



CALLED TO ACTION

Session 1: Introduction to the Themes of Catholic Social Principles

living the Faith
celebrating Prayer
promoting Justice
ready to Serve

Song – Blest Are They - David Hass

Blest are they, the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of God.
Blest are they, full of sorrow; they shall be consoled.

*Refrain: Rejoice, and be glad! Blessed are you, holy are
you! Rejoice and be glad! Yours is the kingdom of God!*

Blest are they, the lowly ones: they shall inherit the earth. Blest
are they, who hunger and thirst; they shall have their fill.

Blest are they, who show mercy; mercy shall be theirs. Blest are
they, the pure of heart; they shall see God!

Blest are they, who seek peace; they are the children of God.
Blest are they who suffer in faith; the glory of God is theirs.

Blest are you, who suffer hate, all because of me. Rejoice and
be glad, yours is the kingdom of God; shine for all to see.

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chqY9S1Lm2w>

Prayer

O God, who have revealed that peace makers are to be called your children, grant, we pray,
that we may work without ceasing to establish that justice which alone ensures true and
lasting peace. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Source: The Roman Missal, Collect Prayer for the Preservation of Peace and Justice

Another option is to use the [Opening Reflection in the Activities section of this resource.](#)

Intro Activity - Following Directions

Distribute one copy of handout 1 to each participant (included at the end of this resource).
Ask the participants to read the questions, follow the instruction carefully and do the
activity as specified in order to complete the activity.

Tell the participants that they have 5 minutes to complete the activity. You may like to
offer a prize for the first to complete correctly.

At the end of the activity, let the participants share their experiences.

Conclude the activity by demonstrating the importance of instructions. Instructions are
meant to protect us and not to limit us.



Scripture – The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-11)

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.”

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.”

Church Teaching - Catechism of the Catholic Church 1717

1717 The Beatitudes depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity. They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of his Passion and Resurrection; they shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life; they are the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations; they proclaim the blessings and rewards already secured, however dimly, for Christ's disciples; they have begun in the lives of the Virgin Mary and all the saints.

1718 The Beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness. This desire is of divine origin: God has placed it in the human heart in order to draw man to the One who alone can fulfill it:

We all want to live happily; in the whole human race there is no one who does not assent to this proposition, even before it is fully articulated.

How is it, then, that I seek you, Lord? Since in seeking you, my God, I seek a happy life, let me seek you so that my soul may live, for my body draws life from my soul and my soul draws life from you.

God alone satisfies.

1719 The Beatitudes reveal the goal of human existence, the ultimate end of human acts: God calls us to his own beatitude. This vocation is addressed to each individual personally, but also to the Church as a whole, the new people made up of those who have accepted the promise and live from it in faith.



Activity

Background:

The Beatitudes in the Gospel According to Matthew (4:1-11) is the beginning of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount where he delivered all his significant teachings. By going up a mountain, Jesus emphasised his role as the giver of the new law and does not replace the old law that God gave to Moses but fulfils them. The Beatitudes from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount fulfils the commandments that Moses received in Mount Sinai.

The 10 Commandments and the Beatitudes are important blueprints on how to live a Christian life. Both bodies of teachings from the old and new testament emphasise the idea of God being involved in the lives of his people. The 10 Commandments emphasised the importance of boundaries and directions that God wants his people to follow. The Beatitudes that Jesus gave affirmation to those who does the will of the Father (calling them Blessed or Fortunate or Happy). In doing that, Jesus challenged all his followers to do the same.

Opening Reflection

Gather the group and reflect on the words of the Beatitudes.

Ask a volunteer to proclaim the whole passage of Matthew 5:1-12

Give the group a few moments to reflect on what was just proclaimed.

At the appropriate time ask the group to read one verse each and allow a brief silence in between verses starting from verse 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

To conclude the reflection, ask each person to say a word or phrase that touches them the most from the reading.

Task: Present Day People Who Represents the Beatitudes.

Split into four groups and ask each group to come up with a list of people who represent the Beatitudes in the present time.

Group 1: the poor in spirit (e.g. people who suffer from depression) and those who mourn (e.g. someone whose lost a friend or family through death or immigration)

Group 2: the meek (e.g. people who are afraid) and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (e.g. people who work for justice)

Group 3: the merciful and the pure in heart

Group 4: the peacemakers and those who are persecuted for righteousness sake

Allow 15-20 minutes for the group to finish the task.

Each group shares the list that they came up with.

Conclude the session with discussion questions like:

How are we able to live out the Beatitudes?

How do you see leaders in our community living out the Beatitudes?

Which of the Beatitudes do you find most challenging? Why?

Task: Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

Arrange your group into small groups (3-5 per group). Give one copy of handout 2 to each group and invite each group to share any experiences they have had that go against our understanding of Catholic Social Teaching.

Final comments:

The Beatitudes are the most significant inspiration of the Catholic Social Teachings. The Church, as the continuation of the mission of Jesus in the world challenges all Catholics to act with justice, compassion and mercy towards all people. Catholic Social Teaching provides a framework by which we can seek to act in the way that God calls us to.



Activity - Handout

Instructions: You have just five minutes to complete this activity. There could be a reward for the person who completes this activity correctly first, so be sure to work quickly...

1. Read everything before you do anything.
2. Put your name in the upper right hand corner of this page.
3. Circle the word 'name' in sentence two.
4. Draw five small squares in the top right-hand corner.
5. Put an X in each square you have just drawn.
6. Put a circle around each square.
7. Sign your name under the title of this page.
8. After the title "Activity | Handout" write 'yes yes yes'.
9. Underline sentences number seven and eight.
10. Put an X in the lower left-hand corner of this page.
11. Draw a triangle around the X you have just made.
12. On the back of this page multiply seventy by thirty.
13. Draw a circle around the word 'top' on sentence four.
14. Loudly call out your first name when you reach this point in the test.
There could be a separate prize for the person who is loudest.
15. On the reverse of this paper write the last ten characters of the alphabet in reverse order eg Z, Y, X
16. On the reverse side of this paper add 107 and 278.
17. Draw a picture of a candle on the reverse of this paper.
18. If you are the first person to get this far, shout out loudly 'I am the first person to get this far following these instructions.'
19. Punch three small holes in your paper with your pencil here



20. Now that you have finished reading carefully, do only sentences one and two. Sit quietly and observe those around you when you are finished.

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Key themes of Catholic Social Teaching

Scripture provides us with many examples of social justice through a number of key themes. These can be summarised as:

- Life and dignity of the human person
- Call to family, community and participation
- Human rights and responsibilities
- Option for the poor and vulnerable
- The dignity and rights of the workers
- Solidarity (standing with those who need help)
- Care for God's creation.

The themes do not stand alone. Rather they overlap and interlock with each other. They are all important. They can be linked to the key understandings that we have about our relationships with self, God and creation:

- God made all people equal in dignity
- The earth and everything on it are God's holy creation for the sustainable use and enjoyment of everyone equally
- All human beings are co-responsible with God for helping to protect the dignity of everyone
- The physical earth must be respected in and of itself, not just as a stage for human activity.

Source: The Catholic Institute of Aotearoa New Zealand TH211 Catholic Social Teaching II Workbook 2013

Activity

Think of an experience where you became aware of the reality of an unjust or unfair situation. This could be a personal experience or something that you heard about on the news.

Share with your small group:

- Briefly outline the experience
- What was unjust or unfair about the experience?
- What was your reaction?
- Was the injustice or unfairness the result of bad luck or the result of human action/decision?
- What Catholic Social Teaching theme does this connect to?
- What could be done to improve the situation?

As a group choose one of the experiences shared and be ready to share that back to the larger group if there is time.

