

Pope for a day

This session considers how some current global issues affect poor communities in developing countries.

You will explore statements by Pope Francis, and formulate your own 'papal' statement on global issues.

AIM: To gain a deeper understanding of the Church as a global family, through the challenge of formulating a 'papal' statement on issues that affect communities overseas and the poorest most of all.

EACH PERSON WILL NEED:

- Newspapers
- Bible
- Film clips from CAFOD's website
- Pope Francis quotations

Activity 1

What should a Pope say?

Duration: 25 minutes

To learn how some issues affect people around the world, go to

cafod.org.uk/Education/Secondary-and-youth-resources/Pope-for-a-day

to watch film clips¹ about:

- **Kenya: helping people out of poverty** (2:15)
- **Bolivia: the melting glacier** (1:24)

Note that, in both cases, poverty contributes to the problem. Why is this?

If you were Pope, receiving reports from bishops in these countries, what would you say to the Church and the world about these problems?

What does a Pope have to consider when he teaches? For example, being faithful to distinctively Catholic teaching even when speaking to non-Catholics, and considering the poorest first—known in Catholic Social Teaching as the 'preferential option for the poor'.

Also consider the need to encourage and challenge, being authoritative yet non-political, and being aware of differing priorities in different countries.

Look at examples (see page 4) of what Pope Francis has said about some of the world's problems and what we should do.

Any reactions? What would you have said?

Starter

Duration: 5 minutes

Using the newspapers, produce a list of the main issues in today's world. This could be done by cutting out a headline or article, highlighting the issue with a marker pen and placing it on a display board or larger sheet of paper.

Examples of current global issues are the refugee crisis, conflict, the climate emergency, conflict, pandemics and HIV and AIDS.



Photos: CAFOD/Caritas Internationalis; David Mutua

¹More films are available at CAFODtv on YouTube

Activity 2

Pope for a day

Duration: 20 minutes

Each person (or group of four, if you are in class) takes one current world issue, eg. conflict, racism or hunger, and a Bible.

You are Pope for a day!

Prepare a papal statement that explains what the Church has to say about the issue.

Your statement should include:

- a description of the problem and some of its causes
- how the problem affects people's lives, especially the poorest people
- what our attitude should be to this problem and to those affected
- a quote from a Gospel story that backs up your argument (eg. Jesus talking to/helping non-Jews, feeding the hungry, speaking about love, or a story that Jesus told about the end of time).
- a sentence summarising your message and a call to action.

Suggestion: If working in a group, each group member could take one of the first four bullets and spend ten minutes writing a rough draft before the group comes together to write its final sentence.

Plenary

Duration: 5 minutes

'Proclaim' the statement. If working as a class, read out in sequence all the statements to form your class 'encyclical'.

Start your proclamation with:

"To our brother bishops, priests and deacons, men and women religious, all the Christian faithful and all people of good will".

End with:

"Given in [place], on [day, month, year]".

Suggestions for teachers:

- If the young people's statements question some aspects of Catholic teaching, leave time in a subsequent session for clarification and discussion.
- If time is short, ask young people to finish the statements at home.
- Publish completed encyclicals in parish or school newsletters, read them out at assemblies or display them on a notice board.

Arms trade
Biodiversity Climate change
Conflict Consumerism Environment
Fair Trade Globalisation HIV & AIDS
Human rights Hunger & Poverty
Racism

Pope Francis quotations

“Inequality is the root of social ills.”

Evangelii Gaudium, 202

“The dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies.”

Evangelii Gaudium, 203

“Interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world, and so it is a duty for Christians as well as other religious communities.”

Evangelii Gaudium, 250

“Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start...”

Laudato Si’, 204

“We must never forget that the planet belongs to all mankind and is meant for all mankind; the mere fact that some people are born in places with fewer resources or less development does not justify the fact that they are living with less dignity.”

Evangelii Gaudium, 190

“Let us not only keep the poor of the future in mind, but also today’s poor, whose life on this earth is brief and who cannot keep on waiting.”

Laudato Si’, 162

“The Church proclaims ‘the Gospel of peace’ (Eph 6:15) and she wishes to cooperate with all national and international authorities in safeguarding this immense universal good.”

Evangelii Gaudium, 239

“Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity.”

Laudato Si, 30

“ Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society.”

Evangelii Gaudium, 187

“We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it.”

Laudato Si’, 229

“An interdependent world... motivates us to ensure that solutions are proposed from a global perspective, and not simply to defend the interests of a few countries. Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan.”

Laudato Si’, 164