The LSA in the class also said how brilliant you were and really enjoyed Period 1.’—Head of Religious Education