

Teacher's Introduction to CST Principles



This document is to aid you in teaching the Catholic Social Teaching principles.

Catholic Social Teaching should not be thought of as a list of individual or isolated principles that can be studied or applied separately; rather, a synthesis of principles expressing a life in which humans flourish.

We hope that pupils will grasp how principles are applied together throughout the programme. At Common Good Schools we refer to this as Common Good Thinking.

The following sections provide an overview for teachers including a definition and some scripture references with a description of the content. Please refer to a bible for the full text.



The Common Good

The Common Good is the shared life of a society in which everyone can flourish – as we act together in different ways that all contribute towards that goal, enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate.

We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility according to our calling and ability.

The Common Good is built as people participate freely in the shared activities that generate it.

It is not a utopian ideal and cannot, by definition, be imposed.

Jeremiah 29:7

Pray for the city where you live. If it is doing well, you will do well.

Acts 2:44-47

Shared life of the new church after Pentecost

Luke 10:25-37

Loving God and neighbour – the Good Samaritan



Human Dignity

Every person is worthy of respect simply by virtue of being human. All human beings are of equal worth in the eyes of God. People matter more than things: each human life has value, from the youngest to the oldest, from the weakest to the strongest.

Genesis 1:26-27

God created humans in his image

Luke 12: 6-7

A person has greater value than many sparrows

1 Corinthians 3:16

God's spirit dwelling in people

Galatians 3:28

Equal dignity of all people, regardless of status or background



Solidarity

We are social beings designed to be interconnected by relationships of mutual concern and support. Solidarity is a determination to work for the good of all and of each individual – all are responsible for all.

We are called to build relationships where there is mistrust, suspicion or estrangement, especially when we encounter people with whom we disagree.

Exodus 17:8-13	Moses in solidarity with Joshua and the Israelites. Aaron and Hur standing in solidarity with Moses
Psalms 122:6-9	Solidarity with others for the sake of the Lord
Matthew 1:23	Emmanuel, meaning 'God with us'. God's solidarity with the world through the incarnation
Luke 2:41-51	Jesus listening and talking to teachers
1 Corinthians 12:26	In this together. If one suffers, all suffer. If one is honoured, all rejoice.



Subsidiarity

Responsibility is taken at the most appropriate level and decisions should always be taken closest to where they will have their effect.

A central authority should only do tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level - so that all fulfil their unique roles.

Matthew 20:26-28	Jesus frames responsibility not as power grabbing, but as service and self-giving.
Acts 6:1-7	A problem was brought to the twelve apostles. They invited the people to choose their own leaders who would help them solve the problem.
Romans 12: 5-6	We are called to use our gifts and skills for the benefit of all because we are joined to each other.
1 Corinthians 12:12-31	One body, many parts.



Stewardship

The Earth was here before us and was given to us – our common home. It is God's dominion, but entrusted to us, and it is our shared responsibility to be good stewards of everything we have received – nature, one another, resources, gifts and talents.

Genesis 1:27-31	Humans were put in charge of all living creatures
Genesis 2:15	God put the man in the garden to look after it
Psalms 24:1-2	The earth belongs to God
Matthew 6:25-34	Don't worry, depend on your heavenly Father to provide all you need.
Romans 1:20	God can be known through his creation



Option for the Poor

There is to be a preferential option for those who are poor or vulnerable, so we say “Come and join in...we need you!” If the strong are separated from the weak, the strong become impoverished, since being fully human means living together, sharing a common life.

Exodus 22:20-23	Care for foreigners, widows and orphans
Leviticus 23:22	Do not harvest to the edges of your field. Leave some for the poor.
Isaiah 1:16-17	Work for justice and help people who are oppressed
Matthew 5:3-12	The Beatitudes – Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, etc.
Matthew 25: 31-46	The Son of Man judges the nations by how they treated people who were hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick and in prison.
Luke 1:46-54	Mary's song of praise (Magnificat) including God's treatment of rich and poor
James 2:1-8	Don't have favourites. God has chosen the poor to be rich