

Catholic Social Teaching

Grade 11

Course Description

In this course, students explore the social teachings of the Catholic Church as they relate to the principles of protecting human life and dignity, becoming active members of family and community, upholding personal rights and responsibilities, and supporting each other through charity, justice and unity. Through readings, discussions, and activities, students examine how Catholic Social Teaching is committed to recognizing Christ in others, especially in the poorest of brethren; they explore how society should function so that individuals can fulfill their earthly journey of discipleship; and, they appreciate that the roots of Catholic Social Teaching are in God's revelation of himself as the Blessed Trinity whose very nature is communal and social.

Portrait of the Crusader

Catholic Social Teaching coursework emphasizes the importance of respecting human worth and dignity and guides each student to develop a socially just perspective that will help guide his/her life and the lives of others. In alignment with the school's Portrait of the Crusader, students are taught and encouraged to follow a moral compass rooted in respect, character, integrity, hope, and kindness and to demand fairness, respect others' beliefs, and value the uniqueness of every human being.

Unit 1 - Humanity and Justice (1-4)

Guiding Questions

1. What is God's desire for every person?
2. What does it mean to belong to a family of God?
3. Who are our brothers and sisters?
4. How do we move towards justice for all?

Enduring Understandings

- ❖ There is a difference between true happiness and fleeting happiness. God always desires what is best for us and provides us with grace and salvation to reach true happiness.
- ❖ We are all vital members of our families and communities, a part of the family of God, and we should treat all people as brothers and sisters.
- ❖ We can model our individual and communal lives on the loving relationship of the Trinity.
- ❖ We can and should strive to live a life rooted in the virtues of charity and justice as modeled by Jesus and guided by the Church.

Concepts and Skills:

- Explore the question, "What is God's desire for us?" Discuss *grace*, *salvation* and *beatitude*.
- Discuss the meaning of "family" and how a sense of belonging supports and strengthens us.
- Explain the ways in which the Church serves as a family of faith.
- Analyze the central role of charity and justice in the life of Jesus.
- Explain the purpose of Catholic Social Teaching and the Church's works of charity and justice.

Summative Assessment

- Students write a letter addressing a social justice topic of their choosing to encourage those working for justice to continue their good work. The letter will include an explanation of the issue, its importance, and ideas for calls to action.
- Students examine the collage at the National Shrine website (www.nationalshrine.com) and create a similar collage representing some holy people in their life (friends, family members), favorite saints, and other places/people (the poor, ill, children) who represent holiness.

Unit 2 - Foundations of Justice (5-6)

Guiding Questions

1. How do we know that our words and actions are good?
2. Where does justice begin?
3. What are the foundational principles of Catholic Social Teaching?

Enduring Understandings

- ❖ Those who seek justice look at *why* others need charity and seek to remedy those conditions.

Concepts and Skills:

- Discuss the concept of “conscience” and the role of conscience in moral decision-making.
- Recognize the role of one’s faith in the struggle against injustice.
- Analyze the foundational principles of Catholic Social Teaching and make connections to family and daily life.
- Study the Church’s efforts to overcome injustice, including discrimination, oppression, and economic oppression.
- Examine and evaluate excerpts from the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Summative Assessment

- Students read the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, analyze one article from the Declaration, and create a written or visual display that encourages youth commitment to that particular human right and our responsibilities to protect it.

Unit 3 - The Divine Image and Sin (7-9)

Guiding Questions

1. What does it mean to be made in the image and likeness of God?
2. What are our rights and responsibilities to each other and the larger society?
3. How does personal sin have social consequences? How does this lead to social injustice?
4. How can the Ten Commandments guide us to build a society rooted in justice and charity?

Enduring Understandings

- ❖ All people have inherent dignity as persons created by God, in His image and likeness.
- ❖ All people have a right to life and the right and responsibility to sustain it.

- ❖ All have the right to be treated justly and the responsibility to work towards a more just society.

Concepts and Skills:

- Discuss the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching.
- Explain the concept of *preferential option for the poor and vulnerable* as a part of seeing Christ in everyone; explain how this practice mirrors Jesus' compassion as shared through the Gospels.
- Examine the social consequences of sin.
- Analyze how the Ten commandments guide us to build a society rooted in justice and charity.
- Discern and work to eradicate personal attitudes that foster the unjust treatment of others.
- Explore how to participate fully in society, bringing individual talents to help others and show respect for creation.

Summative Assessments, options include

- Create a plan to present to school administration for the Holy Cross community to fulfill the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.
- Complete a *Social Sin Case Study* focused on the effects of a specific social sin and its resulting injustice; analyze the personal sins that contribute to this social sin/injustice; and, determine how we can work towards improvement.

Unit 4 - Relationships (10-14)

Guiding Questions

1. How do we respond to God's gifts?
2. How does love and forgiveness transform individuals and society?
3. How do we live the Beatitudes?

Enduring Understandings

- ❖ The love of God and the love of neighbors are inseparable.
- ❖ Truth is of fundamental importance to all relationships.
- ❖ The Beatitudes reflect the spirit of God's law.

Concepts and Skills

- Analyze the language and meaning of the eight Beatitudes and determine how to incorporate them into daily/communal life.
- Determine practical ways to be peacemakers at home, school, and community.
- Research and discern which organizations promote charity and justice in the community and nation.
- Model our lives on Jesus; grow in the attitudes and actions taught in the Beatitudes, and build up the Kingdom of God by working for charity and justice.

Summative Assessments

- Students devise a plan for bringing the Beatitudes to life by practicing deliberate acts of kindness in their daily lives. This plan of active goodness should (1) encourage harmony within family, (2) build positive relationships with others, (3) promote respect, (4) care for the less fortunate and (5) help build unity in their world. Students then create a narrative, a poem or a visual display that depicts the ripple effect of their acts of kindness on the world around them.
- Students complete a case study on the United Nations Peacekeeping forces, researching the work and ethos of the organization and current peacekeeping operations. Students reflect on the connection between UN peacekeeping efforts and human rights, the challenges peacekeepers face, and the communities who benefit from the work of a peacekeeper.

Resources may include:

- Textbook: *Living as a Disciple of Jesus in Society*
- Papal Encyclicals & Pastoral Letters
- [Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church](#)
- Credible current event articles/websites