

BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Leader's notes:

This reflection session is part of the Faith In Action awards, inspiring young people to take the next step in putting their faith into action. Please refer to the main [Faith In Action guidelines](#) for further information.

Length: 90 minutes. This session is broken into different sections each with their corresponding estimated time, so please ensure you design the workshop with the suggestions below, using the timing as a guide.

Structure: Faith In Action guidelines suggest that you include an element from each section: 1) Scripture 2) Church story 3) Personal story and conclude with the liturgy at the end.

Materials required: Quotes for printing (below), candles for liturgy, images of CAFOD's work overseas (below).

Welcome

Welcome the young people, introduce the title of 'Building the Kingdom of God'.

Jesus kept referring to building the Kingdom of God throughout his ministry.

Q. But what do you think is the Kingdom of God?

Q. How do we build the Kingdom of God?

[Watch opening reflection #LoveNeverFails](#)



Pause for reflection

Scripture reading

1 Corinthians 13: 1-8

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails.

10 MINS

You can use the Faith In Action Prayer here, or alternatively use:

Gathering prayer

Loving God,

Awaken within us our calling to be a living witness of your love in the world today.

Open our eyes, so that we may see that no one is beyond the reach of love.

Open our hearts so that we reach out in love to all those in need.

And open our minds, so we understand that the love you have for us is:

a love that protects,

a love that hopes and

a love that trusts,

and a love that will never fail, no matter what.

And may we be witnesses of this love,

so that we too can help transform our world to be a reflection of the Kingdom of God today.

Amen.

5 MINS

You may use the quotes (available to print below) taken from the Catechism of the Catholic Church for display, and refer to them at this point on what the Church teaches.

CCC 1189

Charity is the greatest social commandment. It respects others and their rights. It requires the practice of justice, and it alone makes us capable of it. Charity inspires a life of self-giving: "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it."

5 MINS

No matter what we do no matter how small it may seem that if we do it with love it will make a difference for #LoveNeverFails

Story of Pope Francis

Share this story on Pope Francis to help reflect on how he is working to build the Kingdom of God.

First split the group into pairs, ask each pair to discuss two things which they like most about Pope Francis. Ask each pair to share with the wider group.

Introduce the story of Pope Francis.

Ordained as Pope at the age of 76 on 13 March 2013, Pope Francis, who comes from Argentina is the first in Latin American to be elected Pope. He is known around the world for his humility and commitment to helping the poor and needy. He took his name, Francis, after St Francis of Assisi, a famous saint who is widely known for caring for God's creation and helping the poor and needy.

Even when he became pope, he was keen not to accept all the luxuries that were offered to him in his new role. After he was elected he refused to live in the Papal Palace, instead preferring to stay in a Vatican guest house; he also refuses to drive around in expensive cars, and prefers to wear simple clothes and accessories.

While his humility and practices of simplicity have inspired many around the world, it is his messages of hope for the poor, marginalised and vulnerable that have really challenged and motivated Catholics across the globe to work together to tackle poverty, inequality and to care for creation.

"Help one another, that is what Jesus teaches us. That is what I do, and I do it with my heart."

Ask the group, again in their pairs, to reflect on why Pope Francis' witness of living simply - not having expensive cars, wearing simple clothing - is an important message for Catholics today. What does it mean to live simply? Why is living simply so important?

Pope Francis' emphasis is on reaching out to others in need, rather than looking towards Church security, that we should be shepherds that 'smell like the sheep'. He famously said:

"I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security."

Pope Francis has been working hard to reform the Church, teaching how the Church should not be 'self-referential', that is, always looking in on itself. Rather it should be going out, proclaiming its mission to help those in need.

As Catholics, what does this mean to us? How can we go out and proclaim the mission of the Church?

Pope Francis has a particular keen interest in helping and supporting migrants: those who have had to leave their

homes due to fighting, poverty and climate change.

He has spoken up many times to help people who are on the move, encouraging everyone to welcome the stranger just as Jesus taught us to do.

His first trip outside of Rome as a pope was to a tiny island off the coast of Italy called Lampedusa. This was where many migrants had drowned trying to cross the sea. He challenged the world, which he saw as being 'indifferent' (stopped caring) to the plight of migrants. He asked "Why have we forgotten how to cry for migrants lost at sea?"

He used a cross, made out of the wreckage of one of the boats that capsized, [as a symbol for our time](#).

The Lampedusa cross has been used as a symbol to remind us all not to forget about the suffering of the millions of people who are on the move today. As Pope Francis says:

"Today people are suffering from poverty, but also lack of love."

Ask the group if any have heard of the Lampedusa cross, or the campaign led by Pope Francis called [Share the Journey](#), encouraging Catholics to walk in solidarity with those people who are on the move?

Following in the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi, he not only encourages us all to care for the poor and vulnerable, but also to care for and protect God's creation. In his letter *Laudato Si'* - *On care for our common home*, he calls all people of good will to work together to help protect our planet and build a better world for future generations.

To reflect on the messages of his teaching, let's watch this [short animation](#) on how we can all care for our common home.

25 MINS



Personal story

Q. What are the most important messages you took from the animation?

Q. How can you use your service hours for your Faith In Action award to care for our common home, just as Pope Francis suggested?

Q. What small actions can we all do today to help care for our planet and each other?

Q. What does it mean to live simply? Why is living simply so important?

Q. What other eco-actions can we do in our own home and community?

Activity

Write a plan for what you can do with your personal service hours.

20+ MINS

Pope Francis refers to 'indifference' when we have stopped caring or stopped noticing the needs of those living in poverty and most vulnerable people around the world, where the poor suffer from a lack of love. Looking at our hearts, why is this?

Q. Jesus said "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" Matt 6:21 What do you think he meant by this?

Q. How can we build the Kingdom of God when our hearts are so full of 'worldly' things?

Q. If we prefer to spend time doing the things we love (and who wouldn't!), how do we find time to reach out and care for others, especially for others we don't even know?

Q. How can we create space in our hearts to be open and reach out to help those in need, just as Pope Francis encourages us all to do?

15 MINS

OPEN HEART SURGERY

Ask all participants to work in small groups of twos or threes. Ask them to draw a heart on a large sheet of paper or flip chart sheet. In this heart they are to write down all the things that they love!

This includes everything — family, friends, pets, what they love to wear, what they love to spend their spare time doing, what they love to watch online or on TV, who they love as their favourite actors, films, and so on.

Ask them to work together, and keep going until the heart is absolutely full. If they get stuck, get them to reflect on what do they spend most of their time doing, what do they like to think about, what they like to consume - clothes, media, TV shows, films, going out, and so on.

When all the groups have filled their hearts, go around and read the hearts, sharing some of the highlights with the rest of the group.

Now start to ask some probing questions as to whether our hearts are full of things that Pope Francis talks about — serving others, caring for those in need, spending time with others that need our help, caring for our common home?

Or are they full of things that serve only our needs, such as consumer items, media and entertainment, clothing and how we look, and so on?

Help the participants see that we are all susceptible to the temptations of consumer messages, as well as the amount of entertainment and media that is on offer. It is so easy to let these fill up all of our heart space, and this is why building the Kingdom of God becomes so difficult.

Action

#LoveNeverFails Action Video

Watch our #BeTheChange video below from the #LoveNeverFails series. After the video ask all the participants to think of one action they heard that they can do

cafod.org.uk/loveneverfails



10MINS

Liturgy Preparation

Print the images of CAFOD's work below. Either place them in a central focus, or around the room.

Ask someone to read out the story from each section from the liturgy sheet below, then place a candle on or next to each image, and ask the group to hold the people of that project in prayer.

Pause for reflection after each prayer. You may wish to play some background music as part of this liturgy reflection.

Suggested songs to sing for the gathering and sending forth:

Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God - (Karen Lafferty)

Bring Forth the Kingdom - (Marty Haugen)

End the session with the Lord's Prayer, but pause to reflect after the line 'Thy kingdom come'.

15 MINS

I believe that it is within us
to care for others
to reach out to those in need
#LoveNeverFails

Liturgy

Leader:

Loving Creator,

We ask you to help us to reach out in love, to help those in need.

Open our hearts, so that we can make space for others and that we take time to help build your Kingdom of God here on Earth.

Amen.

Story 1 - Syrian refugees

Gharsa school is in the Syrian refugee camp in Bekaa Valley, Lebanon. The school is supported by CAFOD's local partner, and offers emergency education for Syrian refugee children who are either receiving no education, or are enrolled in public school but need extra help.



The Bekaa Valley has the highest ratio of out-of-school children in the country.

Estimates vary, but between 1-2 million Syrian refugees are believed to be living among a local population of just 4 million in Lebanon. They are in desperate need of jobs, education and healthcare.

A candle is placed next to the image.

Leader: We pray for all the people who are displaced around the world, especially those in the Middle East. We pray that we can reach out to them in love, seeking to protect and to give them hope of a life filled with security, hope and love. We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Story 2 - Uganda

Margaret Lotee, 65, is a borehole mechanic in Moroto, Uganda.

CAFOD works with communities across the globe, giving them the training and resources so that they can develop the skills needed to support their communities. Ensuring that boreholes are maintained and looked after regularly by someone living in the community is essential to ensuring that the support we give keeps on giving, even when we are not there.



A candle is placed next to the image.

Leader: We pray for all those communities around the world that still do not have access to safe drinking water. We pray that we can reach out to them in love, working hard to ensure that no one today should suffer the indignity of not having basic things like safe drinking water. We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Story 3 - Cambodia



This photo shows Dos Las feeding his pigs in their pen outside his home. Dos and his family live in the Pouk district in north west Cambodia. They have been raising chickens, pigs and growing a vegetable garden.

CAFOD's partners are supporting farming families to learn new skills, teaching rural farmers to grow crops, set up home gardens and raise chickens and pigs, as well as how to protect the environment and adapt to climate change by practising new farming techniques.

A candle is placed next to the image.

Leader: We pray for all farming families and communities around the world. May their work and toil be justly rewarded, and may we reach out to them in love to support them in difficult times so that they can be resilient to change, such as climate change. We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Story 4 - Brazil



A view of Jacaraípe favela in São Paulo, Brazil. A newly renovated water tower is visible. This was renovated by local authorities following community campaigning and action for improved conditions in the favela.

The aim of CAFOD's urban programme in São Paulo, Brazil, is to contribute to an inclusive city, strengthening and training local grassroots organisations in São Paulo enabling them to campaign for access to decent housing for families who are homeless or living in precarious and insecure housing to improve the living conditions.

A candle is placed next to the image.

Leader: We pray for all those in poverty in urban areas around the world. We pray that we can reach out in love to those in need, by standing together in solidarity with them and to campaign for better living standards and conditions. We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Final prayer

Leader: We offer up all these prayers in the confidence that with your love, we can all work together to help build a just and peaceful world, a world that reflects the Kingdom of God. We pray for the coming of your Kingdom as we say together the Lord's Prayer.

All: Our Father...

Make sure you pause after the line 'Thy kingdom come'.

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to reach out to those in need
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Catechism of the Catholic Church 1189

BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“ **Whoever** seeks
to **gain**
his life will **lose** it,
but
whoever loses
his life will **preserve** it ”

Luke 17:33



BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD



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