

JOURNAL CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The resources contained in this pack are split into two parts. The first part is a Fact Book which explores each of the Catholic Social Teachings by examining scripture, encyclicals, catechisms and papal quotes. Students then use their understanding of Catholic Social Teachings and apply them to issues such as homelessness, poverty and asylum seekers and refugees.

The second part is an Activity Book which contains a variety of different classroom activities which have been designed to meet the Australian Curriculum content descriptors in a range of learning areas including Geography, History, Civics and Citizenship and English. The activities also extensively cover the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities and Cross Curriculum Priorities.

The Fact Book is intended to be used as a reference guide for students, to assist them with completing the activities. Most of the activities will direct the students to read a certain section of the fact book before attempting the task. Some of the activities are stand-alone and do not require the use of the fact book. The resources have been designed so teachers can pick and choose which activities are relevant to their class – they are not required to be completed in any particular order and there is no minimum number of activities you must use.

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Created for the teacher and with the classroom experience in mind, these resources have been designed and developed by a registered teacher.

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LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

PROVERBS 31:8-9 (NIV)

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

Explain how the scripture passage above reflects the principle of human dignity.

Who in society is unable to speak for themselves? Why is this the case?

Whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. – Gaudium et Spes (“The Church in the Modern World”), Vatican II, 1965, #27.

What is meant by the statement, “they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury”?

What strikes you most about the quote from Pope John XXIII?

Any human society, if it is to be well-ordered and productive, must lay down as a foundation this principle, namely, that every human being is a person, that is, his nature is endowed with intelligence and free will. Indeed, precisely because he is a person he has rights and obligations flowing directly and simultaneously from his very nature. – Pacem in Terris (“Peace on Earth”), Pope John XXIII, 1963, #9.

Can you think of any examples in Australian society where the dignity of people is not upheld? What about globally?

LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

What can you do to uphold the dignity of people in your life? In your school? In your community?

Catechism #1700 *The dignity of the human person is rooted in his/her creation in the image and likeness of God. It is fulfilled in his/her vocation to divine beatitude. It is essential to a human being freely to direct him/herself to this fulfilment. By his/her deliberate actions, the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience. Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth.*

According to the catechism, why do all human beings have dignity?

According to the catechism, what can human beings do to uphold this dignity?

How is this CST principle related to the common good?

Browse through the St Vincent de Paul Society website or the Fact Books

(https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Our_Impact/) and explain how Vinnies works to uphold the dignity of people.

After reading and completing all of the activities above, in your own words write a definition of what the Catholic Social Teaching of 'Life and Dignity of the Human Person' means to you.

CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

1 PETER 4:8-10 (NIV)

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

In your own words, explain the message of this scripture passage.

Describe a situation in your life where you have used one of your gifts to serve others.

JEREMIAH 7:5-7 (NIV)

If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors for ever and ever.

What is this passage saying about family and community?

ROMANS 12:4-8 (NIV)

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Explain the meaning of the first sentence of this passage.

What are all people urged to do in this passage?

CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

It is imperative that no one...indulge in a merely individualistic morality. The best way to fulfil one's obligations of justice and love is to contribute to the common good according to one's means and the needs of others, and also to promote and help public and private organizations devoted to bettering the conditions of life.

– **Gaudium et Spes** (“**The Church in the Modern World**”), **Vatican II, 1965 #30**

In view of the rapid expansion of national economies, particularly since the war, there is one very important social principle to which we would draw your attention. It is this: Economic progress must be accompanied by a corresponding social progress, so that all classes of citizens can participate in the increased productivity. The utmost vigilance and effort is needed to ensure that social inequalities, so far from increasing, are reduced to a minimum.

– **Mater et Magistra** (“**Mother and Teacher**”), **Pope John XXIII, 1961, #73.**

What does it mean to “contribute to the common good according to one’s means”?

The St Vincent de Paul Society is an organisation devoted to bettering the conditions of life.

What are some ways you may be able to assist the Society to achieve this goal?

What did Pope John XXIII say about participation?

Catechism #1914 *Participation is achieved first of all by taking charge of the areas for which one assumes personal responsibility: by the care taken for the education of his family, by conscientious work, and so forth, man participates in the good of others and of society.*

Catechism #1915 *As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life. The manner of this participation may vary from one country or culture to another. “One must pay tribute to those nations whose systems permit the largest possible number of the citizens to take part in public life in a climate of genuine freedom.”*

Reflect on the statements above by answering the following questions.

How do you make positive contributions in your family and in your school/community?

CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

In Australia, are there members of society who are unable to participate in public life? Who are they and why might they be unable to participate?

How would having the largest possible number of citizens participating in public life benefit the common good?

After reading and completing all of the activities above, in your own words write a definition of what the Catholic Social Teaching of 'Call to Family, Community and Participation' means to you.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

JEREMIAH 22:13-17 (NIV)

“Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his own people work for nothing, not paying them for their labor...“Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?” declares the Lord. “But your eyes and your heart are set only on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion.”

This passage is about the King of Judah and his palace. What message is being presented about the responsibilities of the king and the rights of his subjects?

JAMES 2:15-16 (NIV)

Suppose there are brothers or sisters who need clothes and don't have enough to eat. What good is there in your saying to them, “God bless you! Keep warm and eat well!” – if you don't give them the necessities of life?

What does this passage say about the responsibility to help those in need?

The Bible, from the first page on, teaches us that the whole of creation is for humanity, that it is men and women's responsibility to develop it by intelligent effort and by means of their labor to perfect it, so to speak, for their use. If the world is made to furnish each individual with the means of livelihood and the instruments for growth and progress, all people have therefore the right to find in the world what is necessary for them.
– *Populorum Progressio* (“*On the Development of Peoples*”) Pope Paul VI, 1967, #22.

What are the rights and responsibilities outlined by Pope Paul VI?

In your own words, explain what is meant by the statement, “it is men and women's responsibility to develop it by intelligent effort and by means of their labor”?

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Catechism #912 *The faithful should “distinguish carefully between the rights and the duties which they have as belonging to the Church and those which fall to them as members of the human society. They will strive to unite the two harmoniously, remembering that in every temporal affair they are to be guided by a Christian conscience, since no human activity, even of the temporal order, can be withdrawn from God’s dominion*

What are some of the rights and duties someone may have as a member of the Church?

Open the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights document. Make a list below of the 10 rights you believe are most important.

For each of the 10 rights you identified above, come up with a matching responsibility or duty.

Can you think of any examples in Australia where the rights of people are not being upheld? Whose responsibility is it to ensure these rights are upheld? Explain your response.

After reading and completing all of the activities above, in your own words write a definition of what the Catholic Social Teaching of ‘Rights and Responsibilities’ means to you.

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

LEVITICUS 19:9-10 (NIV)

“When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God.”

1 JOHN 3:17 (NIV)

Rich people who see a brother or sister in need, yet close their hearts against them, cannot claim that they love God.

LUKE 6:20-21 (NIV)

“Looking at his disciples, he said: ‘Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.’”

Explain the main messages that are being presented by the three scripture passages above with regards to the poor and vulnerable.

The poor suffer more than other segments of the population from job loss, low wages, poor working conditions and environmental degradation. The Church, in the spirit of Christ, exercises a preferential, but not exclusive, option for the poor; that is, we are called as a people to help them acquire justice, respect, and an inherent sense of dignity, and to participate in transforming economic and political structures to create a just society and a sustainable environment. We urge the public and private sectors to work with the poor to secure employment at a living wage and in safe working conditions; decent and affordable housing; essential health insurance; educational opportunities; and a healthful environment. We urge the poor to become actively engaged in these efforts, and to explore cooperative enterprises in which they would be owners, managers, and workers and consequently share equitably in the distribution of profits and in the responsible care of God’s creation.

– World Day of Peace Letter (“The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility”), Pope John Paul II, 1990, 19.

Why do the poor suffer more than other segments of the population from things such as job loss?

What are some of the things the poor need to have access to in order to improve their lives?

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

Pope John Paul II stated that, “We urge the poor to become actively engaged in these efforts.”
What can poor and vulnerable people do in order to assist efforts to help them?

Today we cannot be satisfied simply with being aware of the problems faced by many of our brothers and sisters. It is not enough to offer broad reflections or engage in endless discussion, constantly repeating things everyone knows. We need to ‘de-naturalize’ extreme poverty, to stop seeing it as a statistic rather than a reality. Why? Because poverty has a face! It has the face of a child; it has the face of a family; it has the face of people, young and old. It has the face of widespread unemployment and lack of opportunity. It has the face of forced migrations, and of empty or destroyed homes.”
– Pope Francis 2016, speech to United Nations World Food Programme

What is the main message of this quote from Pope Francis?

In your own words, explain what Catechism #2443 says about treatment of the poor. How would this benefit the common good?

Catechism #2443 *God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them: “Give to him who begs from you, do not refuse him who would borrow from you”; “you received without pay, give without pay.” It is by what they have done for the poor that Jesus Christ will recognize his chosen ones. When “the poor have the good news preached to them,” it is the sign of Christ’s presence.*

What are some things you can do in your community to help the poor and vulnerable?

After reading and completing all of the activities above, in your own words write a definition of what the Catholic Social Teaching of ‘Option for the Poor and Vulnerable’ means to you.

SOLIDARITY

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-13 (NIV)

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

What is the key message of this passage?

ROMANS 13:8-10 (NIV)

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Love does no harm to a neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.

Why is it stated that, “Love your neighbour as yourself” sums up all other commands?

What is the meaning of this statement?

Excessive economic, social and cultural inequalities among peoples arouse tensions and conflicts, and are a danger to peace... To wage war on misery and to struggle against injustice is to promote, along with improved conditions, the human and spiritual progress of all men, and therefore the common good of humanity.
– *Populorum Progressio* (“*On the Development of Peoples*”), Pope Paul VI, 1967 #76

With regards to the common good, why is it important for ‘stronger’ nations to help the economically weaker nations?

The stronger and richer nations must have a sense of moral responsibility for the other nations, so that a real international system may be established which will rest on the foundation of the equality of all peoples and on the necessary respect for their legitimate differences. The economically weaker countries, or those still at subsistence level, must be enabled, with the assistance of other peoples and of the international community, to make a contribution of their own to the common good with their treasures of humanity and culture, which otherwise would be lost for ever.
– *Solicitudo Rei Socialis* (“*On Social Concern*”), Pope John Paul II, 1987 #39.

SOLIDARITY

Catechism #1941 *Socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all the forms of solidarity: solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor, of workers among themselves, between employers and employees in a business, solidarity among nations and peoples. International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends in part upon this.*

In your own words, explain what Catechism #1941 says about how socio-economic problems can be resolved.

What are some ways that Australia can or does show solidarity with poorer nations?

Read through the International Impact section of the St Vincent de Paul Society website (https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Our_Impact/International_Impact/) and describe some of the ways Vinnies shows solidarity with our overseas neighbours.

After reading and completing all of the activities above, in your own words write a definition of what the Catholic Social Teaching of 'Solidarity' means to you.

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

GENESIS 2:15 (NIV)

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

PROVERBS 21:20 (NIV)

The wise store up choice food and olive oil, but fools gulp theirs down.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-7 (NIV)

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

What are the main messages being presented with regards to care for God's creation?

On this earth there is room for everyone: here the entire human family must find the resources to live with dignity, through the help of nature itself — God's gift to his children — and through hard work and creativity. At the same time we must recognize our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it. — Caritas in Veritate ("In Charity and Truth"), Pope Benedict XVI, 2009, #50.

Natural resources are limited; some are not, as it is said, renewable. Using them as if they were inexhaustible, with absolute dominion, seriously endangers their availability not only for the present generation but above all for generations to come. — Sollicitudo Rei Socialis ("On Social Concern," Donders translation), Pope John Paul II, 1987, #34.

What is the key responsibility that is identified in both of these quotes? Why is this so important?

What are some of the current threats to God's creation? What are some actions that can be taken to combat these threats?

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

What are some individual actions you can take to care for God's creation?

Catechism #2415 *The seventh commandment enjoins respect for the integrity of creation. Animals, like plants and inanimate beings, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present, and future humanity. Use of the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives. Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbour, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation.*

What responsibility do human beings have towards animals, plants and inanimate beings? Why?

Why is caring for God's creation important for the common good?

After reading and completing all of the activities above, in your own words write a definition of what the Catholic Social Teaching of 'Care for God's Creation' means to you.

ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Use the template below to rank the six Catholic Social Teachings analysed in this booklet in terms of how important the principles are to asylum seekers and refugees. The CST that you believe to be the most important will go in the top box, while the one you believe to be the least important will go in the bottom box. If you are using a print copy, cut out the CSTs from the final page and glue them in the correct spot. If you are working electronically, write each CST in each box.

The form consists of seven light blue rounded rectangular boxes arranged in a pyramid-like structure. At the top is a single wide box. Below it are two columns of two boxes each, with a single wide box centered between them. At the bottom is a single wide box, mirroring the top one.

Which CST principle did you rank as the most important and why?

Which CST principle did you rank as the least important and why?

Read about Australia's treatment of asylum seekers and refugees in the **REFUGEE, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND IMMIGRATION FACT BOOK**. How would you evaluate Australia's policies, keeping in mind the CST principles?

ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

LEVITICUS 19:33-34 (NIV)

When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

“What do I think of countries that close their frontiers? I think that, in theory, hearts must not be closed to refugees, but those who govern need prudence. They must be very open to receiving refugees, but they also have to calculate how best to settle them, because refugees must not only be accepted, but also integrated. Consequently, if a country has, say, the ability to integrate twenty persons, they should do this. Another country that has greater capacity should do more... What is the danger when refugees or migrants – and this applies to everybody – are not integrated? They become a ghetto.” – Pope Francis, 2016

What challenge is Pope Francis presenting to all countries?

What does Pope Francis mean when he says that refugees, “must not only be accepted, but also integrated”?

What is a ghetto? Why might groups of refugees “become a ghetto” if they are not integrated?

How can integrating refugees contribute to the common good for all?

ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

“How can we not see the face of the Lord in the face of the millions of exiles, refugees, and displaced persons who are fleeing in desperation from the horror of war, persecution and dictatorship? For every one of them, each with a unique face, God reveals himself always as the one who courageously comes to our aid.”

– **Pope Francis, 2016**

“...ensuring that migrants can be integrated into the societies in which they are received without... sensing that their security, cultural identity and political-social stability are threatened.

On the other hand, immigrants themselves must not forget that they have a duty to respect the laws, culture and traditions of the countries in which they are received.” – **Pope Francis, 2017**

With respect to the quotes above from Pope Francis, what are the rights and responsibilities of refugees? What rights would be most important to refugees?

Changes in climate, to which animals and plants cannot adapt, lead them to migrate; this in turn affects the livelihood of the poor, who are then forced to leave their homes, with great uncertainty for their future and that of their children. There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever. Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering, which is even now taking place throughout our world. Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded.

– **Laudato Si’ (“Praise Be”), Pope Francis, 2015, Chapter 1, #25.**

After reading the quote above, explain how the CST principle of ‘Solidarity’ should inform our treatment of refugees.

Responses to issues such as refugees and asylum seekers will often fall under one of two categories; social justice or charitable works. Charitable works occur when people in need are identified and then are given direct help, such as money or food. Social justice is more focused on changing the structures or inequalities in society to stop people from experiencing disadvantage in the first place. Examples of social justice actions include writing letters to members of parliament or raising awareness about an issue.

What are some **CHARITABLE WORKS** that could be done to assist newly arrived refugees in Australia?

HOMELESSNESS

Use the template below to rank the six Catholic Social Teachings analysed in this booklet in terms of how important the principles are to people experiencing homelessness. The CST that you believe to be the most important will go in the top box, while the one you believe to be the least important will go in the bottom box. If you are using a print copy, cut out the CSTs from the final page and glue them in the correct spot. If you are working electronically, write the relevant CST in each box.

The form consists of seven light blue rounded rectangular boxes. One box is positioned at the top center. Below it are two columns of two boxes each, arranged symmetrically. At the bottom center is a single box. This layout is intended for ranking six Catholic Social Teachings from most important (top) to least important (bottom).

Which CST principle did you rank as the most important and why?

Which CST principle did you rank as the least important and why?

What rights do you think are most important to people who are experiencing homelessness?

What responsibilities might they have?

HOMELESSNESS

ISAIAH 58:7 (NIV)

Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

“How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion.”

– Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium (Joy of the Gospel), 2013

What does Pope Francis mean when he says, “This is a case of exclusion”? How does something like this violate the dignity of the human person?

The lack of housing, an extremely serious problem in itself, should be seen as a sign and summing-up of a whole series of shortcomings, economic, social, cultural or simply human in nature. Given the extent of the problem, we should need little convincing of how far we are from an authentic development of peoples.

– Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (“On Social Concern”), Pope John Paul II, 1987, #17.

Lack of housing is a grave problem in many parts of the world, both in rural areas and in large cities, since state budgets usually cover only a small portion of the demand. Not only the poor, but many other members of society as well, find it difficult to own a home. Having a home has much to do with a sense of personal dignity and the growth of families. This is a major issue for human ecology. In some places, where makeshift shanty towns have sprung up, this will mean developing those neighbourhoods rather than razing or displacing them ...At the same time, creativity should be shown in integrating rundown neighbourhoods into a welcoming city. – Laudato Si’ (“Praise Be”), Pope Francis, 2015 #152.

Why does having a home have “much to do with a sense of personal dignity”?

Read the ‘Causes of Homelessness’ section of the fact book. What are the economic, social and cultural shortcomings that lead to homelessness?

HOMELESSNESS

It is in fact the weakest who are the victims of dehumanizing living conditions, degrading for conscience and harmful for the family institution... young couples waiting in vain for a decent dwelling at a price they can afford are demoralized and their union can thereby even be endangered; youth escape from a home which is too confined and seek in the streets compensations and companionships which cannot be supervised. It is the grave duty of those responsible to strive to control this process and to give it direction.
– **Octogesima Adveniens (“A Call to Action”), Pope Paul VI, 1971, #11.**

Are there people in your community who are experiencing homelessness? People who don't have access to healthcare and education? Whose responsibility is it to help these people and provide for their needs?

Life and Dignity of the Human Person



Call to Family, Community and Participation



Option for the Poor and Vulnerable



Life and Dignity of the Human Person



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Option for the Poor and Vulnerable



Care for God's Creation



Rights and Responsibilities



Solidarity



Care for God's Creation



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Solidarity





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