



YEAR LEVEL	11&12
TITLE	Called to Action
STRAND	CHRISTIAN MORALITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE
SUGGESTED DURATION	40 hours (1 semester)
ENDURING QUESTIONS	How are we called to contribute to the common good? How can I use my gifts for the common good?

Unit Focus

In this unit students will investigate justice issues facing our world today, their causes, the associated problems and their impact on humankind. Students will explore Church teachings relevant to these issues and respond in the light of Catholic Social Teaching. The concept of service will be examined in terms of individual and collective responsibility to think globally and act locally.

Achievement Standards

By the end of Year 12:

Students communicate an understanding and appreciation of Christian life as requiring moral decision making and a discerned response to contemporary culture.

Unit Outcomes

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. Identify and analyse contemporary social justice issues;
2. Explore the Christian response to contemporary social justice issues through Scripture, Church documents and Catholic Social Teaching;
3. Explore a range of religious and ethical perspectives pertaining to various social justice issues;
4. Investigate ways to respond to social justice issues in the light of Church Teaching;
5. Articulate personal understandings, beliefs and questions about their responsibilities in the context of the Christian response to global issues.

Key Understandings for Students

- Jesus, through the Holy Spirit calls and empowers us to work to uphold the dignity of all people.
- Christians are called to read the signs of the times in terms of the significant (positive and negative) movements throughout the world in which we live. They are called to reflect and act on them in ways that bring about the transformation of the world.
- The dignity of each human person requires the pursuit of the common good in a spirit of solidarity and subsidiarity.
- Christians are called to create and support institutions and networks that enhance people's opportunities for their full human development.

- Living in a global community calls for respect and action for justice on behalf of all creation.

Student Context

Students are aware of the dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good. They have a spirituality that often focuses on justice and the discernment of world issues that affect each one of us as a member of the global community. They have an increasing awareness of their own learning styles, perspectives, theories and beliefs and a knowledge of their own needs and weaknesses. In the midst of a world offering numerous views on how to live well, they are motivated to find answers to the ultimate questions in an atmosphere of respect and openness.

Theological Background for Teachers

Social Justice incorporates basic respect for human beings coupled with concern for and action on behalf of human rights. Pope John XXIII declared in 1961 that human beings are the cause, foundation, and reason why all social institutions exist. The Catholic community therefore affirms and defends the ultimate dignity and rights of every human person. "Justice" stems from the Latin "Justitia" - whatever is "rightful" or "lawful". In effect, Christian social justice means the total ongoing Christian mission to proclaim and live the gospel command to love God, neighbour and all of God's great creation.

Tradition maintains that true Christian social justice is an active effort to reform and re-shape human societies, governments, institutions, and structures that deny the basic rights of human beings. Catholic Social Teaching stems from the words and deeds of the Hebrew prophets in the Old Testament but especially from the prophetic life, ministry, and death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The principles of Catholic Social Teaching have continued to develop as the Church reflects on the lived experiences of people in various historical, political and social contexts.

The great prophets of the Old Testament proclaimed a twin message - worship of the one God and justice in society. In their eyes the two could not be separated. The firm belief that God is the God of justice goes hand in hand with the defence of the widow and the orphan, a conventional phrase for the poor. In the New Testament, Jesus makes this the criteria for entry into the kingdom. In our time the Catholic Church has taught that striving for justice in the world is at the centre of the Christian mission and a gospel-centred existence. They provide principles for reflection, criteria for judgement and guidelines for action.

The cause of Catholic Social Teaching seeks to make the world more generally aware of how humanity can best be served by its many products, processes and progressive achievements. The Catholic encyclicals that have dealt with social justice themes in recent decades include: *[Evangelii gaudium](#)* (2013), *[Laudato si'](#)* (2015), *[Gaudete et exsultate](#)* (2018), *[Fratelli tutti](#)* (2020) (see <https://justiceandpeace.org.au/papal-documents/> for a more extensive list).

Pope Francis famously said "How I would like a Church which is poor and for the poor." In "Fratelli Tutti" (n.168) he also clearly states that "the politics we need is a politics centred on human dignity and not subjected to finance because 'the marketplace, by itself, cannot resolve every problem'."

"Essential Catholic notions regarding social justice, respect for human beings, equality among human individuals, differences among human beings, Christian stewardship of God's creation, and human solidarity in God's grace and the risen Jesus are explored in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, articles 1928-1948. The Catechism points out that the community of the baptised, and society as a whole, safeguard social justice by fulfilling the conditions that permit people to obtain what is due to each, according to the common good of humanity and the proper exercise of authority." (Ekstrom, 1995, p.234).

In today's complex society the obligation to struggle for a just and human social order is more urgent than ever. "We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers,

political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference” (Laudato Si n52). This obligation challenges Christians to work to change those attitudes and structures in Australian Society which lead to injustice and to the violation of human rights.

The major forms and causes of injustice include: political (unjust use of power), economic (relating to the production of goods and wealth and the ways in which resources are distributed), gender-based (sexual discrimination in access to power and resources), racial (unjust treatment of people from specific ethnic communities), ecological (unjust treatment of the earth and its inhabitants), and other social injustices (e.g. age discrimination).

Works of Mercy

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church [2447], works of mercy are “charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbour in his spiritual and bodily necessities.” The works of mercy are divided into corporal (ie of the body) and spiritual and there are seven of each. The corporal works are inspired by examples given in Matthew’s Gospel (25: 31-46):

“I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

They are: feeding the hungry; giving drink to the thirsty; sheltering the homeless; clothing the naked; visiting the sick and imprisoned; burying the dead; and giving alms to the poor.

The spiritual works of mercy are: instructing the ignorant ; advising or counselling the doubtful; admonishing the sinner; consoling & comforting the sorrowful; forgiving injuries; bearing wrongs patiently; and praying for the living and the dead.

In 2016 Pope Francis included caring for creation as both a spiritual and corporal work of mercy.

Pope Francis has said “it is not enough to experience God’s mercy in one’s life; whoever receives it must also become a sign and instrument for others. Mercy, therefore, is not only reserved for particular moments, but it embraces our entire daily existence.” (General Audience, 12 October 2016). Furthermore, in his apostolic letter *Misericordia et Misera* (2016), he wrote “the corporal and spiritual works of mercy continue in our own day to be proof of mercy’s immense positive influence as a social value. Mercy impels us to roll up our sleeves and set about restoring dignity to millions of people; they are our brothers and sisters.”

Scripture

Mt 25: 34-40

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that 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 something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

Amos 5: 12-15

For I know how many are your transgressions,
and how great are your sins—
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
and push aside the needy in the gate.
Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time;
for it is an evil time.
Seek good and not evil,
that you may live;
and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you,
just as you have said.
Hate evil and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Major Assessment Task

This Assessment piece will assess Outcomes 1 & 2

Prepare a poster or power-point linking each of the Beatitudes, the 14 Stations of the Cross OR the 10 Commandments to a website for a social justice organisation: eg.

- You shall not kill (a Christian site opposed to the death penalty); You shall honour your mother and father (a website advocating for the rights of victims of domestic abuse)
- Jesus falls the first time (the website of an organisation supporting Cambodian landmine victims), Jesus is crowned with thorns (a website opposing genital mutilation of girls)
- Blessed are the meek (a Christian organisation supporting abused women). Blessed are the peacemakers (a site for the promotion of peace in the Middle East)

Assignments must also include a reference to the Sustainable Development Goals and/or the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching, so that our community can learn about these.

Present your assignment with explanations so that it can be advertised to our school community as a way to learn about various Christian social justice organisations (eg. on the College website, for the newsletter or at parent nights).

Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

Focusing Activity: Use current clip / article / story about a situation of injustice to open up a discussion about why is there injustice in the world? Why are there “haves” and “have nots”? for example is it enough to say that some people have worked hard and earned what they have? Is it that simple?

Outcome 1. Identify and analyse contemporary social justice issues.

- Define what is / is not a social justice issue. Reach a group definition.
- Make an analysis of different types of justice issues using the following categories:
 - Political Injustice (unjust use of power)
 - Economic Injustice (relating to the production of goods and wealth and the ways in which resources are distributed.)
 - Gender-based Injustice (sexual discrimination in access to power and resources)
 - Racial Injustice (unjust treatment of people from specific ethnic communities, for example First Nations peoples in various countries including Australia)

Religious Injustice (for example Christians in China or Israel, Rohingya in Burma)

Ecological Injustice (unjust treatment of the earth and its inhabitants, extending to an exploration of cosmology)

Other Social Injustices (e.g. age discrimination, disability).

Examples of the above issues may be obtained from newspapers, magazines and radio or television news broadcasts.

- Have students begin a journal reflecting on one area of injustice, the various issues which arise in relation to it and particularly their own views and questions about it as they study this course
- Prepare a glossary of terms related to the area of injustice e.g. Area of Injustice: Economic; Topic: Distribution of wealth; Terms: economy, currency, labour, relative poverty, absolute poverty, surplus, consumption, wage, income, resource, commodity, welfare, charity, debt, credit, taxation.
- Identify present understandings of the concept of global issues. Brainstorm examples of injustice on a global scale. Display headlines of examples. Clarify why the issue is of global concern.
- Establish a class scrapbook. This is compiled over the course of the unit. Students bring news-clippings or other items relevant to global issues. One section of Australian examples is further categorised as 'local' or 'national' perspectives. This scrapbook may be used as a resource for activities later in the unit.
- Select a story or film excerpt which demonstrates a global issue. (Possible videos: *City of Joy*, *Hotel Rwanda*, *Constant Gardener*, *Amazing Grace*, *He Named Me Malala*, *2040*, *This Changes Everything*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Selma*, *Hidden Figures*, *Just Mercy*, *The Hate U Give*, *Buoyancy*, *The Public*, *In My Blood It Runs*)

Evaluate students' understandings and appreciation of the issue through the following questions:

What is the issue?

Who is being negatively affected?

What or who is causing the problem?

Who might be responsible for 'fixing' the situation?

- Brainstorm a series of questions concerning a selected issue: Who, What, When, Where & Why?
- Using the above examples discuss the causes of the problem. Look for connections between them.

Outcome 2. Explore the Christian response to contemporary social justice issues through Scripture, Church documents and Catholic Social Teaching

- Read Matthew 25: 34-40. Who was Jesus speaking about at this time? What might "hungry", "imprisoned" etc mean then? And now?

In a collage, powerpoint, etc identify what this text has to say about a Christian response to situations of injustice.

- In groups, students investigate other Scripture references re concern for the poor, eg Deuteronomy 10: 17-19, 15: 7-11, 24: 17-22; Isaiah 58: 3-12; Amos 4: 1-2, 5: 12-15; Micah 6: 6-8; Zechariah 7:9-14; Matthew 19:16-21; Luke 4: 16-21, 10: 25-37, 14:13, 19: 1-10. Ask:

What does Hebrew Scripture teach us in relation to how the poor - including widows, orphans and strangers - should be treated?

What does Jesus say (and do) in relation to the vulnerable and marginalised of society – including women, outcasts, Gentiles, Samaritans, sinners?

- Using knowledge about Jesus, imagine he is standing for office in the next federal election on a policy platform of addressing global issues. You are part of his campaign team. Design and produce a 30 second television advertisement which includes, among other images, his campaign slogan

Write and present a 2-3 minute campaign speech

Plan a promotional tour identifying locations and target groups and give reasons for your choices

Organise a campaign dinner. Who would you invite and why?

- Look at Church encyclicals concerning social justice. For a list of modern Catholic Social Teaching documents see <https://social-spirituality.net/catholic-social-teaching-documents/>. Students could become 'experts' on different documents and present a summary of key points to their classmates. Remember to

contextualise each document according to when it was written and the global events / concerns at that time.

- Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELyLdMIFdzA>

Provide students with summaries of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching – the CES CST Posters are a great resource here. For a particular global issue explain which principle/s apply. Explore the Church's responses to the issue.

- Further explore the ways that the Church responds to social justice issues on a global scale. Invite guest speakers from institutions concerned with global or national justice issues (Caritas, Catholic Mission, ACRATH, Catholic Earthcare, Refugee Council, Reconciliation Australia / Victoria) to explain their various responses. Contact CEO RE staff for further suggestions.

Outcome 3. Explore a range of religious and ethical perspectives pertaining to various social justice issues

- From the media, select an issue of social justice. Research, describe and analyse the issue in relation to:
 - the particular stance taken by different religions (eg Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism) and religious organisations;
 - the views taken by society;
 - laws which may apply;
 - any cultural (mis)understandings involved.

Outcome 4. Investigate ways to respond to social justice issues in the light of Church Teaching

- **Modern Slavery:** Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) have developed a teaching kit which follows a 4-step process for teaching about human trafficking. Go to <https://acrath.org.au/resources/teaching-kit/> The four steps are (1) Introduction; (2) Information; (3) Recognition; (4) Action. Each step in the process is crucial and requires completion as students deepen their understanding of the issue of modern day slavery and commit to action as a result.
- **Works of Mercy:** (See Theological Background) The Justice and Peace Office of the Archdiocese of Sydney has a useful website <http://justiceandpeace.org.au/corporal-and-spiritual-works-of-mercy/> which lists transcripts from Pope Francis, scripture references and ideas for action. While it is written for parishes it can easily be adapted to schools. Follow a See – Judge – Act process to discern the justice issues in your community and ways in which the students can respond.

Outcome 5. Articulate personal understandings, beliefs and questions about their responsibilities in the context of the Christian response to global issues.

- Prepare for a classroom symposium by researching further one of the global issues. Present your findings as part of a panel and be prepared to answer questions. If Jesus had been present at your classroom symposium, what three statements or questions would he have contributed about any of the issues.
- Debate issues related to the Church's response to global issues. Some topics might include:
 - That religion and politics do mix
 - That charity is not just
 - That people do not live by bread alone
 - Too many words, not enough action
 - That charity begins at home.
 - That people should think globally and act locally
- Reflect on your journal entries (from Outcome 1). Express your own views and questions about individual responsibility in the context of the Christian response to global issues.
- Design a poster or pamphlet, write a song, perform street theatre, prepare a radio advertisement, prepare and conduct a prayer assembly, organise a liturgy to promote awareness of a particular global issue in your local area.
- Decide on some actions that are possible, specific and concrete and which can be undertaken individually or as a group in response to the problem/s you have investigated. For example:
 - develop a social media campaign to make others aware of the issue and ways they can respond appropriately.

- advocate by conducting a letter-writing campaign to your member of parliament or the minister responsible.
- Devise a solidarity action whereby participants place themselves (literally or symbolically) in the situation of the people suffering the injustice, eg walk with a stone in your shoe, make a sling for your arm and wear it for a day, carry buckets of water around the school oval

Liturgical Connections

Choose an upcoming day highlighting a social justice issue (refer to the annual CES Social Justice Calendar). Prepare a liturgy to celebrate it. Consider which members / groups in the community could be invited to join the celebration of the liturgy.

Resources

Community Resources

ACRATH

Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project

CAPSA

Caritas

Catholic Earthcare

Refugee Council

Rural Australians for Refugees

Vinnies

Teacher Resources

General Church Reference Texts

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Vatican Documents

Eg Laudato Si (2015)

Social Justice Statements

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference: Office for Social Justice

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/resources/social-justice-statements/>