

Urban poverty: a focus on Lima

A resource for RE teachers, chaplains, youth leaders

Leader's notes

This resource provides a study of Lima, Peru with a particular focus on urban poverty and wealth. It also draws on some key principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST).

It includes five case studies and accompanying postcards featuring the *Changemakers* of Lima - a group of children and young people driving change in communities across the city of Lima.

The postcards use Augmented Reality (AR) through the use of Zappar, a free app. This is not necessary for the session but can be used to enhance it.



Aim

Using the city of Lima as an example, students should understand:

- what urban poverty looks like and some of its causes
- how Catholic Social Teaching relates to urban poverty
- ways that they and other young people can take action to make a difference in the world.

Time

30-40 mins

Materials needed

- case study sheets - one case study per group
- postcards - one set per group
- CST quote sheet - one per group

Preparation

- print out case study cards and CST quote sheets (see appendix)
- order free sets of postcards from the [CAFOD shop](#) or download and print from the [CAFOD website](#)

Optional

- if available, book tablets/smartphones for the session - at least one per group.
- download Zappar from the App Store or Google Play on to the tablets/smartphones.

Curriculum links

RE KS3: Sources of wisdom and authority, the human community, stewardship, love of neighbour.

RE KS4: The magisterium, human dignity, CST, the work of CAFOD, human rights, religion, rights and social justice, and perspectives of wealth.

Bitesize sessions

If time is short, here are some 10-minute sessions you can run with your group.

Pick a postcard

Scatter multiple copies of the postcards around the room. Give three minutes to circulate. Ask each person to stand by the postcard that strikes them most. They should be prepared to share their reasons. Ask: What strikes you most about the photo/story?

Rights of the child

Look at the postcards in conjunction with the UN Convention on the rights of the child - what right(s) does each postcard story relate to?

Ranking activity

In small groups, rank the postcards according to which story is... the most inspiring? ...most urgent?

Catholic Social Teaching (CST)

Read through the list of CST quotes. Choose one to go with each postcard. Explain choices.

Passions

Explain that the young people featured in the postcards are doing things they enjoy and are passionate about. What's your passion? If you were featured in a similar way, how would you want to be photographed? How can you use your passion to improve the world?

Stories of change

Explain that the *Change makers* are using their passions to drive change in communities across Lima, a city being hit hard by climate change, and facing many challenges. Read the stories (use the postcard or case study sheet). What would you change about your community? What would you change about the world? Encourage the group to think on a global scale.

Starter



Ask the group to come up with a tweet for each image, either in groups or individually. They should aim to describe the image in as much detail as possible, using a maximum of 280 characters.

Main input

Explain that both images are of Lima. One was taken in La Capilla, an informal settlement in southern Lima. The other was taken in a much wealthier district of central Lima. As the photos show, Lima is a city of extremes and inequality, with high levels of wealth and extreme poverty existing side by side.

After Cairo, Lima is the second largest desert city in the world. Families living in informal settlements like La Capilla often lack access to crucial services like water and safe spaces for children to play. The city is vulnerable to natural disasters like earthquakes and heavy rains, which can lead to landslides. Lima gets most of its water from the Rimac river and other smaller rivers with sources high in the Andes. But the city is running out of water due to increased demand, rising temperatures and melting glaciers. Predictions suggest that Lima could run out of drinking water in less than 20 years.

Explain that today the group will find out about five young people who are aiming to change Lima - show the five postcards. The young people in the postcards are doing things they enjoy and are passionate about. They are using their passions to drive change in poor communities across Lima.

Main activity

Divide the group into five smaller groups, each with a task sheet, one case study and a copy of the Catholic Social Teaching (CST) quote sheet.

Explain that following on from the 2018 Synod on *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, the Vatican news agency has commissioned them to produce a short news film about 'young people making a difference in the world'. Their task today is to research and prepare a presentation of their ideas for the film. They should draw on information in the case study and the CST quote sheet provided. They should include at least one CST quote relevant to the film.

If needed, explain what CST and a synod are (see the task sheet).

Afterwards, each group shares its presentation.

For a more detailed study of Lima, groups could work through each case study on a carousel.

Optional: If smartphones/tablets are available, invite the group to use the Zappar app to scan the postcards to reveal a video of each young person.

Plenary

Around the world, young people like the *Change makers* of Lima, are doing amazing things to make our world a better place. Think about what you already do or could do to make the world a better place. What are your skills, talents and passions, and how could you use them to make a difference in society?

End the session by giving out the postcards. Ask the group to take them home and show them to at least one other person. Encourage them to download the Zappar AR app to see the postcards 'come to life'.

Task sheet

Following the 2018 Synod on *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, the Vatican news agency has commissioned you to produce a short news film about 'young people making a difference in the world'. **Your task is to prepare a presentation of your ideas for the film.** You can present them in whatever way you wish but must show that your research has used the case study and the CST quote sheet provided. Include at least one CST quote relevant to your film.

Questions to help you

As you read the case study:

- *put yourself in their shoes - what would you want to be reported most about Lima? What changes would you want the most?*
- *think about factors that affect urban poverty, such as water scarcity, natural hazards, climate change and migration*
- *think about the causes of poverty, such as climate change and lack of access to education.*

As you read the CST quotes:

- *which quotes stand out and inspire you?*
- *which quote relates to your case study?*
- *which quote best supports your news film on 'young people making a difference in the world'?*

Decide the angle for the news film:

- *come up with a title*
- *think about who will present the news film and why*
- *decide where will it be shown (TV, online, event) and why.*

Prepare your research:

- *you could include maps, statistics, sketches, photographs, film, etc*
- *you may wish to annotate the photographs included in your case study, to illustrate key points*
- *you could think about how you would advertise your news film, for example, produce a short voiceover for cartoon strip*

Background information

A synod is a body of bishops that assists and advises the pope on various topics. The 2018 Synod focused on *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*. In recent times, a range of people are consulted before a synod. At the meeting, bishops, experts and others give contributions, which are discussed in smaller groups. In the 2018 Synod, young people contributed to the discussions and shared their experiences. A final document is written, which usually feeds into an 'apostolic exhortation', a teaching document from the pope. After the 2018 Synod, the exhortation was called 'Christ is Alive!'

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is a collection of writings that read the 'signs of the times' in the light of scripture. It offers wisdom and insights on living the gospel in today's world.

Lima is a city of extremes. High levels of wealth and extreme poverty and inequality exist side by side. After Cairo, Lima is the second largest desert city in the world. Families living in informal settlements often lack access to crucial services like water and safe spaces for children to play. The city is vulnerable to natural disasters like earthquakes and heavy rains, which can lead to landslides. Lima gets most of its water from the river Rimac and other smaller rivers with sources high in the Andes. But the city is running out of water due to increased demand, rising temperatures and melting glaciers. Predictions suggest that Lima could run out of drinking water in less than 20 years.

Case study 1: Daniela

Themes: migration, water scarcity, global inequalities, poverty, urban change.



Location

Daniela lives in La Capilla in the south of Lima.

Built high into the steep hillside, La Capilla is one of 300 townships in the Rinconada de Pamplona zone, which is located within San Juan de Miraflores.

San Juan de Miraflores is one of the 'new towns', formed by high numbers of people migrating from other towns and from the countryside. It is one of the poorest districts in Lima. On average 19-22 per cent of the population live in poverty, with poverty rates increasing significantly for those living up the steep hillsides.

What are the main challenges?

La Capilla is an informal settlement. Most residents here lack property rights and sewage systems. Water is a major challenge here. With no running water in the community, water is delivered by huge trucks. But sometimes the water trucks don't come, which means people don't have water. And after heavy rain, the water trucks struggle to make it up the steep hillsides.

Residents in these poorer neighbourhoods can end up paying eleven times more for water than people in districts with access to public networks.¹ And when the trucks do come, they deposit the water in tanks that are open to the dust and dirt. Water quality is therefore extremely poor.

Daniela has never had running water at home. She says:

"You don't really know when the water will arrive... Like everybody we feel uncomfortable when water doesn't come. We need water for everything - to wash, to cook, everything".

What are the solutions?

CAFOD is supporting local experts (from CAFOD partner, DESCO) to help young people in their fight for water, amongst other things. DESCO have developed a mobile app, to collect information from residents about their access to and quality of water. The information will be presented to Congress (parliament) and used as evidence to campaign for better rights/ access to water.

Daniela and her friends have been trained to use this app. They are going to their neighbours' houses to collect this information on their phones, to use in their fight for water.

¹ This statistic comes from a survey that was carried out by DESCO (CAFOD's partner) in four different communities, regarding water access, cost and quality.



Daniela, at her family's water tank.



A water truck, delivering water to residents in La Capilla.

Case study 2: Paolo

Themes: migration, global inequalities, climate change, natural hazards, poverty, urban change.



Location

Paolo lives in La Capilla in the south of Lima.

Built high into the steep hillside, La Capilla is one of 300 townships in the Rinconada de Pamplona zone, which is located within San Juan de Miraflores.

San Juan de Miraflores is one of the 'new towns', formed by high numbers of people migrating from other towns and from the countryside. It is one of the poorest districts in Lima. On average 19-22% of the population live in poverty, with poverty rates increasing significantly for those living up the steep hillsides.

What are the main challenges?

La Capilla is an informal settlement. Most residents here lack property rights. As well as problems accessing water, most of the houses are built using precarious materials (such as mats, wood laminates and corrugated roofs). They are on extremely steep slopes over self-built stone platforms known as 'pircas'. This makes them extremely vulnerable, especially as they are already at risk from climate change and natural hazards such as flooding, earthquakes and landslides.

What are the solutions?

CAFOD is supporting local climate change experts (from CAFOD partner, DESCO) to raise awareness and help young people develop their skills to reduce the risks from climate change and natural disasters.

Paolo's community is well organised - they are already making improvements to their neighbourhood, and DESCO is supporting them to further reduce their risks. Along with others in the neighbourhood, Paolo volunteers to do community service every Sunday, to help improve his neighbourhood and make it a safer place to live.

Paolo says: *"For me, community service is really important. It's something that you do to improve your community to help it to grow and develop"*.

Paolo is volunteering to build staircases. The paths in his community are very steep. So, without staircases, it is difficult for people to move around. If there is a fire or a natural disaster like an earthquake or landslide, the staircases help people move down the hills quickly to safety.

Paolo and his neighbours are also building retention walls, which are crucial to protect people from land or mud slides.



The view from La Capilla



Paolo, building a staircase, with a retention wall in the background.

Case study 3: Abigail

Themes: migration, climate change, global inequalities, poverty, water scarcity, urban change.



Location

Abigail lives in the Lomas de Carabayllo, a mountainous district towards the north of Lima. The Lomas de Carabayllo has high levels of poverty. It is also one of the most polluted districts of northern Lima. It suffers from illegal dumping of waste and lots of mining (much of which is illegal).²

What are the main challenges?

This area of Lima benefits from the Lomas de la Primavera (the Lomas), a chain of mountains known as Lima's "green lung". Mist comes up from the Pacific and nurtures vegetation and natural life here, making it a crucial ecosystem in the hyper-arid city of Lima. Pre-Incan artefacts have also been found here.

Despite its ecological and archeological importance, the Lomas is under threat. People are grabbing the land and using fake documentation to sell plots of land to people desperate to find a place to live in the city. Mining companies are also threatening to start mining.

What are the solutions?

CAFOD is supporting local climate change experts (from CAFOD partner, CIDAP) to work with different communities in the district, focusing on conservation of the Lomas as well as reducing risks from climate-change.

In a new project, four local schools have been supported to set up eco-brigades.

Abigail has joined one of these eco-brigades. The eco-brigadiers are taking on the challenge of tackling climate change by defending their green spaces. They have just started clearing an area at school so they can create a garden. They have also started working on a forestation project in the Lomas, planting small plants to protect the environment and keep it clean for the future. Abigail says: *"It's important to protect the Lomas because they give us our oxygen, they help our wellbeing and help our planet"*.

An innovative technology, known as 'fog catchers', is also being used in the Lomas. With just a small investment, the fog catchers optimise Lima's fog by collecting large quantities of water. Moisture collects on the fabric, runs down along guttering at the bottom, before it is collected in a tank. This technology is particularly important given Lima's limited water supply, and the predicted decrease as result of accelerated glacial melt. Sadly, the fog catchers have been destroyed twice by land traffickers, so using them remains a challenge.

² There are 31 non-metallic mining operations in Lomas which cause considerable noise, dust and soil degradation and have a negative impact on residents' health. The illegal dumping of waste is also problematic. The Zapallal landfill, for instance, receives 800 tonnes of rubbish a day, with many poor families working informally, picking up materials for recycling.



Abigail, planting in the Lomas



A fog catcher (not yet installed)

Case study 4: Jean-Pierre

Themes: poverty, urban change, global inequalities.



Location

Jean-Pierre lives in the Lomas de Carabayllo (in the same area as Jasmin). Situated in northern Lima, the area has high levels of poverty and pollution.

What are the main challenges?

The Lomas de Carabayllo has very few public parks and safe spaces for children and young people to play and study. Added to this, parents often have to travel long distances to work, leaving their children alone during the day. As a result, children face many risks, including accidents at home, abuse, malnutrition, inadequate health and hygiene. Many children also risk dropping out of school or falling behind. Unsurprisingly, education levels in this area are low.

70 per cent of children perform below the expected targets; 70 per cent have difficulties in reading comprehension and 91 per cent in mathematical comprehension.

[Source: School Evaluation Census, 2010 (ECE)]

What are the solutions?

CAFOD is supporting local experts (from CAFOD partner, Warmi Huasi) to help the children in Jean-Pierre's neighbourhood. As well as helping to strengthen local children's organisations, they are helping to create vital safe spaces for children. Warmi Huasi have created eight safe spaces, including homework clubs, reading clubs, a wellbeing club and a play club.

Jean-Pierre enjoys going to these safe spaces. He goes to both reading club and homework club - here Jean-Pierre can do his homework and keep up with his studies.

Jean-Pierre wants to be teacher when he grows up. He says: *"When I'm in the homework club I feel good, I feel happy"*.

At homework club, the children also learn about their rights, play games and do other activities like learning how to grow plants and care for their environment.



Jean-Pierre, reading in a child-friendly safe space.



Jean-Pierre, taking care of the garden in a child-friendly safe space

Case study 5: Jasmin

Themes: poverty, urban change, global inequalities.



Location

Jasmin lives in the Lomas de Carabayllo (in the same area as Jean-Pierre). Situated in northern Lima, the area has high levels of poverty and pollution.

What are the main challenges?

The Lomas de Carabayllo has very few public parks and safe spaces for children and young people to play. Added to this, parents often have to travel long distances to work, leaving their children alone during the day. As a result, children face many risks, including accidents at home, abuse, malnutrition, inadequate health and hygiene. Children and young people do not have access to their rights.

What's the solution?

CAFOD is supporting local experts (from CAFOD partner, Warmi Huasi) to help the children in Jasmin's neighbourhood. They are helping to create safe spaces and helping to strengthen local children's organisations. These organisations help children understand their rights, voice their needs and influence local public policies, thereby improving their lives and their community.

Jasmin belongs to one of these local children's groups, which is helping to improve her community. Jasmin has been learning about her rights. In the photo below, she has made a sign about the right to education.

The sign translates as: *"The Right to Learn. Every boy and girl have the right to go to school and receive a good education and have the right to study. Every child has the right to freedom of expression and to be listened to".*

Together with her local children's group, Jasmin and her friends have also created a children's park to play in, called the Labyrinth. They helped to clear up rubbish and plant seeds in the park. Now they have a lovely safe area to play, with a maze, a playground and space to play football and other games.

Jasmin says: *"I like most of all to come here and play football and volleyball. I don't like the violence in my neighbourhood. At the Labyrinth I feel happy and I feel free".*



Jasmin, in her local area



Jasmin, holding her sign about the right to learn

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) quote sheet

Christus Vivit

Following the 2018 Synod on *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, Pope Francis wrote *Christus Vivit* (“Christ is Alive”). Below are some quotes from this; the full document is available digitally on the [Vatican website](#).

“Dear young people, make the most of these years of your youth. Don’t observe life from a balcony. Don’t confuse happiness with an armchair or live your life behind a screen. ... Give yourselves over to the best of life!”

“Above all, in one way or another, fight for the common good, serve the poor...”

“If the years of your youth are to serve their purpose in life, they must be a time of generous commitment, whole-hearted dedication, and sacrifices that are difficult but ultimately fruitful.”

“Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way he brings youth to our world. The very first words, then, that I would like to say to every young Christian are these: Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive!”

“Just as you try not to lose your connection to the internet, make sure that you stay connected with the Lord. That means not cutting off dialogue, listening to him, sharing your life with him and, whenever you aren’t sure what you should do, asking him: “Jesus what would you do in my place?”

“Young people, do not let the world draw you only into things that are wrong and superficial. Learn to swim against the tide, learn how to share Jesus and the faith he has given you.”

“[Jesus] loves you, dear young people, for you are the means by which he can spread his light and hope. He is counting on your courage, your boldness and your enthusiasm.”

Laudato Si’

Laudato Si’ is a letter (‘encyclical’) by Pope Francis. The phrase means “praise be to you” and is from a hymn written by Saint Francis of Assisi, patron saint of the environment. Encyclicals offer Catholics guidance on topics including new technologies or modern issues not directly addressed in the Bible. In this letter, the pope is not just writing to Catholics, but to everyone who lives on Earth, because it is our common home.

“The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development for we know that things can change.”

“Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded.”

“We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalisation of indifference.”

“Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices.”

“Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.”