

Lent Assembly 2024 Script

Themes: Lent, fisher families, technology, Liberia.

Time: 9 minutes with video.

Learning outcomes: That all students understand the Catholic Social teaching principle of distributive justice – sharing things fairly – by understanding injustices in the technology industry.

	<p>Optional opener: Can be done before or after the front page if children are entering the room.</p>
	<p>Hello and welcome to the CAFOD Lent assembly for 2024. CAFOD is the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development and we work with communities all over the world for an to end to extreme poverty and global injustice. We are an NGO which means a non-governmental organization – we work independently of the government.</p> <p>Lent is a is a time for spiritual recollection in preparation for the celebration of Easter.</p>
	<p>This Lent we're sharing the story of Mary who lives in West Point, Monrovia in Liberia. West Point is by the sea so the largest industry is fishing.</p>
	<p>You can see from this map that West Point is surrounded by water. CAFOD also worked with a town called New Kru which is a little further up the coast. Both of these places are in an area called Monrovia. Perhaps you can think of the impact climate change might be having on this area.</p> <p>PAUSE for student ideas if appropriate.</p>

Country Profile: Liberia



Liberia's population = 5 million people (2020)



Agriculture, fisheries and forestry are key to economic growth and poverty reduction goals.



Climate change = heavy rains, storm surges, sea level rise and increased erosion.



CAFOD is the only NGO working in the fishing sector in Liberia.

Liberia's population of about 5 million people are dependent on agriculture, forestry and fisheries for economic growth. Yet, they are going to suffer more floods, rains and storms which of course affect the fish. CAFOD are the only NGO working in the fishing sector in Liberia as we recognise it's a main source of income and if we can help Mary's family and the rest of the community increase their income – we can work towards ending extreme poverty.



Lent 2024

Let's meet Mary and her community and learn about the project and how you can support us using our Lent 2024 video.



Now, you can see that the GPS tracker had such a huge impact on the community. The fishermen could go further out and catch more fish and Mary was able to eat and go to school. I'm wondering how technology changes our lives. I wonder... how many of these items do you use on a daily basis?

CLICK through the images. Phone, airpods, contactless technology, TV, laptop, kettle, car, a boiler for hot water, printer, oven... or maybe even a new emerging technology AI.

You can probably add up the cost of your own technology. A GPS tracker costs £120.



"In whose hands does all this power lie, or will it eventually end up? It is extremely risky for a small part of humanity to have it."

Pope Francis, Laudato Si'



Pope Francis said that only a few people owning the technology is incredibly unfair.

"In whose hands does all this power lie, or will it eventually end up? It is extremely risky for a small part of humanity to have it."

Catholic Social Teaching encourages us to distribute things fairly – it's called distributive justice. I wonder if you've given up something for Lent? Could you give up technology for 40 days?



Internet usage around the world

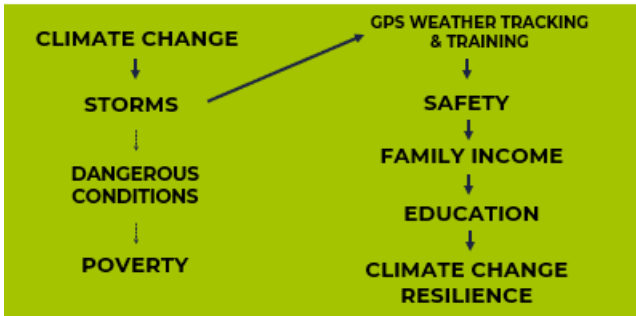
Dark blue = Young people (15-24)
Light Blue = Rest of the population

And yet when we look at the statistics we see that even the internet is unfairly distributed. In Africa only 58% of 15-24 year olds have access to the internet compared with 98% of European 15-24 year olds. The statistic is lower if you take the rest of the population.

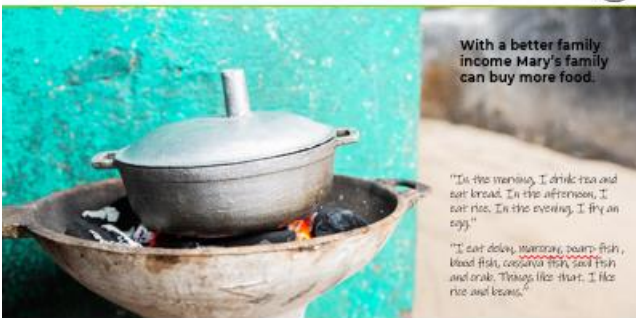
Could you give up the internet?!



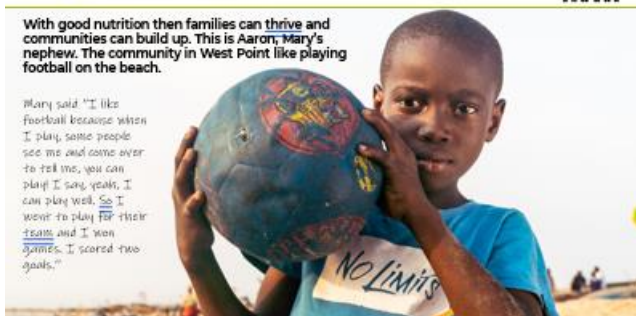
The increase in technology has both good and bad sides to it. Technology must be used very wisely - but we know that for some people having access to such a simple device can actually save their lives.



And, as you can see in this diagram, it can stop the cycle of poverty. We might not be able to do everything to stop extreme poverty but we can do something.



Mary told us that she has food now – lots of fish obviously but rice and eggs. Her Dad told us that there was a time the family could not afford the food because he had an accident on the water.



And this is Aaron, he lives with Mary – she is his auntie. Young people like living in West Point because they can play football on the beach and go to the market. Communities thrive when they are safe.



It cascades down – one little bit of technology can bring West Point out of extreme poverty and into a thriving community.



THE BIG

We'd love your community to help us raise funds. Don't worry, we're not asking you to give up technology for 48 hours – although I wonder if some of you could do that! We're asking you to go for a walk and be sponsored for it. It doesn't sound that bad does it... And maybe you could fundraise enough money for us to buy some more GPS trackers so we can take this project to more people in Monrovia. The thing is, as Catholic community, we really believe that Jesus would be advocating for the fisher folk in Monrovia. He showed us what standing in solidarity really looks like – because he gave up his life for us. Lent is a time for 'prayer, fasting and almsgiving' (that means giving money to those living in poverty). Perhaps you will join with us to do those three things through the Big Lent Walk.



Lord Jesus,
We think of the privileges we have in the 21st century, but we know that these are not accessible to everyone across the world because things are not being shared fairly.

Let's pray for Mary and her community now.

Lord Jesus, we think of the privileges we have in the 21st century and we know that these are not accessible to everyone across the world because things are not being shared fairly.



We stand in solidarity with Mary and her community and pray you will bless those taking part in the CAFOD fish tracking project. Help us to take the next right step to tackle global injustice. Amen.



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