



Catholic Social Teaching

“Contribute towards the attainment of the common good of the entire human family.”

– Pope John XXIII



What is Catholic Social teaching?

Catholic Social Teaching is the name given to a body of directions given by the Catholic Church, which shows us ways we can try to be a good person.

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching are:

1. The dignity of the human person (we are all sacred, all special in God’s eyes)
2. The common good (we are individuals, but we live in common with others – we try to remember what is good for all of us).
3. Solidarity (no one is an island, we all need each other).
4. Self direction (everyone from the individual to the large global group

should make their own decisions and work to achieve whatever they can).

5. The purpose of the social order (the social order is there to serve people, and must uphold the dignity of every person.)

6. The purpose of the government (the government should always promote and ensure social justice and equity for all members of their country.)

7. Participation (everyone has the right to be part of our society).

8. The world is there for us all (God’s creation is there to be used for the common good, by everyone).

9. Those most in need come first (see the world through the eyes of the poor, stand in solidarity).

10. Care of creation (the Earth is God’s gift – look after it).

Activity

Stations of Catholic Social Teaching

Split into ten groups and choose one of the elements of Catholic Social Teaching described on the left.

Using an A3 sheet of paper, textas, crayons etc. **come up with a design** that symbolises that your principle of Catholic Social Teaching means to your group.

Once finished, **hang each design at a different place in the room**. Each morning, **choose** one of the stations, and **reflect** on how that principle influences your choices, and what you could do that day in support of it.



Case study: Christopher

A 6-year-old student, Christopher, became concerned about the people he saw living on the streets.

He decided that he wanted to do something to help. Christopher began to raise money to donate to Vinnies’ work with the homeless.

Through a lolly guessing competition at his school, Christopher raised \$73.20.

Meanwhile, local radio station Vega 95.3 Breakfast Show were so inspired by Christopher’s efforts that they added an extra \$100 to the money raised.

Christopher showed a strong sense of compassion and solidarity, and a deep understanding of the dignity of every person. He showed us that it doesn’t matter how young or old you are, everyone is important and everyone can help.



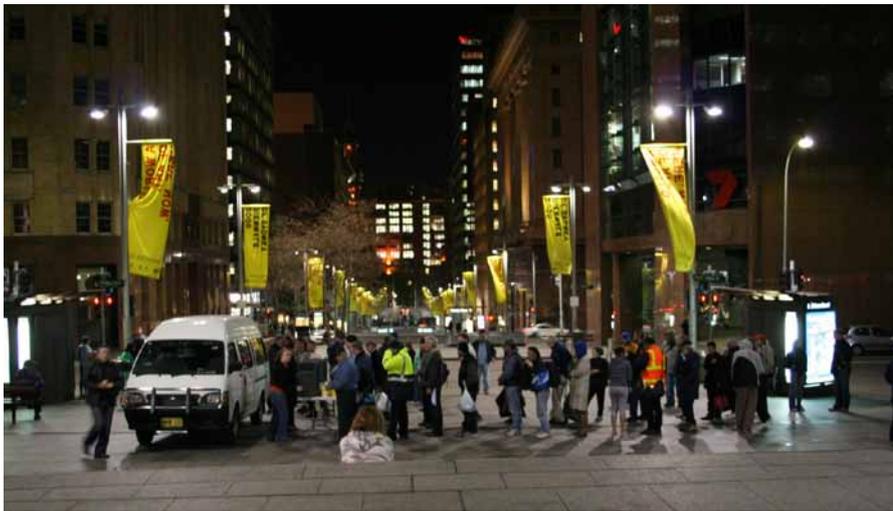
★ To help make his life better...

A Year 5 teacher wanted to explain the idea of 'Solidarity' (one of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching) to her class. She found it a hard word to explain, but thought it was very important for her students to understand.

The teacher decided to volunteer for Night Patrol, a Vinnies program where volunteers travel in a van to various points around the city, offering food, support and companionship to people

experiencing homelessness.

During her experience she met a man who had experienced homelessness for quite some time. He told her how Vinnies had done more for him than just give him food or money. That they had stood by him, and worked with him, to help him make his life better. To the teacher, this is what solidarity meant, to "walk with someone". Alongside them, working together to assist them.



★ What can I do to help?

Be an advocate for social justice! See those around you who are facing hardship in their lives, and speak out against these injustices. Organise awareness days at your school, highlighting these issues.

Organise volunteering projects with your school. Raise funds for the Vinnies Winter & Christmas Appeals.

Show solidarity. Organise a Winter Sleepout at your school and remember those who experience homelessness every night.

Take care of our environment. Be conscious of how much energy you use, and where you can cut that down. Organise litter cleanup days in your school and local area. Recycle as much as you can. Encourage others to do the same.

★ Did you know?

In 2006, **5.2 million Australians took part in voluntary work.** In that year they **volunteered a total of 713 million hours.**

Over 20% (over 1 million) of those volunteers **give their time to religious organisations.**

Activity

Think global, act local

Choose one of the Catholic Social Teaching principles.

On a sheet of paper, brainstorm all the possible things you could do to enact that principle in your life in order to make a difference.

From the brainstorming, **come up with three main goals that you want to achieve this year.** Make the first something you can do, personally, in your life. Make the second something you can do in your local community. Make the third something you can do that will have an impact on our world.

For more info go to **Caritas Australia's BE MORE website:**

<http://www.bemore.org.au/>



For more information go to:

Volunteering Australia website:

<http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org>

Catholic Social Teaching resources:

http://www.osjspm.org/catholic_social_teaching.aspx

Vinnies homepage: www.vinnies.org.au

