

THIS WEEK IN SCHOOL

You are invited to think about:

- How followers of Jesus are called to treat others with love and respect
- How Catholic social teaching can help us to be just and fair in our treatment of others
- How Jesus treated the Samaritan woman at the well with dignity and compassion

KEY WORDS

Migrant: A person who moves from one place to another to seek a better life.

Refugee: A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution or a natural disaster.

THEME 6: SOCIAL JUSTICE | LESSON 1

Jesus Teaches Us to Act Justly

THE MIGRANT CRISIS AND THE IRISH NAVY'S RESPONSE

The 'European migrant crisis' refers to a period beginning in 2015 when large numbers of people arrived in Europe after travelling across the Mediterranean Sea or overland from Africa, Asia and the Middle East. This movement of people is still happening. Many of these people risk their lives trying to make their way to Europe in the hope of finding safety and peace and the chance to start a new life. Some flee their homes in search of a better life because of the poverty in their own country. These people are called **migrants**. Others are forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution or a natural disaster. These people are called **refugees**. Very often, these people sell everything they own in order to pay smugglers to get them into Europe. Often, the smugglers are only interested in the people's money and have no regard for their safety. They transport these desperate people across rough seas in poorly made boats that are overcrowded and not equipped for such purposes. Every year, many of these overcrowded boats sink, resulting in the deaths of thousands of men, women and children.

In response to this migrant crisis, the Irish Government asked men and women who serve in the Navy to go to the Mediterranean Sea and rescue as many people as they could. On board the Irish vessels, the migrants receive food, water and any medical treatment they need. Between May 2015 and June 2016, the Irish Navy rescued 15,621 people from the Mediterranean Sea.

THINK ABOUT IT ...

- Do you think the Irish Navy is right to help the migrants and refugees who are crossing the Mediterranean Sea? Why or why not?



A group of refugees and other migrants landing off the coast of Greece in 2015

MANY PEOPLE NEED TO BE RESCUED

It is very clear that migrants and refugees who find themselves in such desperate circumstances need to be rescued. But other people in very different situations also need to be rescued, even people who live in Ireland. Sometimes people end up in difficult situations because of unjust or unfair circumstances over which they have no control. For example, when a factory or other business closes down, the people who work there may no longer be able to afford to keep their home or feed their family. In Ireland in recent years, many people were left homeless because of the downturn in the economy. In some developing countries, people are starving because a lack of rainfall prevents them from growing crops with which to feed themselves and their families. People in such situations also need to be rescued.

JOURNAL EXERCISE

- Imagine you have to leave your home in a hurry to go to a place you do not know, and that you have been given just five minutes to pack. Draw a picture in your Religious Education journal to show how you are feeling.

Read this excerpt from the story of Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman at the well:

Jesus and the Woman at the Well (John 4:7-15)

A Samaritan woman came to draw some water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink of water.' (His disciples had gone into town to buy food.)

The woman answered, 'You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan – so how can you ask me for a drink?' (Jews will not use the same cups and bowls that Samaritans use.)

Jesus answered, 'If you only knew what God gives and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would ask him, and he would give you life-giving water.'

'Sir,' the woman said, 'you don't have a bucket, and the well is deep. Where would you get that life-giving water? It was our ancestor Jacob who gave us this well; he and his children and his flocks all drank from it. You don't claim to be greater than Jacob, do you?'

Jesus answered, 'Those who drink this water will get thirsty again, but those who drink the water that I will give them will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give them will become in them a spring which will provide them with life-giving water and give them eternal life.'

'Sir,' the woman said, 'give me that water! Then I will never be thirsty again, nor will I have to come here to draw water.'



FOR MEMORISATION

Jesus said, 'Those who drink the water that I will give them will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give them will become in them a spring which will provide them with life-giving water and give them eternal life.' (John 4:14)



KEY WORDS

Society: The larger community in which we live, as distinct from the smaller communities or neighbourhoods to which we belong.

Social justice: When a society is fair and just in its treatment of people, we say that social justice exists in that society.

Social teaching of the Catholic Church: The Catholic Church's teaching about acting with justice (fairness) towards other people.

Social injustice: When a society is unfair and unjust in its treatment of people, we say that there is social injustice in that society.

THINK ABOUT IT ...

- What do you think Jesus meant when he spoke about 'life-giving water'?

CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO WORK FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Jesus treated all people with respect, fairness and compassion. He reached out to those who were in need and he treated everyone as equals. In other words, he practised **social justice**.

The Church calls us to do the same. The **social teaching of the Catholic Church** provides us with guidelines for how we can work to change injustices that we see in our **society**, such as poverty, homelessness and the neglect or pollution of the environment. We respond to the invitation to work for social justice when we treat others fairly, when we share what we have with those in need, and when we support and stand up for people who are excluded or treated badly in our society.

There are many organisations working for social justice in Ireland and elsewhere. Christian Aid is an international aid agency that brings together members of different Christian Churches to work against inequality and injustice in society, both here in Ireland and overseas. The social justice charity Trócaire frequently works alongside Christian Aid to promote peace and justice as well as care of the environment throughout the world.

Our planet needs to be rescued and helped if it is to survive. Working to protect the natural world that is all around us and on which we all depend for our survival is also one of the ways in which we can work for social justice.

THIS WEEK

The children explored the concept of social justice and the Church's teaching that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. They learned that all Christians are called to challenge injustices such as poverty and homelessness, to challenge systems that exclude or disadvantage people, and to work to put an end to actions that damage or destroy the environment. They looked at the examples of Trócaire and Christian Aid, both of which work to end injustices in society. The children also heard the story of Jesus speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well – a woman whom others had ignored and looked down upon.

Work together to complete the sentences in this reflection:

Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.
 Life is beauty, admire it.
 Life is a dream, realise it.
 Life is a challenge, _____.
 Life is a promise, _____.
 Life is a song, _____.
 Life is precious, _____.

DID YOU KNOW?

When we work for social justice, we are working to build the Kingdom of God on earth, as Jesus asked us to.

TIME TOGETHER**Chat Together**

What **social injustice** would you most like to see an end to in our society? What could you do to work against this injustice, or to support those who suffer as a result of this injustice?

Pray Together

Help us, Lord, to build a world where everyone is treated equally and with dignity, as Jesus asked us to. Amen.

Be Just

Try always to be fair and just in your dealings with others, and to challenge situations of injustice wherever you see them.



THIS WEEK IN SCHOOL

You are invited to think about:

- How your attitude can affect the way you relate to other people
- How the Beatitudes can help you to be happy and bring happiness to others

KEY WORDS

Attitudes: People’s thoughts and feelings about other people and things in the world around them.

Beatitudes: A set of good attitudes and values that Jesus urged his followers to put into practice in their lives.

Spiritually poor: People who are ‘spiritually poor’ know and are prepared to admit that they can be better people than they are. People who are ‘spiritually poor’ are also humble.

Humble: A humble person is someone who recognises that all of their talents and achievements are gifts from God. Humble people never boast about themselves or their achievements.

Persecute: To treat someone badly because of who they are or what they believe.

THEME 6: SOCIAL JUSTICE | LESSON 2

Jesus Teaches Us the Beatitudes

RECALL THE STORY: ‘A BAD DAY FOR JOE!’

- How did Joe treat others in the story? What words would you use to describe his behaviour?
- Who did Joe affect by his actions? How did his actions affect these people?
- Did Joe always behave in this way, or was this behaviour unusual for him?

THINK ABOUT IT ...

- Do you sometimes feel as Joe did in the story? Why do you think that happens?

JOURNAL EXERCISE

- Draw an outline of yourself in your Religious Education journal. Add colours, symbols and/or words inside or around the outline to indicate what you are like when you are being your best self.

OUR ATTITUDES INFLUENCE OUR ACTIONS

Our **attitudes** are the thoughts and feelings we have about other people and things in the world around us. Our attitudes affect how we see other people and they influence our actions – the things we do. Attitudes can be positive or negative. Good attitudes usually lead to good actions, whereas bad attitudes tend to result in bad actions.

- In the story ‘A Bad Day for Joe!’, what was Joe’s attitude to everything?
- What other attitudes – good and bad – can you name?



THE BEATITUDES

In the **Beatitudes**, Jesus presents us with a set of good attitudes and values that he wants us to put into practice in our lives. The word 'Beatitude' can be split into two words: 'be' and 'attitude'. The Beatitudes are 'good ways of being' in the world. Through his own words and actions, Jesus showed us how to live the Beatitudes. Jesus tells us that when we live by these attitudes, we will make ourselves and others happy.

The Beatitudes are found in a passage known as the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel according to Matthew.

BEATITUDE
= BE +
ATTITUDE

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)

Happy are those who know they are **spiritually poor**;
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

Happy are those who mourn;
God will comfort them!

Happy are those who are **humble**;
they will receive what God has promised!

Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God
requires;
God will satisfy them fully!

Happy are those who are merciful to others;
God will be merciful to them!

Happy are the pure in heart;
they will see God!

Happy are those who work for peace;
they will be called children of God!

Happy are those who are **persecuted** because they do
what God requires;
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

Happy are you when people insult you and persecute you
and tell all kinds of evil lies against you because you are
my followers. Be happy and glad, for a great reward is
kept for you in heaven.



THINK ABOUT IT ...

- What would the world be like if everyone lived by the attitudes that Jesus set out in the Beatitudes?
- What would the world be like if no one lived by these attitudes?

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE LAW OF LOVE

The Beatitudes are guidelines for how the followers of Jesus are to live their lives. But long before Jesus came on earth, God gave people another set of guidelines to help them live good lives. These guidelines were called the Ten Commandments. How many of the Ten Commandments can you remember?

Jesus also gave us a New Commandment. Unscramble the words below to read the key message in it:

eovl noe
hato ren

JOURNAL EXERCISE

- Record using words and/or images some of the ways in which people can live by the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments and the New Commandment today.

THE CAPUCHIN DAY CENTRE FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

In 1969 Brother Kevin Crowley founded the Capuchin Day Centre for Homeless People in Bow Street, Dublin. Today, with the help of many volunteers, the Centre provides over 700 meals each day and over 1,500 food parcels each Wednesday to the homeless and poor of Dublin.

The Capuchin Day Centre for Homeless People is an example of the Beatitudes in action. In other words, the good work that takes place at this Centre shows the values and attitudes that Jesus taught being put into practice. The Centre brings happiness to those who provide the service, as well as to those who avail of it – just as Jesus promised would happen when people respond with love to one another.

THINK ABOUT IT ...

- Which Beatitudes do you think you would see in action on a visit to the Capuchin Day Centre?

**FOR MEMORISATION**

Choose three of the Beatitudes and learn them by heart.

THIS WEEK

The children learned that their attitudes can affect their actions and the way they relate to others. Good attitudes tend to produce good behaviours towards others, whereas bad attitudes often lead to bad actions. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us the Beatitudes – a set of good attitudes and values that he wants his followers to live by. The Beatitudes, along with the Ten Commandments and the New Commandment, can help us to live good lives. If we live according to these, we will be happy and we will bring happiness to others.

Read the poem 'Beatitudes' together.

Beatitudes

If you can hold great riches,
Never letting them hold you;
If you can hear your praises being sung
And still give God his due;

If you can help the slow and weak
And raise the one who falls,
And quickly come with helping hand
When anybody calls;

If you can have a heart that's free
From selfishness and sin,
And keep that heart so God's great light
May shine more strongly in;

If you can give forgiveness
To the one who hurt your heart;
If you can build a bridge and bring
Together those apart;

If you can say – this thing is wrong
Or that is right to do,
And stand your ground though other hearts
Would pain and punish you;

If you can be a friend to all,
To all be strong and true,
Then God who made the world
Will make his Kingdom come in you.

DID YOU KNOW?

BEATITUDE = BE + ATTITUDE.
In other words, each Beatitude teaches us how we should 'be' in the world as followers of Jesus.

TIME TOGETHER**Respond and Share**

Think about ways in which people in your family already live the Beatitudes – the 'Be' attitudes that Jesus taught us! Write about one of those ways in your Religious Education journal. Then share what you have written with your parent or guardian.

Pray Together

Jesus, our friend and teacher, help us to live according to your Beatitudes. Help us to follow you, no matter the cost. Amen.

Begin!

Begin today to consider how you could live your life according to the Beatitudes.



THIS WEEK IN SCHOOL

You are invited to think about:

- How God, human beings and the natural world are connected
- How human actions contribute to the destruction of the earth
- How we can respect and care for the earth, as God asked us to

KEY WORDS

Evolution: The process by which different organisms and life forms are thought to have developed over the course of the earth's history.

Encyclical: A letter written by the Pope to all the members of the Church throughout the world.

Laudato Si': An Italian phrase meaning 'Praise be to you'. *Laudato Si'* is the name of a letter (encyclical) written by Pope Francis and addressed to 'every person living on this planet'.

THEME 6: SOCIAL JUSTICE | LESSON 3

We Are Called to Care for Our Common Home

ALL LIFE ON EARTH IS CONNECTED

The earliest forms of life began on planet Earth around 3.8 billion years ago. Human life came much later. Life in all its forms has grown and developed ever since – a process that we call **evolution**.

As far back as the nineteenth century, scientists such as Charles Darwin started to realise that all living things and all species are connected in a great web of life. Since then, scientists have continued to gather evidence to show the connections that exist between all living things on earth.

As Christians, we accept that the world evolved over the centuries, while at the same time recognising that God is the source of *all* life. The saints were very aware of this. For example, St Francis of Assisi called birds, fish, sheep, the moon and the stars his 'brothers and sisters'.

THINK ABOUT IT ...

- How might people's attitude to caring for the earth and all its creatures change if we looked upon every living creature as our 'brother and sister' – as St Francis of Assisi did?



St Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds by Giotto (c. 1300)

Read the following account of the creation of the world and of the different living creatures that inhabit the world as it is told in the Book of Genesis in the Bible.

The Story of Creation (Adapted from Genesis 1:1-31)

In the beginning, there was nothing. There was no sky, no sun, no moon and no stars. There was just water moving around in a dark, empty space. God did not want things to be this way. So God said, 'Let there be light!' – and light appeared. God called the light 'day' and the darkness 'night'.

Then God decided to separate the water in the white clouds above from the water on the earth below. So God created the sky.

Then God said, 'Let dry land appear.' And it happened. Dry land appeared from underneath the water. God named the dry land 'earth' and the water that was gathered together 'sea'.

Then God said, 'Let all kinds of plants grow on the earth.' And it happened. There was every kind of plant that you could imagine! God looked at everything he had made: the light, the sky, the sea, the land and the plants. God was pleased with all that he had made. It was good.

Next, God made the bright, warm sun in the sky to shine during the day. After that, God made the glowing moon and the twinkling stars to shine at night. Now the sky was not bare – there would always be something in it! God was pleased with what he saw.

Then God said, 'Let the water be filled with all kinds of creatures. And let beautiful birds fly in the sky above the earth.' So God created amazing animals to live in the water, and all kinds of birds to fly across the sky. God looked at all he had made: the sun, the moon and the stars, the creatures of the sea and the creatures of the air. God was pleased with everything. It was all good.

But God knew that the world needed something else – something special. The world needed something that was *very* good. So, God made people. God wanted the people to care for the fish and the birds and the animals, and God wanted them to look after one another too. God made the people to be like himself. They would be good and kind and loving. They would all be good at different things but, together, they would use the things that they were good at to take care of the world. When God saw all of this, he knew that it wasn't just good. People were special. It was very good.





- How did God feel after creating the light, sky, sea, land and plants?
- Why did God create people?
- What did God want people to do?
- According to this story, why are people the most special element of all God's creation?

LAUDATO SI': ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

In 2015 Pope Francis wrote an important letter, called an **encyclical**, to every person on the planet. He called the letter ***Laudato Si'***, which is an old Italian phrase that means 'Praise be to you'.

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis reminds us that the earth, which he calls 'our common home', is God's gift to us. It is full of beauty and wonder, and it belongs to everyone. The Pope also tells us that the earth has never been so badly treated and damaged as it is now. Human activities such as pollution of the environment, careless disposal of waste, and also climate change and the lack of clean water, all threaten our planet.

But Pope Francis reassures us that it is not too late – we *can* change our behaviour, and we *can* make a new start in caring for our planet and for all the creatures that live on it.

Pope Francis urges the whole human family to work together to care for our planet. He asks us to take simple actions to change our behaviour and to show our love for our planet and for one another. When we adopt the right attitude and look upon the earth as 'our common home', we will have a new care and respect for it, and look after it as God asked us to.

JOURNAL EXERCISE

- What do you think of Pope Francis' letter to the world, reminding us of the need to care for the earth, 'our common home'? Do you agree with him? Write your thoughts on this in your Religious Education journal. Mention some of the things you think people could do to take better care of the earth.

FOR MEMORISATION

Creator God,
you made the world and
everything in it.
Praise be to you!

THIS WEEK

The children recalled the story of creation in the Book of Genesis, and how God gave humans the responsibility to care for the earth and all its creatures. Instead, as Pope Francis reminds us in his encyclical letter *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, people have exploited and damaged the earth and its resources. The Pope urges us to look upon the world as 'our common home' and to respect and care for it as God asked us to. We have a responsibility to take care of the world not only for ourselves but for the generations to come.

Read the poem 'Environmental Change' together. A boy named Patrick Barrett from County Mayo wrote this poem for a poetry competition run by Trócaire in 2015.

Environmental Change

Temperatures are rising,
Sea levels are rising too,
I don't own a canoe,
So what do you suggest I do?

I could move to Scandinavia,
And live amongst the ice and snow,
But if the temperatures keep rising,
All of that too will go.

I suppose I could recycle,
Turn the lights off as I go,
Maybe plant a tree or two.
It might help, you never know.

Environmental change is happening,
It is something we can't outrun.
Can we explain to our children
Just what we have done?

DID YOU KNOW?

Science and Sacred Scripture are complementary rather than contradictory in helping us to understand the wonder of God's creation.

TIME TOGETHER**Chat Together**

Talk about the simple steps that you can take to care for our planet, such as reducing the amount of paper you use, reducing food waste, recycling, and using less water.

Respond and Share

Make a list of three things you will do in your home to help to take care of our planet. Share what you have written with your parent or guardian.

Pray Together

Loving God, help us to care for our planet and everything on it as you asked us to. Amen.

Be Responsible

Make a commitment to always reduce, reuse, recycle or repair instead of being wasteful.

