

>>> **Catholic Social Teaching for Adult Groups** <<<
CST: Call to Family, Community, Participation
Catechesis for the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh

Faced with the grave social problems which, with different characteristics, are present throughout America, Catholics know that they can find in the Church's social doctrine an answer which serves as a starting point in the search for practical solutions. Spreading this doctrine in an authentic pastoral priority. In this regard, special care must be taken to train lay persons capable of working, on the basis of the faith in Christ to transform earthly realities. *Ecclesia in America*, Pope John Paul II, 1999

Scripture

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Gen 12:3

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Deut. 5:4-7

Beatitudes Matthew 5:1-7:29

Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it. Mk. 10:14-15

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Rom. 12.9

...let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. ...be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. Jas 1:19, 22

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Cor. 13:4-7

For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? 1Jn 3:11, 17

Papal Encyclicals & Bishops' Statements

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society – in economics and politics, in law and policy – directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. The family is the central social institution that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable. *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*, USCCB

Our families are the starting point and the center of a vocation for justice. How we treat our parents, spouses and children is a reflection of our commitment to Christ's love and justice. We demonstrate our commitment to the Gospel by how we spend our time and money, and whether our family life includes an ethic of charity, service and action for justice. The lessons we teach our children through what we do as well as what we say determines whether they care for the "least among us" and are committed to work for justice. *Social Development & World Peace*, USCCB

The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. The Christian family has an evangelizing and missionary task. The family is the original cell of social life. Authority, stability, and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for freedom, security, and fraternity within society. Family life is an initiation into life in society. The family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2205, 2207

...it remains each person's duty to retain an understanding of the whole human person in which the values of intellect, will, conscience and fraternity are preeminent. These values are all rooted in God the Creator and have been wonderfully restored and elevated in Christ. The family is, as it were, the primary mother and nurse of this education. There, the children, in an atmosphere of love, more easily learn the correct order of things... *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965

Learn More

Office of Peace & Justice, Catholic Diocese of Raleigh
www.dioceseofraleigh.org
 919-821-9751 jurski@raldioc.org

Parenting for Peace & Justice
 314-533-4445
www.ipj-ppj.org

U.S. Catholic Bishops' Conference – Family
nccbuscc.org/laity/marriage/index.htm (statements & teachings)
usccb.org/bublishing/familylife/children.htm (resources for family)

Life and Dignity of Person >>> Rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person >>> Call to Family, Community, Participation >>>

Solidarity >>> Care of Creation >>> Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers >>> Option for the Poor and Vulnerable >>>

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Objectives: To learn the themes of Catholic social teaching, its gift, its roots in the life of Christ and the Gospel, papal encyclicals and bishops' statements, its challenge to today's Catholics and its essential role in Catholic faith and identity.
 To journey more deeply in our life of faith; to respond in our world today in light of Catholic social teaching, as salt and light; and to rejoice in the Good News.
 To realize the call to family as gift, as the cell for experience God and neighbor in right relationship.

Overview

Read the Catholic Teaching on the reverse page.
 ~Reflect on this teaching :
 In your own life, your community, country and world.
 In connection with the other themes of CST listed on the border.
 In Jesus' life as son of a carpenter.
 As a vision of what family is in the kingdom of God given for us and for the world.
 ~Expand your familiarity with Church teachings using the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Preparation

(We must be particularly sensitive to those in our community and their experience of family . Families come in all shapes and sizes.)

Make copies of the Family Pledge of Non-violence. Here, family can extend in meaning any small community of people.

Hang newsprint and label: one for each of the components of the Pledge: Respect, Communication, Listening, Forgiveness, Respect for Nature, Creative Play, Courage

Other Materials: markers, pencils and paper for group discussion.

Use some of the readings and scripture passages on these pages in your discussions.

Focus –Family Pledge of Non-violence

Today families are surrounded by so much violence, confronted with all the demands of family living, overwhelmed by the conflicting messages of the mass media and competing activities in a fast-paced society, we need all the help we can get to “be family” and to try to make a positive difference in our community. A pledge is one simple yet important tool to help us.

This pledge recognizes that the term “family” can be extended to mean any community.

Read the pledge together.

Reflect on the components of the pledge alone for ten minutes.

In small groups, discuss the components of the pledge. (one or two components per group depending on group size and time)

- How do you experience this component in daily life?
- How does our faith and The Good News express this component?
- What practices can we take on to deepen this experience?
- How can this component be used to break a cycle of violence?

Come together and have groups share their findings.

List responses on newsprint.

Personal reflection:

What are specific steps you could take by yourself or as a family or group to improve the components of the pledge? Make a plan for yourself or as a family or group for the next month. Celebrate your efforts at the end of the month. Reflect and plan for the next month.

Closing: Read

“From the moment of birth, each of us has embarked on a journey whose final destination is the fullness of life with God forever, the final realization of the “Kin-dom” or “Beloved Community of God.” But we don’t make this journey alone. We do so as families, as faith communities and as disciples of Jesus who sends us the Spirit to lead us. And as followers of Jesus, we are called to help bring that fullness, that Kin-dom or Community, into being along the way – in our families, our faith communities, our local communities, our nation and our world. We are the children of God on our journey to God.”

Together, say the St. Francis Prayer

...everyone must consider every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all their life and the means necessary to living it with dignity, so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concern for the poor man Lazarus (Luke 16:18-31). ...Furthermore, whatever is opposed to life itself, ...whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, ...as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. *Gaudium et Spes*

FAMILY PLEDGE OF NONVIOLENCE

Making peace must start within ourselves and in our family. Each of us, members of the

_____ family (or group), commit ourselves

as best we can to become nonviolent and peaceable people.

To Respect Self and Others

To respect myself, to affirm others and to avoid uncaring criticism, hateful words, physical attacks and self-destructive behavior.

To Communicate Better

To share my feelings honestly, to look for safe ways to express my anger, and to work at solving problems peacefully.

To Listen

To listen carefully, to one another, especially those who disagree with me, and to consider others' feelings and needs rather than insist on having my own way.

To Forgive

To apologize and make amends when I have hurt another, to forgive others, and to keep from holding grudges.

To Respect Nature

To treat the environment and all living things, including our pets, with respect and care.

To Play Creatively

To select entertainment and toys that support our family's values and to avoid entertainment that makes violence look exciting, funny or acceptable.

To Be Courageous

To challenge violence in all its forms whenever I encounter it, whether at home, at school, at work, or in the community, and to stand with others who are treated unfairly.

This is our pledge. These are our goals. We will check ourselves on what we have pledged once a month on _____ for the next twelve months so that we can help each other become more peaceable people.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

“Eliminating violence, one family at a time, starting with our own.”

The Prayer of St. Francis

O Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying to ourselves that we are born to eternal life.

