

## **KEY PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING**

Ages 7 +

### **The dignity of the human person**

God made each one of us. This makes us incredibly special. It doesn't matter who we are, who our friends are, what we own, or what we look like. What matters is that we are special because we are God's children. This means that we must treat others with respect and fairness because God made us all.

### **We are called to live as family and community**

Jesus understood that people need each other. We all need our families, friends and neighbours. He tells us that these important people can help us. Jesus says we must help them too. Doing this, we create a loving community where everyone can live life to the full.

### **Rights and responsibilities**

All God's people have the right to food, work, clothes, a home, school and medical care. These 'rights' are things that every person on earth needs in order to live a full life. But many people do not have them. Jesus wants people who enjoy these rights to help their sisters and brothers obtain their rights. It is not enough to feel badly for others. Jesus says it is our responsibility to see that everyone receives his or her rights.

### **We are called to stewardship**

The earth and all life on it is God's creation. We are called to take care of it because it is a holy gift from God and the only place we can live. When we make bad or thoughtless use of the world's resources, many people suffer. When we make good choices about how we treat other living things (people, animals, plants) we help all living things to live as God intends. Making wise choices about the care of God's creation is called good stewardship.

### **An option for the poor and vulnerable**

Every person needs food, water, work, housing, school, and medical care. Those who do not have these are poor. Our Church teaches that these sisters and brothers must be treated with extra respect and extra care and have access to what they need. Those who are not poor must share what they have with others because the gifts of God's world are for all people.

### **The dignity and rights of workers**

Everyone's work is of value. There are many kinds of work. In each job, workers deserve to be treated with respect, work safely, work reasonable hours, and earn fair wages. They deserve this because they are made by God. Our work gives us the means to live, but it is also a chance to use the talents God gives us. Our work is our way of cooperating with God to help create a better world.

### **Solidarity**

The world's peoples are interdependent. That means we need each other if we are to live. We must work together if we are to go on living. When we walk alongside our sisters and brothers

around the world and learn from each other, we call this solidarity. Even though there are huge distances between us, we are still one family—the family of God.

**Promotion of peace**

We are called to forgive others. When we have done something wrong we must try to put things right not just by saying sorry but by changing our behaviour. Jesus teaches us to live in peace with one another. He says we must forgive those who hurt us and make friends again. This is not easy and we all need to work at promoting peace in order to have one just world.