

>>> **Catholic Social Teaching for Adult Groups** <<<
CST: Care of Creation

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

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. Genesis 1:1-31

Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for the Lord. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. Leviticus 25:3

O Lord, how manifold are your works. In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. ...may the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works. Praise the Lord. Psalm 104

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. Isaiah 40:28

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal... Matt. 6:19-21

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. ... Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Matt. 6:25-34

Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions. Luke 12:15-21

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything. 1Cor. 6:12

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. Col. 3:14

Papal Encyclicals & Bishops' Statements

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*, USCCB, 1999

From the patristic period to the present, the church has affirmed that misuse of the world's resources or appropriation of them by a minority of the world's population betrays the gift of creation since "whatever belongs to God belongs to all." *Economic Justice for All*, USCCB

The most profound motive for our work is this knowing that we share in creation. Learning the meaning of creation in our daily lives will help us to live holier lives. It will fill the world with the spirit of Christ, the spirit of justice, charity, and peace. *Laborem Exercens*, Pope John Paul II, 1981

The seventh commandment enjoins respect for the integrity of creation. Animals, like plants and inanimate beings, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present, and future humanity. Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbor, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2415

Because of the blessings God has bestowed on our nation and the power it possesses, the United States bears a special responsibility in its stewardship of God's creation to shape responses that serve the entire human family. As pastors, teachers, and citizens, we bishops seek to contribute to our national dialogue by examining the ethical implications of climate change. *Global Climate Change*, USCCB, 2001

Care For the environment represents a challenge for all of humanity. It is a matter of a common and universal duty, that of respecting a common good, destined for all, by preventing anyone from using "with impunity the different categories of beings, whether living or inanimate – animals, plants, the natural elements – simply as one wishes, according to one's own economic needs." It is a responsibility that must mature on the basis of the global dimension of the present ecological crisis and the consequent necessity to meet it on a worldwide level, since all beings are interdependent in the universal order established by the Creator. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Pontifical Council, 2005

Learn More

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

The Earth Charter www.earthcharter.org

Renewing the Earth, USCCB, 1991 statement
www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/ejp/bishopsstatement.htm

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 as salt and light, and to rejoice in the Good News.
To experience the option for the poor and vulnerable in Christ, locally and globally.

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 the Son of Man.
In terms of the reign of God.
~Read the US Catholic Bishops' statement, *Renewing the Earth*, 1991
www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/ejp/bishopsstatement.htm

Preparation

Newsprint
Make copies of:
Page 1 of this Snip-it
Copies of *The Earth Charter* found at www.earthcharter.org
Copies of Page 3 – *Digging Deeper*
The Earth Charter is an authoritative synthesis of values, principles, and aspirations for a just, sustainable and peaceful global society in the 21st century, produced through the United Nations, shared and practiced by growing numbers of men and women, organizations and governments in all regions of the world, including the Catholic Church.
Read The Earth Charter and check out different avenues for action your group may want to take. There is an international network for study groups for youth and adults.

Curriculum

On Newsprint, post the question: What does it mean that it would take seven worlds to provide everyone with the lifestyle many enjoy in the United States?
List answers and expect discussion.
Hand out copies of the Earth Charter. Explain that this is an international document that declares the fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society.
Have people read: The Preamble, the first four fundamental principles, and The Way Forward. Principles 5-16 are sectioned and define how the first four fundamental principles can be met.
Break up into groups, hand out page 1 of the Snip-it: Ask each group to:
Compare the teaching of the church to the Earth Charter, paying particular attention to all the themes of CST listed around the edge of the page.
Each person think of the last thing they bought: Was it needed or wanted?
What is the entire chain of the item – what earthly resources were required, including oil and minerals, wood, water? - who were involved in the production of the item including distribution? - how did this product affect the Earth, and the people who made it?
Share your experience with the group.
Read the first paragraph of the preamble again. In what ways can we take responsibility for Earth and the human family?
Come back to the whole group and discuss the last question. List answers.
How does the group feel about the Earth Charter? What does our faith tell us? Does it call for change in our way of thinking? In what ways?
We can reflect on this discussion with:
~“Live simply so that others can simply live.” Mother Teresa
~Act locally, think globally. Care of creation begins within heart and mind, one person at a time and then in concert with one another.
~People and all the earth are so interconnected. Our choices and actions matter no matter who or where we are – it begins at home and circles out.
Invite ACTION:
Groups young and old, all over the world, are forming groups to think deeply about The Earth Charter, with new understanding about how they can make a difference for the world and the human family.
Are there some here today that want to join in this exciting work? Have those interested gather after the session, organize using page 3 of the snip-it.

...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*

The Earth Charter - Digging Deeper



Study

Reflect

Act

Learning More:

Chose someone to download the following learning tool from www.earthcharter.org

Go to: *Resources*, click on *3.3 nonformal education*, scroll and click on

Exploring the Earth Charter, by Rick Clugston

Follow the instructions which may take several sessions to complete.

Journal with the Earth Charter:

Read together and discuss one section at a time.

Individual Journal

What information did you learn? How is all creation connected?

Check out Catholic Diocese of Raleigh / Office of Peace & Justice / Mission & Teachings, and Links (www.dioceseofraleigh.org)

Using the themes of Catholic Social Teaching, what does our faith respond to what you have learned?

What do you and others need to do in light of this learning to promote a sustainable path for ourselves, communities, and the Earth?

Share and compile your thoughts.

Select a World Challenge

Select one or more issue listed on the Activity Worksheet: Applying the Earth Charter Principles from *Exploring the Earth Charter* learning tool above.

Select an environmental or justice issue that affects you as residents of North Carolina – for example, climate change, polluted water, litter and recycling, hunger, animal rights...

Research what interests you. Using the internet, investigate North Carolina work, for example, NC Citizens for Clean Water (www.nccleanwater.org)

NC Audubon Society (www.ncaudubon.org)

State Climate Office of NC (www.nc-climate.ncsu.edu/office/charter.html)

Pax Christi USA (www.paxchristiusa.org)

NC Justice Center (www.ncjustice.org)

see if and how your group can get involved – there are lots of choices and work to do

Educate Others:

Organize a campaign to spread the word about The Earth Charter in your area

Make posters, order or copy The Earth Charter for distribution, share it with family and friends, make a portable “information table” to distribute material at your local stores and upcoming events.

Network with other groups around the world through [www.earth charter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org)

For more help in getting started, call or e-mail:

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

SHARE THE JOY OF GOD'S CREATION, WORKING IN SOLIDARITY FOR THE COMMON GOOD!