

Assembly Notes

Lent Week Five



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 have 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.

One negative thought process many of us have, which if changed could bring huge benefits, is the belief that we can’t make a difference. Sadly, we live in a culture that too often communicates the idea that the world is unfair and bad things happen in it but that we can’t really make a difference and so we should not worry that others suffer and we should simply concern ourselves with our own lives.

But God hardwired humans to care and to respond with compassion when we see others suffer. God also made us to live in community – for it is with others that we find our greatest happiness and sense of purpose. All this means that on most days someone around you will be in need of help and it pleases God when we respond in love to that person, or those people, for that is what he created us to do.

This God-given response is illustrated well in the Gospel reading for the Fifth Sunday of Lent. Listen carefully to a shortened version of this reading. Pay attention to the sad events that unfold, the reaction of the community, and in turn Jesus’ reaction to the people around him.

Read scripture – you could ask a pupil to do this. [Click multiple times to reveal text on screen in sequence.](#) Following the reading, if time permits, ask pupils to share their observations.

The last sentence we heard how ‘Jesus wept’. It is the shortest verse in the whole Bible. These two words remind us that Jesus shared in our humanity, as like all those gathered to comfort Martha and Mary, Jesus also feels their loss deeply and wants to do something to ease the sisters’ pain. In the next part of the Gospel which we didn’t hear today, we discover that Jesus who is God, did do something. He raised their brother Lazarus from the dead.

SLIDE FOUR

Reflecting on Bible passages such as the one we have 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 and 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.

Lent – Week Five missio

A man named Lazarus, became sick. His sisters sent Jesus a message: “Lord, your friend is dying.” Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters but he did not set off immediately. When he arrived he discovered that Lazarus had already been buried.

Many had come to see Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother’s death. When Martha saw Jesus she said, “If you had been here, Lord, my brother would not have died!



Lent – Week Five missio

Catholic Social Teaching

- Human Dignity
- Care of Creation
- Community
- Dignity of Work
- Option for the Poor
- Solidarity

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 **Community**

SLIDE FIVE

Human beings learn from one another. If you watch a baby, you will notice this clearly as they try to imitate the actions of people around them. It is how they learn to walk, speak, even how to respond emotionally to different situations.

This learning through imitating doesn't stop as we get older. Anyone watching a sports match can see how supporters seem to copy one another and work in union to encourage their team. We don't succeed and develop by being alone. We continue to need others to learn how to live well and in turn we need to be there for others too. In today's Gospel, Martha and Mary were conscious of their need for help, from Jesus and from the people around them.

All this evidences the effect we as individuals have on others and what can be achieved when people come together. For these reasons, **Catholic Social Teaching** states that we must never overlook our responsibility to our local and our global community.

We each have a role to play and we must get involved 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

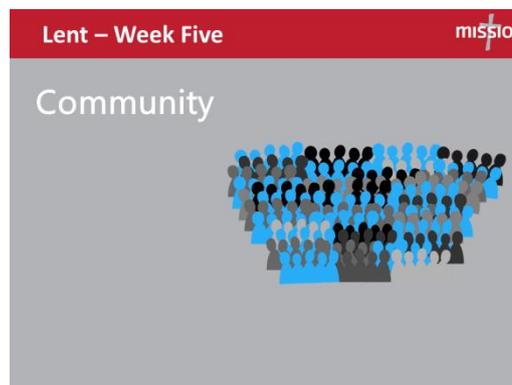
It is this thinking that motivates Fr Khalil Jaar, a Catholic priest from Jordan, in the Middle East. Fr Kahlil's parish in Jordan is near a large refugee camp in which there are a number of Christian refugees from Iraq. Sadly, these refugees did not feel safe in the camp and sought help from Fr Kahlil. Recognising his responsibly 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.](#) Here he is with some of the children.

Getting everyone involved in supporting each other is a key aspect of **Catholic Social Teaching**. Fr Khalil recognises how this can create a sense of purpose and pride. Some adult refugees who had worked as teachers help run classes at the school. Others act as teaching assistants. Further help comes from members



of Fr Khalil's parish, missionary nuns, and **Missio**, who 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.**

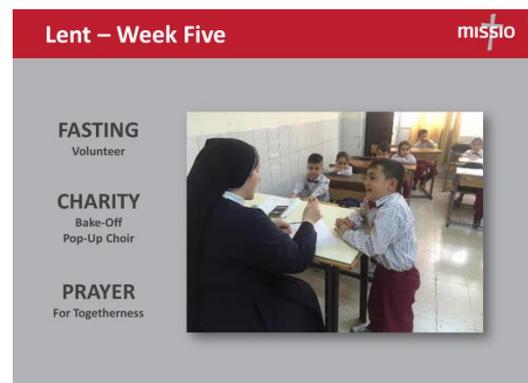
There are many ways this Lent you could take steps to be a missionary of God's love in your local and global community, and if you think that there's little difference you can make, then set yourself the task of changing that way of thinking. Repent!

Consider these three Lenten acts.

FASTING – Fasting doesn't always mean giving up food. It can also mean putting someone else first. 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?

CHARITY – Consider how you could fundraise for **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.

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 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

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