

CST Assembly Notes

Solidarity



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



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.

'Christ has confidence in young people and entrusts them with his mission. Go create a world of brothers and sisters!' – Pope Francis.

To know how best to do this, 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.

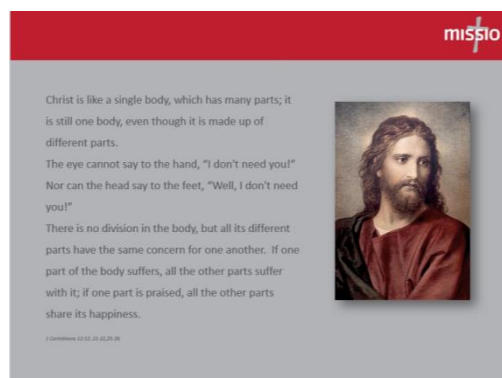
What lessons can we find in passages like this from the letter of St Paul to Christ's followers in Corinth, Greece? *(next slide)*

SLIDE THREE

Christ is like a single body, which has many parts; it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts.

The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' Nor can the head say to the feet, 'Well, I don't need you!'

There is no division in the body, but all its different parts have the same concern for one another. If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness. – **1 Corinthians 12:12-26** (abridged)



Question – What do you think are the lessons we are to learn from this passage, about unity and cooperation?

Answer – A clear lesson is that through their shared humanity people are interconnected and dependent on each other. In order to function well as one, all members need to work together.

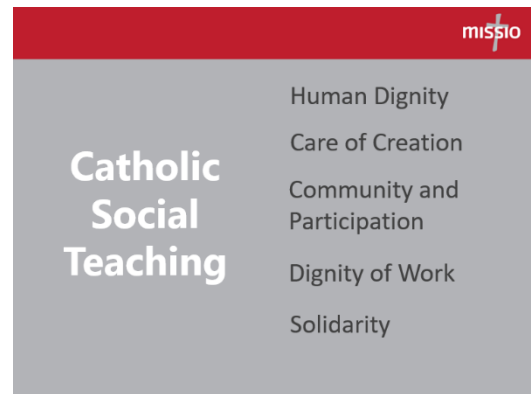
Answer – Another lesson is that communities may be made up of different people, with different interests and abilities, but all must participate. No one person or group should be rejected. All have a role to play.

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 in the Scriptures 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 **Solidarity**.

SLIDE FIVE

Solidarity is linked with the word solid. Solidarity reminds us that we are not separate from one another, but through our shared humanity and as children of one God, all of us, wherever we are in the world, are bonded together and dependent on each other.



EXTENSION TASK – Look at the image on the screen. Now think of the ways you’ve been dependent on people across the world since waking up this morning. The miner in Russia who dug the coal to generate the electricity powering your shower. The tea picker in Sri Lanka or coffee farmer in Colombia who ensured you got your morning cuppa. The seamstress in Cambodia who sewed your clothing. Now consider that most of these people are dependent on one another in a similar way too.

Also bear in mind that most of these workers will have received very poor wages and work very long hours in difficult conditions. It is these kinds of injustices that prevent people from living well and that Catholic Social Teaching encourages us to do our best to change.

Our solidarity should be born out through our united efforts to work together to create a fairer and more peaceful world for all. The Church calls this the Common Good. That is, ‘the good of all human beings and the good of the whole human’ (DOCAT, p. 94).

Our interconnectedness is most noticeable through social media, where we can link with people all over the world, often at the same time. Every day on social media platforms, ideas, images, music, opinions are criss-crossed with millions of people across the world.

This *should* make it easier to recognise my solidarity with every person with which I share this planet. It *should* make me more aware of my responsibilities towards their well-being. It *should* also make me recognise how my words and actions impact and influence others.

Missio provides a good example of where social media can help build up a broken community and strengthen solidarity.

SLIDE SIX

In October 2016, Missio ran a campaign called ***Heal the Broken-Hearted*** to support people affected by the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Although the genocide may seem like a long time ago, the emotional scars caused by the conflict still need healing.



Missio has been financing counselling and community reconciliation programmes to help restore peace to people like Concile and Paschal (pictured on screen) *

Rwanda is a country in central Africa and a long way from Birmingham. But, so moved by Missio's campaign were some pupils from St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College, Walsall, that they decided to act. Together they wrote prayers that were emailed across to Concile, Paschal, and others affected by the genocide. These prayers were also tweeted and posted on Facebook to encourage wider support for the people of Rwanda.

The pupils' efforts strengthened solidarity. And as solidarity builds up good relationships, mutual respect, understanding and peace, these pupils fulfilled the role God assigned them and us, to be a missionary of his love.

* For further information please visit <http://www.missio.org.uk/secondary> *Our Mission, To Be Merciful*

EXTENSION TASK – Can you think of other occasions when social media has been used to strengthen solidarity and evidence God's love in action? E.g. the public response following the Manchester attack (22 May 2017).

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:

Reflect upon how you use social media. Resolve to be someone whose posts communicate messages that inspire. Look for ways in which your use of social media could strengthen solidarity and the common good. 'The good of all human beings and the good of the whole human' (DOCAT p. 94).

[Click to reveal actions in sequence](#)

Consider how you could support Missio and be part of a Church that works in solidarity with others, bringing hope and opportunities for all. Maybe you could organise a fundraising team competition and use money raised to support **Missio** projects around the world.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION – The image shows two sisters from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, pictured with their dad. The sisters were unable to attend school and for their own safety were locked indoors whilst their parents worked long hours in a garment factory for little pay. **Missio** helps finance the Lindalva children's centre in the city that educates and cares for children living in poverty, whatever their faith. The sisters were given a free place in the school where they developed intellectually, emotionally, and socially.



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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION – The image shows Eunice and her friends at school in Thika, Kenya. The school runs a feeding programme which is financed by **Missio**. Without this, Eunice and her classmates would either go hungry or miss school to work in the local coffee plantation.

SLIDE EIGHT

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

Click to reveal the verses in sequence.

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.

I have my mission. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for nothing.

I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it, if I do but keep His commandments.

Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away.

