



AN INTRODUCTION



“ The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration... It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach.” *Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel, 28*



This resource is best used after you have used the ‘Liturgy and Community Pack’ with your parish, opening up the six themes of Catholic Social teaching to the parish community.

Using this Parish Plan resource will help your parish to explore how to put the six themes of Catholic social teaching into practice and respond to the needs of your local community.

Pope Francis has spoken of the “globalisation of indifference”, calling it an “illness which does so much harm in this world”. The Pope is talking about how we shut our eyes to what’s actually happening in the world, and so fail to take positive action to do something about it. Love in Action is designed to help parish communities to have the confidence to open their eyes to the needs of people beyond the worshipping parish community, and consider how they are called to respond – to live out their faith as Caritas people.

We will use the process of action affirmed by the Church, and first devised by Cardinal Cardijn, founder of the Young Christian Workers (YCW): SEE what is really happening in our local and global communities; JUDGE, reflect, analyse what is happening through a lens of faith; ACT as a result.

“ Whenever we attempt to read the signs of the times it is helpful to listen to young people and the elderly. Both represent a source of hope for every people. The elderly bring with them memory and the wisdom of experience, which warns us not to foolishly repeat our past mistakes. Young people call us to renewed and expansive hope, for they represent new directions for humanity and open us up to the future, lest we cling to a nostalgia for structures and customs which are no longer life-giving in today’s world.”

Pope Francis, The Joy of the Gospel, 108

In preparation for your first meeting – make your large table-top map of your parish (see ‘Mapping’ Sheet). Your younger members may want to get involved in preparing the meeting by making a 3D version of your parish map. You can also use the toolkit. Use ‘How to Map’ and ‘Friends and contacts’ sheets to explore your community.

(See left) So make a special effort which includes your young people and those older members of the community – and all ages in between. Consider how to gather the wisdom of those who are housebound or unable to attend meetings for other reasons.

In this resource you will find:

- Three 90-minute parish meeting guides for the leader/facilitator to help you develop a Love in Action Plan.
- Resources to help you ‘SEE’ the reality of your local area, using Community Mapping tools.
- Post cards to enable you to ‘JUDGE’ how our faith calls us to respond.
- Project Planning tools and practical ideas in the handbook to help you ‘ACT’ and support your parish planning.
- PowerPoint presentations to use in your parish meetings.

LOVE IN ACTION



MEETING ONE - OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY



“ One of the treasures is the Catholic social action which takes place locally, usually quietly but on a much greater scale than we realise... the social and pastoral mission of the Church, reaching out to those in need. We have a word which beautifully describes this practical expression of Christian love - Caritas.”

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

As you gather and chat, please take time to look at the maps. Use post it notes to mark on the map:

- Examples of social need
- Examples of social outreach (not just Catholic action – but any action supporting people in need)



God our loving Father,
from living stones, your chosen people,
you built an eternal Church to your glory.

We thank you for the gifts of your Spirit that you have given to your Church in this parish. Continue to pour on us your grace, so that together we may grow as your faithful people. Give us wisdom in our hearts so that we may come to know your will, and always seek to live out your eternal plan in our lives and our community. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

WELCOME AND PRAYER



10 mins

- Ask participants why they have gathered and what they hope to achieve.
- If necessary introduce Love in Action and the aim of creating a Parish Plan to put into practice our Catholic social teaching through social action.



15 mins

SEE

- Map: Complete your parish map
 - Consider especially those areas/issues which might have been overlooked – e.g. the housebound
- Identifying the need and response
- What, from the map, do you feel are the most pressing needs?
 - Then in twos or threes, if possible with people from your own geographical area, discuss what outcomes (change) you would like to see the Catholic community make happen.

JUDGE

Read through the six Love in Action guidelines (Principles of Catholic Social Teaching) on the postcards and/or sheet. Consider the following questions:



30 mins

- Was I aware of these guiding ideas previously?
- How might these ideas provide a framework for action?
- In what areas of my own life will they help?
- Which of the six guidelines particularly resonate with me?

Ask others

 15 mins

ACT

Look back at the needs that we identified – which principles relate to the issues you have singled out? It's important that we now get as much information as possible about these issues. Use the last 15 minutes to plan how each person will involve others before you meet again. Use the 'Friends and Contacts' and 'How 2 Map' sheets to get more comments and details about your local community. What are the real issues? This will help you choose an issue next time.



Heavenly Father, help us to see with your eyes to judge with the loving heart of your Son, Jesus Christ and through your Spirit to put love into action.

Amen.



MEETING TWO - OUR PARISH MISSION



God our loving Father,
from living stones, your chosen people,
you built an eternal Church to your glory.
We thank you for the gifts of your Spirit that you have given to your Church in this parish.
Continue to pour on us your grace, so that together we may grow as your faithful people.
Give us wisdom in our hearts so that we may come to know your will, and always seek to
live out your eternal plan in our lives and our community.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

WELCOME AND PRAYER

REFLECTION 10 mins

“ I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets,
rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own
security.

Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel, 49

Discuss


- How can we, in this community, respond to the Pope's call?
- How can we best support and encourage each other?

  15 mins

SEE

Look again at the issues from your map.

- Did you ask your friends and contacts to help you understand the issues more? What did they say?
- What are the most pressing/important needs (20 minutes)
Use concentric circles to choose:
 - Draw five concentric circles on the floor (use chalk or tape) – or on flip chart on a table-top.
 - Write down all the issues (from your map) on individual post it notes and put them around the outside of the outer circle.
 - Split into groups – in turn each group must agree one issue to move forward two spaces within the circles. They can also move back any issue one space, which another group has already moved.
 - Groups must explain their reasoning.
 - Stop when you have a few issues in the centre. (Remember to save the other issues – you can return to them to plan other responses later).

Use the 'Look Closer' sheet in the toolkit to examine your chosen issues more carefully.  30 mins



MEETING TWO - OUR PARISH MISSION

 10 mins

JUDGE


- Take the six postcards – recap on the guidelines.

ACT

- Which Caritas Guidelines most closely link to your chosen issues?
- What do the guidelines call you to do? How do we act in love as a Caritas people?
- Is there any preparation you can do between today and when you meet next time to plan your action?

 15 mins

Invite people to offer intercessory prayers for any issues which have been discussed.

 Heavenly Father, help us to see with your eyes, to judge with the loving heart of your Son, Jesus Christ, and through your Spirit, to put love into action.

Amen.

 5 mins

LOVE IN ACTION




MEETING THREE - OUR LOVE IN ACTION RESPONSE



“As a community, the Church must practice love. Love thus needs to be organised if it is to be an ordered service to the community.”

Pope Benedict XVI, *God is Love*, 20



WELCOME AND PRAYER  10 mins

God our loving Father,
from living stones, your chosen people, you built an eternal Church to your glory.
We thank you for the gifts of your Spirit that you have given to your Church in this parish.
Continue to pour on us your grace, so that together we may grow as your faithful people.
Give us wisdom in our hearts so that we may come to know your will, and always seek to live out your eternal plan in our lives and our community.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Over the last two gatherings we have been following the 'Pastoral Cycle': See, Judge, Act. First we looked together, through compassionate eyes. Then we judged with a faithful heart. Now we act together in love.

ASK

? What can we do as a parish? Use the two feet of 'Love in Action' to decide upon at least one 'justice' action and one 'charity' action in response to your chosen issue.

 20 mins

Roots and fruits

 20 mins

Once you have decided upon your responses, use the 'Caritas Tree' sheet to begin to identify the aims of the project and the resources you will need.



Invite people to offer intercessory prayers for any issues which have been discussed.

 5 mins

Heavenly Father,
help us to see with your eyes,
to judge with the loving heart of your Son,
Jesus Christ, and through your Spirit, to put love into action.

Amen.

 30 mins **Getting started**

Use the Plan of Action Sheet, to make a plan for each 'action'.



THE DIGNITY AND EQUALITY OF EACH HUMAN PERSON

Every human being is seen as equal. They're lovingly and beautifully made in God's image and likeness. The other principles flow from this.

THE CALL TO PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY

Human beings exist in relation to one another. We're called to live with others, aware of others, communicating, sharing, enjoying moments of joy and being there together in times of sadness. All of us are called to participate, to join in, to work alongside others for the common good of all.

A PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR

Caring for those living in poverty, both in our local neighbourhoods and throughout the world, is a fundamental duty of us all. However, the preferential option for the poor goes further than this. In the Gospels, time and again, Jesus shows a preferential option for the poor – putting them first, giving them special importance, thinking of their needs and enabling them to have their rightful place in the world. It is not enough simply to think of those living in poverty and try to help them. The voice of people living in poverty needs to be heard. We must enable them to be a full part of the decision making process. We must enable those living in poverty to play a full, active role in society.

THE DIGNITY AND RIGHTS OF WORKERS

The right to work, to have a job, to earn money and so support your family are all connected to the dignity of each individual. Catholic social teaching affirms that human beings are not merely a commodity, a tool as part of a process to make things. Human beings are greater than any thing. They deserve a fair wage and proper working conditions.

SOLIDARITY AMONG PEOPLES AND THE PROMOTION OF PEACE

We seek the good of one another, aware of our dependence on one another. Pope Saint John Paul II said, "[Solidarity] is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good." (The social concern of the Church, 38.) Peace flows from this. We are called to live honestly with one another, working together in love for the good of all. This is what will lead to true peace.

CARE FOR CREATION

God created the earth. Often, the way we treat creation leads to the harm both of it, and of those living on it. Our destruction of the earth for quick gain has repercussions for animals, for ourselves now, our eco systems and the generations that will come after us. We need to treat the earth with respect.

LOVE IN ACTION



THE TWO FEET OF LOVE IN ACTION



“The Church must always be known for its closeness to the peoples of this earth in their struggle for dignity and freedom”

Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream*

ACTION

- Work in small groups.
- Each person in the group chooses one issue from the 'Caritas Guidelines' exercise.
- Brainstorm at least one 'justice' action and one 'charity' action in response to your chosen issue(s). To help you – read through the examples in the 'two feet of love in action' below.

“The Conscience is called by this social teaching to recognise and fulfill the obligations of **Justice** and **Charity**

Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church, no.83

- We step with the Social Justice foot when:
 - We work to address the root causes of problems facing our communities, advocating for just public policies helping to change the social structures that cause suffering and injustice.
 - We work for peace and justice and work for long-term change.
 - We support the efforts of others to transform their communities.

- We step with the Charitable Works foot when we work to aid or assist others to meet their immediate, short-term needs.
 - Examples include engaging in direct service of providing food, clothing, shelter, or monetary assistance to help those in need.



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“**Social Justice**... concerns the social, political and economic aspects and above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions.

Compendium no.201

“To [those who lack what they need to live a dignified life] are proclaimed glad tidings that God loves them... and comes to visit them through the **charitable works** that the disciples of Christ do in his name... As we can read in Matthew 25, we shall all be judged on this.”

Pope Francis, *Address to pastoral convention*



PLAN YOUR SOCIAL ACTION



ACTION

- Set your goals (fruits)
- Identify your ingredients (roots)
- Consider what support (trunk) and networks (branches) will help your work
- You can also use the 'Plan of Action' sheet

FRUIT

What outcomes/results would you like to see?

[Dashed box for writing outcomes/results]

BRANCHES

What are the networks and relationships which will help the work to grow?

TRUNK

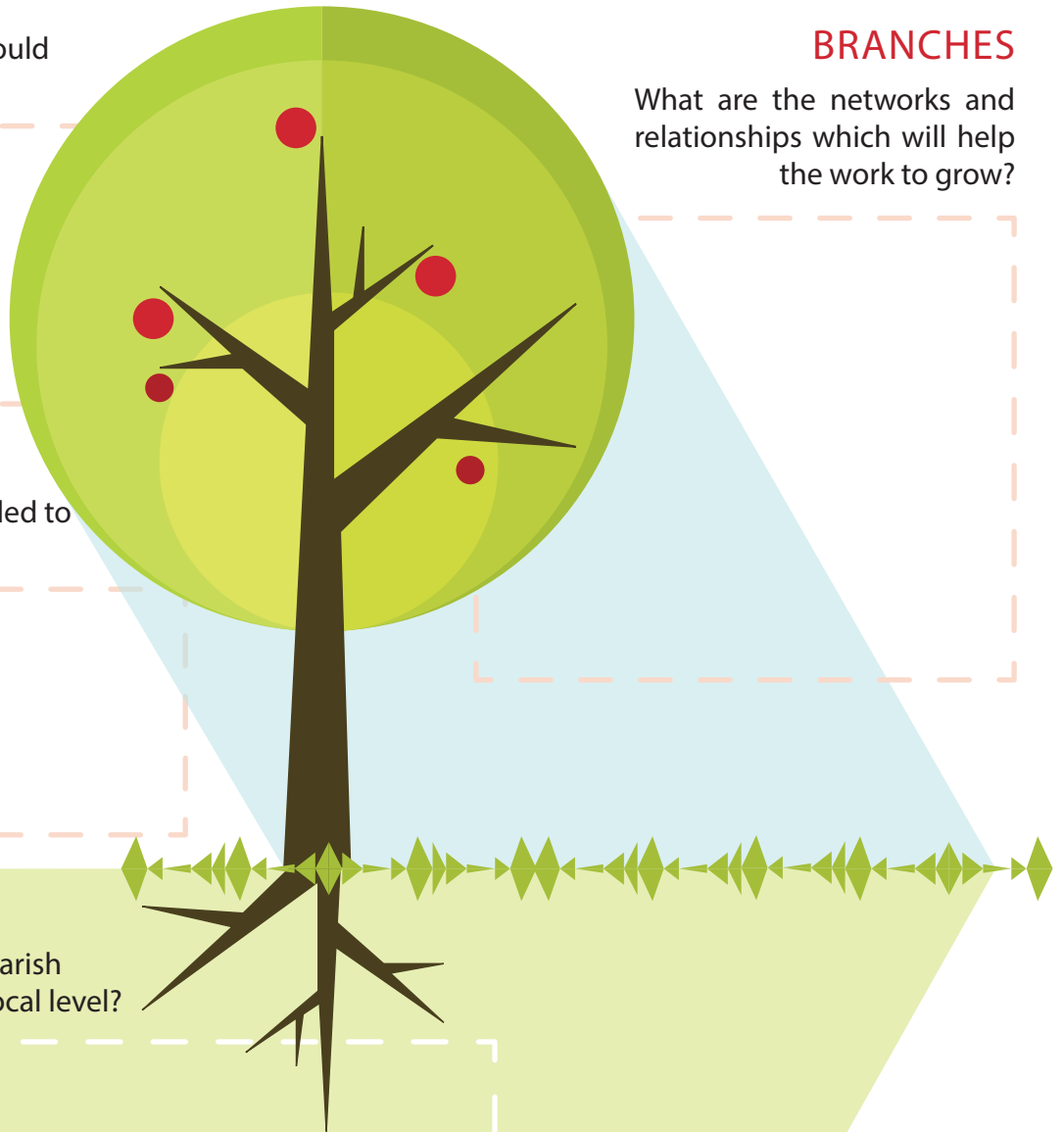
What other support is needed to help the local work?

[Dashed box for writing support needed]

ROOTS

What ingredients can the parish community contribute at local level?

[Dashed box for writing ingredients]



LOVE IN ACTION



CARITAS GUIDELINES



“ The Church’s social thought is primarily positive: it offers proposals, it works for change and in this sense it constantly points to the hope born of the loving heart of Jesus Christ.”

Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel, 183



DIGNITY



COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION



CREATION



SOLIDARITY AND PEACE



OPTION FOR THE POOR



DIGNITY OF WORKERS

CARITAS GUIDELINES

- Each individual chooses one principle of Catholic social teaching.
- In twos or threes brainstorm issues of concern in society/world that contradict each principle chosen by your group.
- Agree together on three issues for each principle chosen and write them down.