

Mission Possible

In *Mission Possible* students develop an understanding of justice in light of the Christian message. Students examine Scripture which demonstrates how Jesus Christ showed love and justice for all people, particularly the marginalised. Students choose a current issue of injustice which they analyse and evaluate in light of the gospels and Catholic Social Teaching. They also evaluate their own beliefs about justice in light of new learning from Scripture and the Church's teaching. Students prepare and participate in an action that promotes a just way of responding to the issue they have analysed.

DOCTRINAL FOCUS

In planning to teach this unit the following references from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church are recommended:

#1836 Justice consists in the firm and constant will to give God and neighbour their due.

(See *Compendium* #381 *What is justice?*)

#1911 The unity of the human family, embracing people who enjoy natural dignity, implies a universal common good. This calls for ... the community of nations (to) provide for the different needs of men; this will involve the sphere of social life to which belong questions of food, hygiene, education ...

(See *Compendium* #407 *What is the common good?*)

#1953 The moral law finds its fullness and its unity in Christ. Jesus Christ is in person the way of perfection. He is the end of the law, for only he teaches and bestows the justice of God: 'For Christ is the end of the law, that everyone who has faith may be justified'.

(See *Compendium* #420 *What is the New Law or the Law of the Gospel?*)

#1977 Christ is the end of the law (cf. Rom 10: 4); only he teaches and bestows the justice of God.

(See *Compendium* #421 *Where does one find the New Law?*)

#521 Christ enables us to *live in him* all that he himself lived, and *he lives it in us*. We are called to become one with him, for he enables us as the members of his Body to share in what he lived for us in his flesh as our model.

(See *Compendium* #155 *In what way do the people of God share in the three functions of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King?*)

#2419 'Christian revelation ... promotes deeper understanding of the laws of social living'. The Church receives from the gospel the full revelation of the truth about man. When she fulfils her mission of proclaiming the gospel she bears witness to man, in the name of Christ, to his dignity and his vocation to the communion of persons. She teaches him the demands of justice and peace in conformity with divine wisdom.

(See *Compendium* #404 *What is required for an authentic human society?*)

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

The commandment to love God and neighbour asks us to love with great compassion, including those who are hostile to us. How is your life an expression of this commandment?

When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist (Dom Helder Camara). What issue of injustice do you feel strongly about? What questions does this issue prompt you to ask of yourself and others? What are some of the personal costs in being critical about unjust processes and structures?

Peace, in the sense of the absence of war, is of little value to someone who is dying of hunger or cold. It will not remove the pain of torture inflicted on a prisoner of conscience. It does not comfort those who have lost their loved ones in floods caused by senseless deforestation in a neighbouring country. Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where the people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free (Dalai Lama). What insights does this provide for how you understand justice? What are the challenges of this way of thinking and acting?

LINKS WITH STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

Students live in a world where justice is not always present. Catholic teaching on Social Justice invites students to consider ways of being just, of becoming the voice for the voiceless. *Who are the voiceless or vulnerable in your students' lives? How can students contribute to the transformation of these people's lives?*

EXPLANATION OF SCRIPTURE

Mt 22: 34–40 The Greatest Commandment

The question by the Pharisees about which law is the greatest comes as another attempt to put Jesus to the test with a trick question. Again Jesus answers with a new understanding of the greatest commandment. 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind' from Deuteronomy is the basis for the *Shema* prayer recited by Jews several times a day. He then goes beyond the question by placing another alongside it. Also taken from Scripture, Lev 19: 18 tells us to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. Jesus Christ tells the Pharisees that on these two commandments 'hang all the law and the prophets'. The distilling of the Torah to a single, all-embracing command, whether of love of God or neighbour, was not unknown in the Judaism of the time. Jesus Christ had already added the command to love one's neighbour as oneself among the commandments listed for the young man who asked him about eternal life (19: 19). Jesus Christ seems to be saying that there is no distinction between the two. To love God with one's heart and soul and mind is inseparable from an active love of those whom God loves. One needs a heart that is compassionate – love is the criterion.

POSSIBILITIES FOR PRAYER AND WORSHIP

- Prepare a morning and/or afternoon prayer around the psalm in *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 5, Chapter 2, p. 15 following this or a similar pattern:

Introduction:

O God, come to our help.

Response: *Lord, come to help us.*

Hymn: 'Holy Spirit of Fire' (Michael Mangan, *Setting Hearts on Fire*).

Psalm: In *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 5, Chapter 2, p. 15.

Reading: Phil 4: 8–9

Response: *Help us live the good news where we are.*

Pray together: *Our Father ...*

- Students can finish the statement, 'We hope for ...' in spontaneous prayer. Conclude with the Mantra of Hope in *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 5, Chapter 2, p. 31.
- Pray the 'Blessing for Each Other' in *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 5, Chapter 2, p. 39. Invite the students to choose a phrase from the prayer and reflect on it quietly for a few moments in silence. Read the blessing again. Offer one another a sign of peace.
- Students compose and pray together a simple litany (repetitive prayer) based on Mt 25: 31–46. Conclude with the hymn 'St Teresa's Prayer' (Michael Mangan, *Setting Hearts on Fire*, Litmus Productions).
- Identify the prophets of our day. Prepare a PowerPoint reflection of images and prayers thanking God for these 'prophets'. Sing a suitable song, e.g. 'Prophets of Hope' (Tricia Watts, *As One Voice*, Willow Connection).
- Celebrate the 'Litany of Blessing' in *Just Imagine: Creative Ways of Presenting Scripture* by Rina Wintour, p. 96–97.
- Use photo language to reflect on mission and justice. Students choose a photo that speaks to them about the Church's mission to reach out in justice. (Images from Project Compassion or Catholic Mission may be helpful.) These images can form a central focus for a reflection time or a class prayer.
- At the end of the unit celebrate a commitment liturgy. Students reflect on their own personal mission to reveal the love of Jesus Christ. Conclude with the 'Prayer of St Francis' in *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 5, Chapter 11, p. 112.

Related Chapters – *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 5: Chapter 2, Virtues; Chapter 10, A Heart to Love; Chapter 11, Our Church Community.

Faith concepts: love, mission, service, justice, community, interdependence, rights.

Seeking understanding:

What is justice and how is it shown?

How can we be people of justice and service?

Understandings:

Jesus Christ is the model of Christian justice.

The Christian mission is to live as Jesus taught.

A community ensures social justice when it respects the dignity and rights of each person.

Each individual can bring about change that creates a just world.

Unit specific learning:

Students will learn about	Students will learn to	Students will undertake to
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Reasoning & Responding</i>	<i>Personal & Communal Engagement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current situations of justice and injustice.• Ways in which Jesus lived justly.• The social structures of Jesus' time and the Christian response to these demonstrated in the gospels.• Some principles of Catholic teaching about social justice.• Qualities and characteristics of a just person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyse a justice issue in light of the gospel and Catholic Social Teaching.• Monitor changes in or affirmations of their thinking about issues of injustice in light of new learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan and participate in an action to bring about a positive response to an issue of injustice.

PHASES OF STUDENT INQUIRY

Additional Reading for Teachers	Orientation to Inquiry <i>What do students already know, think or feel in relation to the topic? What are students' questions about the topic? What experiences and reflections can we offer students to become engaged with the topic?</i>	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning
<p>Catholic Social Teaching has been articulated in a series of papal, conciliar and episcopal documents. The depth and richness of this tradition can best be understood by a direct reading of these documents. Key themes that emerge are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life and dignity of the human person. 2. Common good and community. 3. Protection of human rights and the responsibilities of the human person to society. 4. The role of government and subsidiarity. 5. Economic justice. 6. An option for the poor and marginalised. 7. Peace and disarmament. 8. The dignity of work and the rights of workers. 9. Solidarity with the <i>whole</i> human family. 10. Care for creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popcorn Strategy Teacher collects articles, e.g. newspaper, news, ads, song, etc. on a current social justice issue. Present the issue through an engaging medium. Students respond with their first thought or emotion about the issue. 	<p>Assessment for Learning These tasks will indicate students' prior knowledge and experience of the meaning of social justice in a variety of contexts.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Class brainstorms a list of other social justice issues globally, nationally and locally. Students select an issue which they feel strongly about. Record a basic outline of the issue. Respond to 	

	<p>questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is unjust about this issue? - Why do you think this is unjust? - Who are the people involved and what are their roles? - Who has power in this issue? Who does not? - Who wins? Who loses? Who decides? - What are the effects on each group of people of the decisions made? - How is each person's dignity affected? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Justice and Injustice? Y-Chart Discuss the understanding and experience of justice and injustice. Describe what it looks, sounds and feels like using a Y-chart. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying a Justice Issue for Analysis by the Whole Class From all the issues that have been identified through the orientation phase, ask students to rate from 0 to 10 the issue they feel most strongly about. Use this rating to identify the issue most significant for the majority of students. This issue will be analysed 	

	further and reflected on in the Development Phase.	
Additional Reading for Teachers	<p>Development <i>What experiences and religious texts will provide new learning for students? What skills will students need in order to work with these resources? What strategies and tools will enable students to think and reflect on these experiences and texts? How will students process their thinking and learning?</i></p>	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Facts About the Issue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In collaborative groups students investigate the facts of the issue. As a grade develop some questions that you want answered about the issue, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What is happening to people in this situation? Why? – What decisions have been made about this issue? Who makes the decisions? – What are the consequences of the decisions? – Does everyone have access to adequate resources for their basic needs? – Is everyone’s dignity being respected? <p>Each group of students investigates the facts through guest speakers, email an expert, internet, letter writing, interview, etc.</p> <p>Sort out information on a chart.</p>	<p>Assessment for Learning Students’ understanding of the facts is necessary in order to understand the issue more fully throughout the unit.</p>

<p>The Great Commandment Mt 22: 34–40. Jesus Christ implied that there can be no distinction between the commandment to love God and the commandment to love others. To love God with one’s heart and soul and mind is inseparable from an active love of neighbour. Christians are called to live a life that is compassionate – love is the heart of the Law.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Golden Rule: de Bono’s Hats Read Mt 22: 34–40 and interpret using de Bono’s Blue Thinking Hat. Focus questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Why was this story told? – What can I learn from it? – What do I need to do? Compare the <i>Great Commandment</i> with similar beliefs or values in the major world religions. A helpful resource for this may be <i>Terrific Topics 2005</i>. Write a prayer based on ‘The Golden Rule’. 	<p>Assessment of Learning Students’ responses to the questions will indicate how they interpret the ideas and messages in Mt 22: 34-40, how they relate the teaching to their own life, and how it might inform their own actions and beliefs.</p>
<p>Tax collectors were extremely unpopular in Jesus Christ’s day. People hated paying taxes to Rome because it was an admission that they had been conquered by a foreign power. Tax collectors were despised both as collaborators with a foreign power and as exploiters of their fellow Jews for gain.</p> <p>In Jesus’ time women had little, if any, independence. They were considered the property of their fathers until they married, then they became the property of their husbands. A woman could not own anything, nor be a witness, nor take part in public life. Yet membership of the Jewish people came through the mother’s line, not the father’s, and the Jewish tradition preserves the stories of great women in the religious tradition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice in Jesus’ Time In small groups explore the social structure of Jesus’ time and attitudes to either the sick, women, foreigners, tax collectors or other marginalised people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lk 10: 38–42 (women) Mt 20: 29–34 (healing of the blind) Mk 10: 46–52, Lk 18: 35–43 (the blind beggar) Lk 19: 1–10 (Zacchaeus the tax collector) Lk 10: 25–37 (the Good Samaritan) Or look at other relevant gospel passages to explore how Jesus responded to the marginalised of his 	<p>Assessment for Learning This report will demonstrate the students’ understanding of justice issues in Jesus’ time and his response to them. This is necessary in order for students to relate this learning to the issue under investigation.</p>

<p>Sickness and disability were considered to be the work of ‘demons’. The sick were considered unclean and lived on the edges of society. In every city and town, particularly Jerusalem, there were the crippled and the blind who were forced to beg for a living.</p> <p>Because of the mutual dislike between Jews and Samaritans the gospels twice mention good deeds by Samaritans. Jesus Christ teaches that genuine love for our neighbour must also extend to our ‘enemies’.</p>	<p>time.</p> <p>Construct a rubric that will guide students in reporting their findings. Share with the whole class.</p> <p>As a class relate the Scripture to people today.</p> <p>Who are the marginalised today?</p> <p>How do people become marginalised in our school, classroom, local community?</p> <p>What are the ways in which I respond?</p> <p>What might be some of the possible consequences of how I respond? (for myself and for others)</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of Issue Review the social justice issue in light of new learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How do the teachings from Scripture relate to this issue? – How do you feel and think about this issue now? – Have your feelings and ideas changed? 	<p>Assessment of Learning This task will demonstrate students’ ability to analyse and reflect on Scripture to inform their attitudes and thinking about a justice issue.</p>
<p>Catholic Social Teaching summarises what the Church teaches about social justice issues. Included in its principles are: Dignity of the Human Person: Human life is sacred. Each person has a responsibility to promote and respect human dignity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing the Issue Through Catholic Social Teaching : Think Pad In learning teams take one of the guiding principles of Catholic Social Teaching (see <i>Expressions</i>, Book 7, p. 	<p>Assessment of Learning This task will demonstrate students’ developing understanding of Catholic Social Teaching as it relates to the issue under investigation.</p>

<p>The Common Good: Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the good of all in society, to ensure their rights are respected.</p> <p>Universal Purpose of Goods: The goods of the earth are meant to be shared equally amongst all. Everyone has a right to access their share of resources to meet their basic needs.</p> <p>Option for the Poor: Seeing the world through the eyes of the poor. Catholics are challenged to act to remove the injustices that keep poor people poor.</p>	<p>70) and complete a Think Pad. Divide paper into four boxes with these titles: words; pictures; connections to life; wonderings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Write two or three sentences that summarise what the principle is about. – Illustrate what the principle is about. – Write and draw how this principle applies to the issue in question. – Record feelings, questions or ideas about this issue in light of this principle. <p>Share with the whole grade. Compare and contrast students' ideas and interpretations.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Is Justice And Injustice About For Catholics? In small groups students talk about and record what they believe justice is about and what it is not about for Catholics. <p>Clarify student thinking in a whole class discussion.</p>	<p>Assessment of Learning This task will demonstrate students' understanding of justice from the perspective of Catholic Social Teaching. It may also indicate development in students' learning and perceptions compared to those at the beginning of the unit.</p>
<p>Additional Reading for Teachers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SYNTHESIS</p> <p><i>How will students demonstrate their understandings, beliefs, values, skills and feelings in relation to the topic? How will students take action based on their learning? What strategies and tools will enable students to discern their action, to plan and implement action and</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning</p>

	<i>to evaluate their action?</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Introduce questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What do I think and feel about the issue now? – Have my ideas and feelings changed or stayed the same? – What would be a positive way to respond to this issue as a Christian? 	Assessment of Learning The journal entry will indicate if students are able to make the connections between Church teaching and their own responses to the issue under investigation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Plan Students develop an action plan to promote a just response to the issue, e.g. an awareness raising campaign, posters, talks at assembly, develop a web page. 	Assessment of Learning The action plans will indicate how students understand they can make a difference to the issue that has been analysed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Application Use a job application template (<i>Expressions</i>, Book 7, pp. 72, 79) to describe the qualities and characteristics of people working for justice in a Catholic context. 	Assessment of Learning The job application will indicate the development of students' knowledge and understanding about social justice.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Map Students think back over the work they have done during the unit and create a visual representation of their learning (<i>Learning Links</i>, Murdoch, K, p. 92). 	Assessment as/for Learning This learning map will indicate the ways in which students have learnt throughout the unit.

RESOURCES

To Know, Worship and Love, 2nd Edition

Year 5: Chapter 2, Virtues; Chapter 10, A Heart to Love; Chapter 11, Our Church Community.

Teacher Resources

Murdoch, K & Wilson, J 2004, *Learning Links: Strategic Teaching for the Learner-Centred Classroom*, Curriculum Corporation, Vic.

Ryan, M 2003, *Expressions: A Religion Series for Catholic Primary Schools, Book 7*, Social Science Press, NSW.

White, D 2003, *Into the Deep: Rich Teaching Strategies for the Religious Education Classroom*, KD Publications, NSW.

Terrific Topics 2005, Middle Primary, Book 1, Blake Education, NSW.

Websites

Themes in Catholic Social Teaching for teachers

<http://www.osispm.org/major_themes.aspx>

Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching for teachers

<<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/socialteaching.html>>

Ten Building Blocks of Catholic Social Teaching for teachers

<<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/projects/socialteaching>>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS

This unit may be used to assess some of the Level 4 standards.

Students analyse and reflect on scripture texts and stories in Church Tradition to inform actions, attitudes and values.

Students analyse and critique their personal and global worlds in light of the teachings of the Catholic Church seeking to make a difference.