



Catholic Schools Week 2025

Catholic Schools: Alive in Christ

19–25 January 2025

Friday: Life to the Full
for the Common Good of All





Introduction

‘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. The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Here I want to recognise, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world’s poorest. 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.’ (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 13)

Video Resources

For older students:

‘The Common Good – Catholic Social Teaching’ by The Religion Teacher

A short video (3 mins 24 secs) giving a useful outline of Catholic Social Teaching.

<https://youtu.be/J47lwCEUrtE>

For younger students:

‘*Laudato Si'* animation for children’ by CAFOD

An introduction to Pope Francis’ letter on caring for our common home.

<https://youtu.be/KOgF2Kgel6k>

General:

‘7 Commitments to Change the World’ by Global Compact on Education

An introduction to the Global Compact on Education’s 7 Commitments.

https://youtu.be/X_8HHxVIsvU

‘For the Beauty of the Earth’ by John Rutter

A song accompanied by images of nature.

<https://youtu.be/xlBkpAm3fhw>

‘Brother River Meditation’ by the Irish Catholic Bishop’s Conference

A short video of nature scenes and sounds for meditation on the theme of creation.

<https://youtu.be/yUUibGTmfW8>

Music

This playlist features a wide range of songs exploring good citizenship:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5nirvDoxTJNK3Fn9Rqo9gS>

This playlist features a wide range of songs exploring creation themes:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/56dhAP6KnOriHEJ4Yq5pL5>



Suggested Activities

- Ask students to create a visual representation (a poster, drawing or digital artwork) that encapsulates their understanding of an environmental theme of their choice. This will serve as a creative outlet for their reflections.
- Post-It note exercise: Have students write an environmental issue of their choice on a Post-It note and place these on the classroom board or wall. Students can read out their note and say a few words about it, if they wish, as they place it. The notes can be gathered, collated and formed into a presentation for later use.
- Complete Worksheet 1 on the Global Compact on Education, included below (p. 5).
- Complete Worksheet 2 on *Laudato Si'*, included below (p. 6).
- Conduct a brief prayer service or prayer moment as included below (p. 4).
- Use the PowerPoint presentation that accompanies this resource.
- Divide students into small groups and assign each group a specific excerpt from *Laudato Si'* that addresses a different theme – the relationship between humans and nature; the impact of consumerism on the environment; the duty of wealthier nations to support poorer communities; intergenerational solidarity, etc.
- Have a quick brainstorming session where students share what they know about environmental issues. Write their responses on a whiteboard.

Conclusion

‘Answering the cry of the earth is not just a private, spiritual vocation, but a question of justice and love for our neighbour.’ (Ciara Murphy, *The Messenger*, February 2020)



Prayer Service

(A shortened version can be used as a 'Prayer Moment' at the start or end of class. The songs featured here are also used in the accompanying PowerPoint presentation.)

Opening song

'Brother Sun (Giving Glory!)' by The Porter's Gate:

<https://open.spotify.com/track/5YgbeMpoNDifKLABJoPqTl>

Prayer

A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognise that we are profoundly united
with every creature

as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

(Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 246)

Concluding Song

'The Maker' by Chris August: <https://open.spotify.com/track/7LjiiqiOFAZPc4SquVHq7mO>





Worksheet 1

This worksheet can be used in conjunction with the '7 Commitments to Change the World' video from Global Compact on Education: https://youtu.be/X_8HHxVlsvU.

These are the 7 Commitments of the Global Compact on Education. Reflect on them and answer the questions that follow.

1. Place the person at the centre of every educational program.
2. Listen to the voices of children and young people.
3. Encourage the full participation of girls and young women in education.
4. Establish the family as the first and essential place of education.
5. Educate ourselves on the openness to the most vulnerable and marginalised.
6. Find new ways of understanding the economy, politics, growth and progress.
7. Safeguard and cultivate our common home.

1. Which of the 7 Commitments do you consider to be the most important? Explain why.

2. What practical steps can you take to support the Commitment you have chosen?

3. Which of the 7 Commitments is, in your opinion, most relevant in a school situation?



Worksheet 2

Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow.

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. The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Here I want to recognise, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world's poorest. 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.

(Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 13)

1. What do you think the term 'our common home' means?

2. What signs do you see that humanity is working together to build up the world's environment, our common home?

3. What, in your opinion, is the worst example of 'environmental degradation'?

4. What practical steps can you yourself take to build up our common home?

5. Why should people of faith be interested and involved in this work?
