

A Bible Study on the Seven Themes Of Catholic Social Teaching

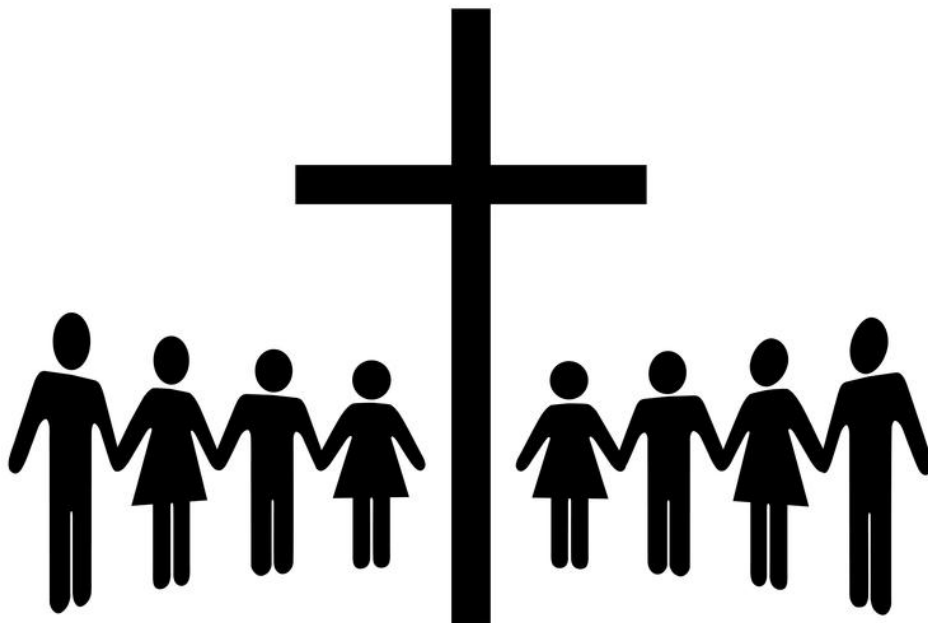


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A Brief Overview

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) have identified seven core themes in Catholic Social Teaching (CST). The CST Bible Study is an eight week program exploring those themes. The first week is an introduction to CST and weeks two through eight are sessions on each of the seven themes. This study may be adapted to meet the needs of a given group. For example, the group can meet weekly for eight weeks or monthly for eight months (ideal for a school year). Each session is approximately one hour long.

Leaders of this study act more as facilitators rather than teachers. Knowledge of the material is not a prerequisite for a good study. The discussion questions in each section are meant to be thought provoking, used to open up a discussion into practical ways to live our faith. The facilitator of the group is a fellow learner. If questions arise, the facilitator can refer them to a pastor, members of parish staff, or the Parish Social Ministry Office of Catholic Charities and bring answers back to the next meeting. If time allows, a study group could incorporate social time, which could include refreshments or a meal.

Components of the Bible Study

1. **Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit.** Groups are free to adapt or use a different opening prayer.
2. **Bible Passage and Discussion Questions:** Each week a bible passage related to the given theme is read. Questions are provided to prompt group discussion and reflection, but members should feel free to discuss whatever questions or insights the passage raises for them. It is not a requirement that all questions be used in the discussion.
3. **CRS Theme Video:** There are **recommended** You Tube videos for each theme of Catholic Social Teaching. The website address is provided in each session. All of these videos are found on the same page provided by Catholic Relief Services. **The use of these videos is optional.** They are best used as an introduction to the session. The videos are 3 to 5 minutes in length. There is no video for the introductory session.
4. **USCCB Teaching.** A brief teaching from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) on each theme with discussion questions is provided. Feel free to discuss other questions that may arise apart from the prepared questions.
5. **Challenge Activities.** This activity is provided to put the session's theme into action. Group members may decide to do something together, or they may decide what they will do as individuals. Some people may already be doing what is suggested, so it may only be a challenge to continue what they are already doing. If you are doing a weekly study, it will probably be too much to add another challenge activity each week. Instead, encourage members to commit to one or two things a month.
6. **Closing Prayer.** The closing prayer changes with each session. Groups can use the prepared prayer or use a different prayer that the group agrees to.

Session 1: An Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching

Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit

Bible Passage and Discussion Questions: Faith and Deeds

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. (James 2: 14-26) NABRE

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does this passage speak to you? What in this reading is challenging to you?
2. How do you put your faith into action? Have you seen your action bring you closer to God?
3. James claims that faith without deeds is dead. What would you say to someone who claims that actions alone matter, without spirituality? How do you respond to those who claim we are justified by faith alone, that our actions don’t matter?
4. What other ways could you put your faith into action?

USCCB Teaching: Words of Pope Benedict

“The Church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the Sacraments and the Word” The Church has a “threefold responsibility” to proclaim the word of God, celebrate the Sacraments, and exercise the ministry of charity. “These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable” (**God is Love - Pope Benedict XVI**)

The Two Feet of Social Justice - Worksheet Attached

The seven themes of Catholic Social teaching are listed below. They will form the next 7 topics for our bible study.

- Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- Call to Family, Community, and Participation
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- Solidarity
- Care for God's Creation

Challenge Activities:

- Invite a friend to join this bible study.
- Follow what's in the news. How does Jesus ask you to respond to the issues you hear about today?
- Who do you know in your community that needs your support? What will you do?

Closing Prayer: Pray together the "I AM" reflection found on the prayer handout (Follow with petitions and Our Father)

Session 2: Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit

CRS Theme Video: Life and Dignity of the Human Person

YouTube video found at crs.org/resource-center. Scroll down to Catholic Social Teaching 101 Videos

Bible Passage and Discussion Questions: Psalm 139

LORD, you have probed me, you know me: you know when I sit and stand; you understand my thoughts from afar. You sift through my travels and my rest; with all my ways you are familiar. Even before a word is on my tongue, LORD, you know it all. Behind and before you encircle me and rest your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, far too lofty for me to reach. Where can I go from your spirit? From your presence, where can I flee? If I ascend to the heavens, you are there; if I lie down in Sheol, there you are. If I take the wings of dawn and dwell beyond the sea, even there your hand guides me, Your right hand holds me fast. If I say, “Surely darkness shall hide me, and night shall be my light” Darkness is not dark for you, and night shines as the day. Darkness and light are but one. You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother’s womb. I praise you, because I am wonderfully made; wonderful are your works! My very self you know. My bones are not hidden from you, When I was being made in secret, fashioned in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw me unformed; in your book all are written down; my days were shaped, before one came to be. How precious to me are your designs, O God; how vast the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the sands; when I complete them, still you are with me. (Psalm 139: 1-18) (NABRE)

Questions for Reflection:

1. What is one thing that you take from this passage?
2. How does this passage speak to the dignity of the human person?
3. What is one thing that is wonderful about you?
4. How does God call you to help others see their own goodness?
5. Since God has known you since before you were born, what mission do you think he has for you? What gift have you been given to serve?

USCCB Teaching: Life and Dignity of the Human Person

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. The value of human life is being threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong. Catholic teaching also calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding increasingly effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person. (USCCB)

Discussion Questions:

1. What issues of Life and Dignity are important to you?
2. What are ways you can personally address these issues?
3. The problems in our society are immense. What can we do to face these problems without losing heart?
4. Since we can't personally fully cover all issues of Life and Dignity, how can we support the work of others who are engaged in issues that we are not?

Challenge Activities:

- Contact your Congressmen/Senators about important issues regarding Life and Dignity.
- Join the local organizations that are committed to the Life and Dignity (Birthright peacemaking groups, joining or forming a parish social justice group, etc.)
- Pray for the issues that affect the Life and Dignity of people in your community and culture.
- Donate to causes that promote the Life and Dignity of the human person.
- Participate in other activities that are unique to your local community.

Closing Prayer: –Lead with petitions and the Our Father. Finish by praying together the “Prayer for the Life and Dignity of the Human Person” found on the prayer handout.

Session 3: Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit

CRS Video on Family, Community and Participation

YouTube video found at [crs.org/resource-center](https://www.crs.org/resource-center). Scroll down to Catholic Social Teaching 101 Videos

Bible Passage and Discussion Questions: The Two Shall Become One Flesh

The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said, “This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called ‘woman,’
for she was taken out of man.”

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.
Genesis Chap 2-18-24 (NABRE)

Questions for Reflection:

1. In this scripture passage, what words or phrases intrigued you the most?
2. The passage from Genesis reveals the sacredness of family. What do you most appreciate about your family?
3. In your opinion, why are families such a central part of God’s saving plan?
4. Although the family is our primary community, we also belong to larger communities that are important to our well being. What are the important communities in society and in your life?
5. Why are family and other communities important to your faith?
6. Have you ever experienced communities that exclude others from participation?

USCCB Teaching: Call to Family, Community, and Participation

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society -- in economics and politics, in law and policy -- directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable. (USCCB)

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever experienced times in your community when the family unit is undervalued? Or experienced times when other social organizations compete for important family time?
2. In what ways does society promote marriage and in what ways is society hostile to marriage?
3. In what ways are we called to participate in the broader community?
4. What are roadblocks to participation for you? For others?
5. Who in your community is excluded from participation in important community conversation?

Challenge Activities:

- Take quality time to be with family this week (Call parents, reach out to brothers and sisters, events with children, a date with your spouse, etc.)
- Participate at a parish event this month. Meet someone new at Church.
- What is happening in your town? Become involved in your community.
- Invite someone who may feel excluded to a Church or community event.

Closing Prayer: Pray together the “Prayer of St. Theresa of Avila” found on the prayer handout. Finish with petitions and the Our Father.

Section 4: Rights and Responsibilities

Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit

CRS Video on Rights and Responsibilities

YouTube video found at crs.org/resource-center. Scroll down to Catholic Social Teaching 101 Videos

Bible Passage and Discussion Questions: Christ's Second Coming

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me’. Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and did not care for me. Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ He will answer them, ‘Amen I say to you, whatever you did not do for one of these least one, you did not do for me.’ And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” Matthew 25:31-46 (NABRE)

Questions for Reflection:

1. In this scripture passage, what words or phrases intrigued or troubled you the most?
2. What is challenging about this reading and what makes you hopeful?
3. Who are we responsible for in this life?
4. What in our culture hinders us from living out this Gospel? What in our culture supports the challenges of this Gospel?
5. Who are the neglected and forgotten people in your community?

USCCB Teaching: Rights and Responsibilities

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a **fundamental right to life** and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities--to one another, to our families, and to the larger society. (USCCB)

Discussion Questions:

1. What rights are due to all people?
2. What rights do you enjoy that others in your community do not?
3. What programs in your community enhance human dignity?
4. Does your community fail to protect the rights and dignity of some individuals? Describe.
5. Everyone has a fundamental right to life. What are the issues that affect the life and dignity of people in your community?
6. What are you called to do?

Challenge Activities:

- Contact your Congressmen and Senators to advocate for those people and groups whose rights are being overlooked or neglected.
- Join or start a community organization that will ensure the Rights and Responsibilities of all.
- Pray for the issues that affect the Rights and Responsibilities of people in your community and culture.
- Donate to causes that promote Rights and Responsibilities.

Closing Prayer: Pray together “Only One Person at a Time” found in the prayer handout. Finish with petitions and the Our Father.

Session 5: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit

CRS Video on Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

YouTube video found at crs.org/resource-center. Scroll down to Catholic Social Teaching 101 Videos

Bible Passage and Discussion Questions: Authentic Fasting the Leads to Blessing

Is this not, rather, the fast that I choose: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking off every yoke? Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry, bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; Your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: “Here I am!” If you remove the yoke from among you, the accusing finger, and malicious speech; If you lavish your food on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; Then your light shall rise in the darkness, and your gloom shall become like midday; Then the LORD will guide you always and satisfy your thirst in parched places, will give strength to your bones And you shall be like a watered garden, like a flowing spring whose waters never fail. Isaiah 58: 6-11 (NABRE)

Questions for Reflection:

1. What is your reaction to this passage?
2. What does the passage say to us about authentic fasting?
3. What are the issues in our community regarding poverty?
4. What do our Church and our city do for those in poverty?
5. Besides seeing to their needs, what else do those living in poverty need from us?
6. Does “poor” mean just those without money? How do you define poverty?

USCCB Teaching: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and the vulnerable first. (USCCB)

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the reasons people live in poverty? How can we better appreciate the complexity of their varied situations?
2. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 means very important and 1 means not important at all, where does our society place the needs of the poor?
3. Why should the poor get preferential treatment?
4. What organizations or individuals do you know who are champions of the poor?

Challenge Activities:

- What organizations exist in your community to serve the poor? Would you consider volunteering in one of these organizations?
- If you already serve in one of these local organizations, establish relationships with the people you serve.
- What worthy organizations that serve the poor would you like to support financially? (Example: Catholic Relief services, Habitat for Humanity, etc.)
- What local, national and global issues keep people living in poverty from having just access to the world's resources? What can you do to help make systemic change? What organizations support change (Bread for the World, One.org, etc?)
- What lifestyle changes can you make to be in solidarity with those who lack basic needs?

Closing Prayer: Pray together the prayer “Gathered in My Name” found on the prayer handout. Add your own prayers of petition before the closing prayer in this reflection.

Session 6: The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit

Video on Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

YouTube video found at [crs.org/resource-center](https://www.crs.org/resource-center). Scroll down to Catholic Social Teaching 101 Videos

Bible Passage and Discussion Questions: True Worship of God

Ill-gotten goods offered in sacrifice are tainted. Presents from the lawless do not win God's favor. The Most High is not pleased with the gifts of the godless, nor for their many sacrifices does he forgive their sins. One who slays a son in his father's presence ___ whoever offers sacrifice from the holdings of the poor. The bread of charity is life itself for the needy; whoever withholds it is a murderer. To take away a neighbor's living is to commit murder; to deny a laborer wages is to shed blood. If one builds up and another tears down, what do they gain but trouble? If one prays and another curses, whose voice will God hear? Sirach 34: 21-29 (NABRE)

Questions for Reflection:

1. What did you hear in this reading? What is challenging to you in this passage?
2. Is there anything that surprises you in this reading?
3. What is your reaction to the line, "To take away a neighbor's living is to commit murder; to deny a laborer wages is to shed blood"?
4. Is everyone owed a job? What are the limits in this demanding passage from Sirach?

USCCB Teaching: The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected--the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

Discussion Questions:

1. How are we doing in our society in terms of the rights of workers?
2. Are the rights listed above reasonable and practical?
3. How does capitalism aid the rights of workers? How does it hinder it?
4. What responsibilities do employees have? What are the responsibilities of employers?
5. What would our economy look like if we truly lived out the opening statement: "The economy must serve people, not the other way around?"

Challenge Activities:

- At your place of employment, take pride in the job you do.
- If you have oversight of others, affirm the good work they do.
- Build the esteem of co-workers by being positive, and being a role model.
- What else can you do to live out the ideal of this teaching?

Closing Prayer: Pray together the prayer "A Prayer for Workers" found on the prayer handout. Finish with prayers of petition and the Our Father.

Session 7: Solidarity

Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit

CRS Video on Solidarity

YouTube video found at [crs.org/resource-center](https://www.crs.org/resource-center). Scroll down to Catholic Social Teaching 101 Videos

Bible Passage and Discussion Questions: Love for Enemies

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:43-48 (NABRE)

Discussion Questions:

1. In this scripture passage, what words or phrases intrigued you the most?
2. Who are the most common enemies of people in our culture?
3. Who are your enemies? (You may talk in general here)
4. Do you find Jesus’ call to love your enemy challenging? Explain
5. How can you practically live out Jesus’ command in this passage?

USCCB Teaching: Solidarity

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers and sisters keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pope Paul VI taught that if you want peace, work for justice. The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the success stories in our culture and our community regarding solidarity?
2. What are examples of how our culture fails to live out the concept of solidarity?
3. Where do you feel the work of justice is most lacking in our society?
4. Who are the peacemakers in your life?
5. What do we need to achieve peace?
6. What can we do to achieve solidarity in our own community?

Challenge Activities:

- Reach out to someone in your parish who seems to be an outsider.
- Advocate for groups who lack a voice in your community.
- Attend community events and/or join groups that work toward solidarity.
- Write a letter to the editor or contact political officials to support immigrants and refugees who are struggling in our country and in the world.
- Make a commitment to be a peacemaker by never using violent words or actions and treating others with respect, even those whose opinions and actions you disagree with.

Closing Prayer: Start with petitions then pray the reflection “A Few Thoughts on the Lord’s Prayer”.
Finish with the Our Father.

Session 8: Care for God's Creation

Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit

CRS Video on Care of Creation

YouTube video found at crs.org/resource-center. Scroll down to Catholic Social Teaching 101 Videos

Bible Passage and Discussion Questions: Dependence on God

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat [or drink], or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil. Matthew 6: 25-34 (NABRE)

Questions for Reflection:

1. What does Matthew tell us about God’s creation in this passage?
2. What answers does this passage give to those who are using this world’s resources?
3. How do you encounter God in creation?
4. What are things that you worry about in your life? How do you calm your fears?
5. What is one thing that you take from this reading?

USCCB Teaching: Care for God's Creation

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan; it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is your reaction to the teaching above? How do you respond?
2. What are the current environmental challenges we face in our world?
3. What is your biggest struggle in living out this Catholic Social Teaching?
4. What do we need to do to balance economic needs and environmental issues?
5. What can we do in our own community to be good stewards of creation?

Challenge Activities:

- Recycle, reuse, repurpose, and commit to live simply.
- Write a letter to the editor and/or contact your representatives on local environmental issues.
- Join your community in local clean up events.
- Use a travel mug for coffee, water, and other beverages. It saves money and the environment.

Closing Prayer: Pray together the “A Prayer Our Earth (From Laudato Si’)” found on the prayer handout. Finish with prayers of petition and the Our Father.

Appendix

Come Holy Spirit Prayer

Two Feet of Social Justice

“I Am” Prayer

Life and Dignity of the Human Person Prayer

Prayer of St. Theresa of Avila

Only One Person at a Time

Gathered in My Name

A Prayer for Workers

A Few Thoughts on the Lord’s Prayer

A Prayer for Our Earth (from Laudato Si’)

Come Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Leader: Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created.

Response: And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

(Catholic on Line)

Two Feet of Social Justice

USCCB



Reflection Questions

1. What conclusions can you draw from this model of the Two Feet of Social Justice?
2. Which do you find easier; dealing with root causes or meeting immediate needs of individuals?
3. What are examples of work being done in both of these areas in your community?
4. What work needs to be done in your community in both of these areas?

I AM

Charlotte D. Nichols

I am loved and affirmed by God--

Therefore, I am able to love and affirm others.

I am forgiven by God and accepted unconditionally - just as I am -
Therefore I am able to forgive and accept others unconditionally -
just as they are.

I am nourished by the Bread of Life -

Therefore, I am committed to building communities where people
are nourished, physically and spiritually.

I am one for whom Christ suffered and died

Therefore, I am willing to accept the suffering in my life that
God may turn it into blessing for me and for others.

I am led through the dark times in my life by the light of God's
love Therefore, I can walk with others through their times of
darkness.

I am being made whole through God's love -

Therefore, I am a channel for God's healing love for others.

I am strengthened by the faith and fellowship of those who have
known God's love -

Therefore, I reach out to share that faith and fellowship.

I am renewed by the peace and stillness of prayer -

Therefore, I pray that others may know God's peace.

I am blessed a thousand times over by the abundance of life in Christ,
Therefore, I seek to share that abundance with others.

I am filled with joy and thanksgiving -

Therefore, I want the whole world to join me in song and dance
and celebration.

Closing Prayer

GOD has created me to do some definite service; God has committed
work to me which has not been committed to another. I have my mission.
I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link
in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. God has not created me for
naught. I shall do good; I shall do God's work (Cardinal John Henry Newman)

Prayer for the Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Lord and giver of all life, help us to value each person, created in love by you.

In your mercy, guide and assist our efforts to promote the dignity and value of all human life, born and unborn. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(Catholic on Line)

Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila

Christ has no body now but ours,
No hands, no feet on earth but ours.

We possess the eyes through which
He looks with compassion on this world.

We possess the feet with which
he walks to do good.

Ours are the hands with which
He blesses all the world.

Ours are the hands,
the feet,
the eyes of Christ.

We are his body.

May we use the gift of our bodies
To Live Christ in the world
So all people know his healing touch.

Amen

Only One Person at a Time

I never look at the masses as my responsibility.

I look at the individual. I can love only one person at a time. I can feed only one person at a time.

Just one, one, one.

You get closer to Christ by coming closer to each other. As Jesus said, "Whatever you do to the least of my brethren, you do to me."

So you begin I begin. I picked up one person-
maybe if I didn't pick up that one person I wouldn't have picked up 42,000.

The whole work is only a drop in the ocean. But if I didn't put the drop in, the ocean would be one drop less.

Same thing for you
same thing in your family
same thing in the church where you go
just begin ... one, one, one.

Words to Love by . . . Mother Teresa

Gathered In My Name

Leader: If we are serious about the situation of World Poverty, we may feel the impossibility of making a difference. But with God, the impossible becomes possible, so we pray . . .

Reader 1: For the hungry people of the world . . . and for us who often eat too much. We pray to the Lord

Response *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Reader 2: For those who must try to survive without sufficient water . . .
. . . and those who waste it. We pray to the Lord . . .

Response *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Reader 3: For all lonely people . . . and for us who fail to open our hearts to them. We pray to the Lord . . .

Response *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Reader 4: For those who lack sufficient clothing to preserve their dignity . . . and for us who often seek to have more than we will ever use. We pray to the Lord . . .

Response *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Reader 5: For those who lack sufficient medical services . . . and for us who often seek an instant remedy for every pain and ache. We pray to the Lord . . .

Response *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Reader 6: For those who are unjustly imprisoned . . . and for us who sometimes fail to value the gift of freedom and even deny it to others. We pray to the Lord . . .

Response *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Please add your own intentions here

ALL: O God, enlighten our minds to the responsibility we have to care for our brothers and sisters here and around the world, and help us to know that it's our willingness to try that gives you the opportunity to show your care and concern for all people. This prayer we make through Jesus and in the Spirit. AMEN

-Adapted from The Cry of the Poor,
The Gateway Series 3, pp. 36-37.
The Columban Fathers and Sisters,
Navan, Co. Meath, Ireland. 1989.

A Prayer for Workers

O glorious Joseph! Who concealed your incomparable and regal dignity of custodian of Jesus and of the Virgin Mary under the humble appearance of a craftsman and provided for them with your work, protect with loving power your sons and daughters, especially entrusted to you.

You know their anxieties and sufferings, because you yourself experienced them at the side of Jesus and of His Mother. Do not allow them, oppressed by so many worries, to forget the purpose for which they were created by God. Do not allow the seeds of distrust to take hold of their immortal souls. Remind all the workers that in the fields, in factories, in mines, and in scientific laboratories, they are not working, rejoicing, or suffering alone, but at their side is Jesus, with Mary, His Mother and ours, to sustain them, to dry the sweat of their brow, giving value to their toil. Teach them to turn work into a very high instrument of sanctification as you did. Amen.

(Pope John XXIII)

A Few Thoughts on the Lord's Prayer

I cannot pray **Our**, if my faith has no room for others and their need.

I cannot pray **Father**, if I do not demonstrate this relationship to God in my daily living.

I cannot pray **who art in heaven**, if all of my interests and pursuits are in earthly things.

I cannot pray **hallowed be thy name**, if I am not striving, with God's help, to be holy.

I cannot pray **thy kingdom come**, if I am unwilling to accept God's rule in my life.

I cannot pray **thy will be done**, if I am unwilling or resentful of having it in my life.

I cannot pray **on earth as it is in Heaven**, unless I am truly ready to give myself to God's Service here and now.

I cannot pray **give us this day our daily bread**, without expending honest effort for it, or if I would withhold from my neighbor the bread that I receive.

I cannot pray **forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us**, if I continue to harbor a grudge against anyone.

I cannot pray **lead us not into temptation**, if I deliberately choose to remain in a situation where I am likely to be tempted.

I cannot pray **deliver us from evil**, if I am not prepared to fight evil with my life and prayer.

I cannot pray **thine is the kingdom**, if I am unwilling to obey the King.

I cannot pray **thine is the power and the glory**, if I am seeking power for myself and my own glory first.

I cannot pray **forever and ever**, if I am too anxious about each day's affairs.

I cannot pray **Amen**, unless I honestly say, "Cost what it may, this is my prayer."

A Prayer for Our Earth (from Laudato Si')

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.