

Catholic Social Teaching

NOTES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

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What is Catholic Social Teaching?

Catholic Social Teaching is founded in Scripture and includes statements and letters written by Church leaders. It offers wisdom and insights on living the Gospel in today's world.

Jesus tells us to love God and to love our neighbours, especially our sisters and brothers living in poverty. We use Catholic Social Teaching principles to guide all our work at CAFOD.

Modern Catholic Social Teaching is said to have originated in 1891 with the encyclical letter, [Rerum Novarum](#). Since then, a wealth of teaching continues to give new life to the Scriptures and shape the Church's response to our modern world.

Pope Francis continues to add to Catholic Social Teaching with his own encyclicals, including [Laudato Si' \(2015\)](#) and [Fratelli Tutti \(2020\)](#).

From these Catholic Social Teaching documents and encyclicals we derive core principles. There is no fixed or official list of principles.

Different organisations and writers include different ones. However, they will cover the same ideas and beliefs.

In this document and accompanying resources there are nine principles used. The principles overlap, and our actions for global and local justice will often be in response to more than one principle at a time.

How to use this document

This document is designed to be used by teachers in primary schools to understand Catholic Social Teaching.

For each of the nine principles there is a page which includes:

- A key statement.
- Two explanations.
- A scriptural quotation.
- Quotations from Catholic Social Teaching.
- A description of how the principle is demonstrated in CAFOD's work.





Human Dignity



**We are beautifully
made in the image and
likeness of God.**

Each of us is made in God's image. Every person has an innate human dignity no one can take away.

Our common humanity requires that we respect and uphold the dignity of each and every individual. Everything else flows from this dignity.

God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness."

Genesis 1:26

"Every person is worthy of our giving...they are God's handiwork, his creation. God created that person in his image, and he or she reflects something of God's glory. Every human being is the object of God's infinite tenderness, and he himself is present in their lives."

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 274



We support refugees in Lebanon with safe places to live, nutrition, education, health and clean water.

"Human persons are willed by God; they are imprinted with God's image. Their dignity does not come from the work they do, but from the persons they are."

Saint Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 11

CAFOD AND HUMAN DIGNITY

We work with all people, regardless of gender, disability, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, sexual orientation, political or religious belief. We celebrate diversity as we come together and seek justice for all. Since we believe each person is made in the image and likeness of God and has inherent dignity, we work with people living in poverty to have access to food, water, housing and other basic amenities which many of us can often take for granted.



The Common Good



We are called to work for the good of each and of all.

Our actions have an impact on everyone. When we make decisions, we should consider the good of all.

The common good is about respecting the rights and responsibilities of all people and leaving no one behind.

"All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would... distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need."

Acts 2:44-45

"Beside the good of the individual, there is a good that is linked to living in society: the common good. It is the good of 'all of us'...To desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity."

Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, 7



Children in the eco-brigade in Peru look after their environment for the good of everyone.

"The whole is greater than the part, but it is also greater than the sum of its parts."

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 235.

CAFOD AND THE COMMON GOOD

We work to build a world where everyone, including the earth, can flourish. Ultimately, no one can truly flourish if another person is hungry, lost or abandoned, nor can humankind flourish while our common home is degraded and exploited for the good of the few.



Participation



**We are called to work
for the good of each and
of all.**

**We all have the right and duty to participate
fully in society.**

**We live in community with others, growing together.
We are called to be active participants in all that we
do. We have a responsibility to be inclusive so that we
allow all people to participate.**

*"When each separate part works as it should, the
whole body grows and builds itself up through love."*

Ephesians 4:16

*"Each of us has a part to play, a gift to share, a service
to offer, for building up the Body of Christ in love."*

Pope Francis, 19 June 2013



**Because of the changing climate, people like Saidimu and his family
have changed the way they farm. They keep animals and grow
vegetables to eat and sell.**

*"It is necessary that all participate, each according to
his position and role, in promoting the
common good."*

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1913

CAFOD AND PARTICIPATION

**Together we can confront the problems of our world and seek solutions that are truly effective. We listen to
people in the communities we work with, help them to participate if needed, and speak out boldly on their behalf
when it is right to do so.**



Subsidiarity



STATEMENT

We are called to empower communities, to let everyone have a say.

Subsidiarity involves making sure that decisions are made at the most appropriate level, so all those affected can contribute and have a voice.

Everyone has important ideas and knows what is best for their families and communities. They need to have a say and the chance to influence outcomes.

Jethro said to Moses, "Let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves."

Exodus 18:22

"Development programmes, if they are to be adapted to individual situations, need to be flexible; and the people who benefit from them ought to be directly involved in their planning and implementation."

Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, 47

CAFOD AND SUBSIDIARITY

We believe that local individuals, communities, and local organisations are best placed to influence changes to global, national and local policies and practices so that they benefit all. We follow Jesus' example of ensuring that the insights and perspectives of quieter voices are heard, so that a better world is achieved together.



Luana's community make decisions on issues that affect the environment and their lives in the Amazon.

"...together we want to give voice to all those who suffer, to all those who have no voice and are not heard."

Pope Francis, 20 September 2016



Stewardship



We are guardians of God's creation, living sustainably and enhancing the wellbeing of our planet.

Stewardship is all about caring for the many gifts that God has given to us. These include our environment, our own talents and other resources.

All living things are connected so we must use God's gifts responsibly to meet the needs of everyone, now and in the future.

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it."

Genesis 2:15

"Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home"

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* 13



Dristy in Bangladesh is learning eco-friendly farming techniques.

"...the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us."

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* 159

CAFOD AND STEWARDSHIP

Caring for the earth is integral to our task of tackling the scandal of global poverty, vulnerability, inequality, injustice and exclusion. Following an integral ecology approach, we respond to the inseparable cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.



Solidarity



God created us as one global family called to support our brothers and sisters.

Being in solidarity is recognising others as our brothers and sisters and actively working for their good.

We are connected to people and places all over the world.

"... all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 3:28

"I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security...while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: 'Give them something to eat' (Mark 6:37)."

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 49



The children of St Chad's school are speaking out for justice, showing solidarity with our global family.

"We are a single family dwelling in a common home."

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 17

CAFOD AND SOLIDARITY

By coming together in hope as individuals, families, communities, organisations and nations, we can achieve transformative change for the common good. When we unite and make a stand for what we believe in, we can achieve remarkable things.



Preferential Option for the Poor



KEY
STATEMENT

The needs of poor and vulnerable people should be put first.

A preferential option for the poor means that we think first about the needs of those who are the most vulnerable.

Jesus taught that when we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, look after the sick and visit those imprisoned, we are looking after Him.

"Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow."

Isaiah 1:17

"The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty!"

Pope Francis, 26 July 2013



Lombe's mother is teaching other mothers in Sierra Leone how to make nutritious food paste to tackle malnutrition.

"The [Option for the Poor] affects the life of each Christian as he or she seeks to imitate the life of Christ."

St Pope John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 42

CAFOD AND PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR

We work wherever the need is greatest. We refuse to accept the suffering of our brothers and sisters. No one should be beyond reach of the love and support they need.



Distributive Justice



KEY
STATEMENT

Everyone should have
access to their fair share
of resources.

God's plan was for all people to share in the goods of this world. This means that no person should struggle to have the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter and clothing.

Distributive justice is all about fair allocation of resources (including income, goods and services).

"All who believed were together and had all things in common."

Acts 2:44-45

"...we are agreed today that the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone"

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 93



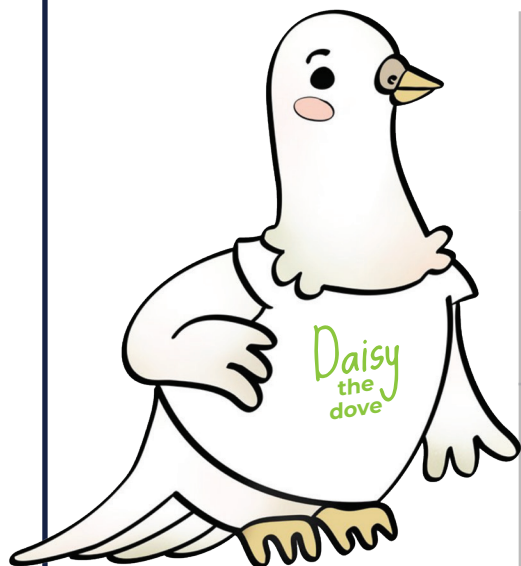
Fabiano used to spend hours every day collecting water from a well. Now a pump in the village means the whole community has access to water.

"The principle of the universal destination of goods is an invitation... to bring about a world of fairness and solidarity..."

**Compendium of the
Social Doctrine of the Church, 174**

CAFOD AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

CAFOD founded the Fairtrade Foundation in 1992 along with Christian Aid, Oxfam, Traidcraft, the World Development Movement and the National Federation of Women's Institutes. We believe we are all part of the global food system, which means we have the power to change it. Changing the food we buy and choosing products from Fairtrade companies are some of the ways we can help tackle poverty.



Promoting peace



KEY
STATEMENT

**We can be God's
instruments of peace
through seeking justice.**

Peace is not just the absence of war. It is part of God's nature, and a value we should all seek to live out in our daily lives.

Peace comes from both justice and love and is dependent upon people understanding one another.

"...those who promote peace have joy."

Proverbs 12:20

"Today the world has a profound thirst for peace. In many countries, people are suffering due to wars which, though often forgotten, are always the cause of suffering and poverty."

Pope Francis, 20 September 2016

CAFOD AND PROMOTING PEACE

Poverty and conflict are closely linked. We work on peace-building projects in many countries where there is war or violence.



Rosana and her friends are part of a peace-building project in Colombia.

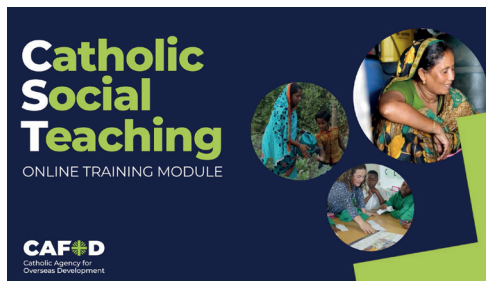
"Inner peace is closely related to care for ecology and for the common good because, lived out authentically, it is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life."

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 225

FIND OUT MORE

We have more resources on Catholic Social Teaching on our website.

Visit cafod.org.uk/cstprimary



Catholic Social Teaching online training module



Catholic Social Teaching

Animation on Catholic Social Teaching for children

CAFOD Catholic Agency for Overseas Development

no one beyond reach



Animations for children on Laudato Si' and Fratelli Tutti



Further reading

There are many documents which form the canon of Catholic Social Teaching. The quotations in this document are from much bigger documents, many of them written by different Popes. Here are the links to the full documents:

[Saint Pope John Paul II \(1991\) Centesimus Annus/On the Hundredth Year](#)

[Pope Francis \(2013\) Evangelii Gaudium/The Joy of the Gospel](#)

[Pope Benedict XVI \(2009\) Caritas in Veritate/Charity in Truth](#)

[Pope Francis \(2015\) Laudato Si'/Praise be to you](#)

[Pope Francis \(2020\) Fratelli Tutti/Brothers and Sisters All](#)

[Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church \(2004\)](#)

[The Catechism of the Catholic Church \(1993\)](#)

[Pope St John Paul II \(1987\) Sollicitudo Rei Socialis/The Social Concern](#)

For a full list of Papal encyclicals, visit vatican.va

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development **CAFOD**