#### Walk With Me

# **Pre-Confirmation Programme**Catholic Social Teaching

#### **Contents**

- 1) God's plan for creation
- 2) How does God guide me today?
- 3) What is Catholic Social Teaching in the modern world?
- 3) A Career, a Job, or a Vocation?
- 4) The Christian at work
- 5) The Christian in politics
- 6) The Christian and war
- 7) Is Technology a good thing?
- 8) Pope Francis—"Let Us Dream"
- 9) 7 Steps Bible Study Method
- 10) A call to action!

**Suggested answers to the Questions** 

### **Topic 1: God's plan for creation**

### Can science prove the existence of God?



#### Scientific method

Scientific discoveries are made by using a process known as Scientific method.

- 1.**An observation is made** e.g. Most objects seem to fall to the ground at the same rate
- 2.**Do experiments and measure results** e.g. drop many different objects at the same and different heights. Measure distance and times for each object to arrive at the ground
- 3. Suggest a rule (known as an Hypothesis) that will apply to all objects e.g. The earth attracts objects to itself like a magnet. Call this force of attraction "Gravity"
- 4.**Do tests to try and disprove the rule** e.g. What happens if we drop something very light like a feather? Why doesn't the Moon fall to the earth?
- 5. Modify the hypothesis to try to fit all observations



In 1687 Sr. Isaac Newton published his Universal Law of Gravity



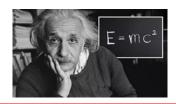
As methods of measurement and testing became more sophisticated it was discovered that Newton's Law was not correct with objects travelling at the speed of light and when measuring sub atomic particles

In 1905 Newton's Universal Law of Gravity was replaced by Einstein's theories of Relativity



#### But it doesn't end there!!

With more and more discoveries of space, planets, galaxies and black holes: scientists are testing to see if Einstein's Theories of Relativity also must now also be modified!!



Science is continually modifying its Laws as new discoveries are made

# In fact, science can't completely prove anything!

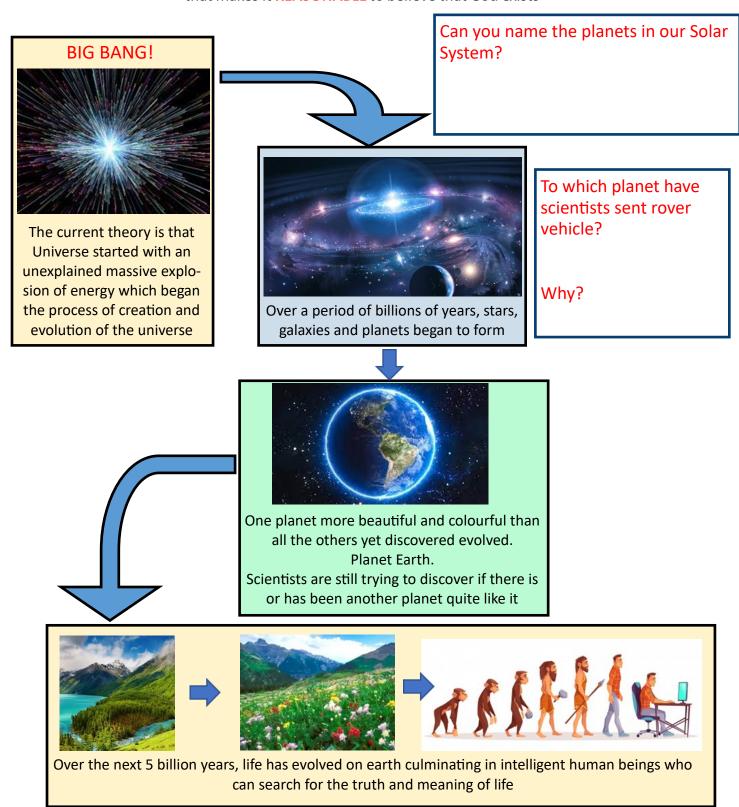
#### Questions for discussion

- 1. Why doesn't a feather fall to the ground as quickly as a stone?
- 2.Can you think of a way of testing a stone and a feather to show that in fact both obey Newton's Law?
- 3. Why doesn't the Moon fall to the earth?

#### Science can neither prove or disprove the existence of God

#### How do I know that God exists?

Whilst no one can **PROVE** that God exists we can see evidence that makes it **REASONABLE** to believe that God exists



There is evidence of an **order, logical development and beauty** in creation It is very **reasonable to believe that there is a God** who is the author and creator of our world

Can you remember the Bible story of creation from Genesis Chapter 1?

Write down what was created each day:

Day1 Day4

Day2 Day5 Day7

Day3 Day6

What have scientists discovered about this Bible story and their understanding of how we have evolved?

We can know that God **EXISTS** but can we know him as a person?

Can we have a **RELATIONSHIP** with him?



God is invisible.

We cannot experience him with our senses



God is infinite.
We are limited

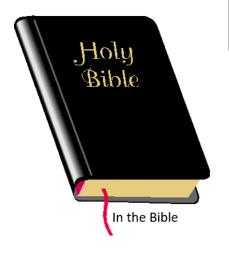
What does "infinite" mean?

Can you think of an example of something that is infinite?

God has taken the initiative.

For us to know him he has approached us. God has revealed himself to us

### God has revealed himself and spoken to us...



The **Old Testament** describes the people, places and events before Jesus

In the **Old Testament** God gradually revealed himself to his people

In the **Old Testament**, God prepared his people for the coming of Jesus through......







People

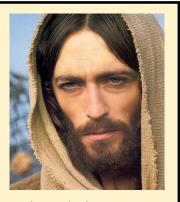
**Places** 

Events

Can you remember the name of the prophet who led the people to the promised land?

How did they escape from the Egyptian Pharoah?

Through Jesus Christ – The **invisible God becomes visible!**God became a human being just like us.



Through the person of Jesus

#### Jesus shows us:

- God loves us unconditionally
- God's love has no limits
- Through his death Jesus has reconciled us with God
- God continues to live with us, love us and give himself to us through the Holy Spirit

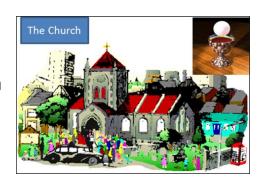
Now we not only know God but we have a **loving relationship with him**Jesus taught us that God is our **Father** in Heaven and that we are his **children** 

### Through Jesus – God has fully revealed himself





Through the Holy Spirit alive in the Church,
Jesus continues to teach and lead us into and ever deeper understanding of God.



#### And.....

#### God's plan is not just for the Baptised followers of Jesus

#### God's love extends to the whole of humanity

"For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil." (Mt.Ch5 v45)

#### Jesus sacrifice on the cross has reconciled the whole of humanity to God

"Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God made peace through his Son's blood on the cross and so brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven." (St. Paul's letter to the Colossians Ch1 v20)

#### Through Jesus, God is drawing the whole of creation into union with him

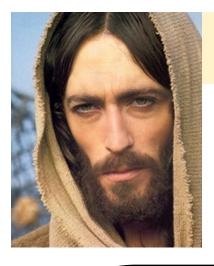
"This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head." (St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians Ch1 v10)

#### What do these verses really mean????

Can you explain what these statements of Jesus and St. Paul mean in your own words?

Can you think of any way that they may effect the way we should act or think?

- "For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil." (Mt.Ch5 v45)
- 2. "Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God made peace through his Son's blood on the cross and so brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven." (St. Paul's letter to the Colossians Ch1 v20)
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# The Kingdom of God

# Jesus frequently taught us about the Kingdom of God

"The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mk Ch1 v15)

A king who decides to settle his accounts. He forgave the debt of the man owing 10,000 Talents when he pleaded with him. That same servant however refused to forgive the debt of 100 denarii owed to him. The king in anger handed the unforgiving servant over to the torturers until he repaired his debt. Mt. Ch18 v19- Ch19 v 1





A dragnet net thrown into the sea. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore, put the good fish into the basket and throw what is of no use away. Mt. Ch13 v47-53

What is a parable?



A man who sowed good seed in his field. While he was asleep an enemy sowed a weed amongst the wheat. They were both allowed to grow until harvest when the weeds were collected first and burnt. Then the wheat was collected and put into the barn. (Mt Ch v24-30)

A mustard seed. The smallest seed that grows into the biggest bush. Provides shelter for the birds. (Mark Ch4 v26-34)





A treasure hidden a field which someone finds. He hides it again, goes off in his joy, sells everything he owns and buys the field. (Mt. Ch13 v44) He used
many
parables to
try to help us
understand
what he
meant by the
Kingdom of
God

Yeast mixed in with three measures of flour until it was leavened all through Mt. Ch13 v31-35



# These parables teach us that the Kingdom of God is a kingdom of:-

- Justice
- Forgiveness

- 6 Descriptions of the Kingdom of God
- Small beginnings which flourish into communities of peace and welcome for all
- Humility with quiet imperceptible growth
- Coexistence of the good with evil in which the good would ultimately prevail
- Great value and joy

Match one or more of these 6 descriptions with these pictures of the parables

















# In the Our Father, Jesus taught us to pray for the coming of God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven

Our Father who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy Name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

#### Give us this day our daily bread.

A kingdom of Justice in which everyone has what he or she needs

# And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

A kingdom in which people do not hold grievances, but give and accept forgiveness.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.



Our task is to work to establish God's Kingdom on earth!

#### The Our Father is a call to action!!!

Can you think of one thing you could do today to help someone you know?

## How???



### Jesus also taught us to "Love one another as I have loved you"



Is the driving energy which creates and builds the Kingdom of God on earth



# St Paul taught us the real meaning of Love

1 Corinthians Ch13 v4-8

**Love** is patient and kind

Love is not jealous or conceited or proud

Love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable

Love does not keep a record of wrongs

Love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth

Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.

Love is eternal

# Belief in and acceptance of God's love calls us to action



"Dear young friends! Only conversion of heart can make our world, which is full of terror and violence, more humane. And that means patience, justice, prudence, dialogue, integrity, solidarity with victims, the needy, and the poorest, limitless dedication, love even unto death for the sake of the other. When you have understood that, quite deeply, then you can change the world as committed Christians. The world cannot continue down the path that it is taking now. If a Christian in these days looks away from the needs of the poorest of the poor, then in reality he is not a Christian!"

Pope Francis - 2015

What does Pope Francis mean by:

Justice?

**Prudence?** 

Dialogue?

**Integrity?** 

**Solidarity?** 

To live as a committed Christian, we need God to help us answer the difficult questions facing our world today

# A group task:

### **Sowing Rays of Sunshine!!!**



In this article in the Daily Mirror a group of young children described how they decided to cheer people up through acts of simple kindness during the pandemic.

They set themselves the task of doing 10 kind things for family, friends and neighbours.

#### Things like:

Baking cakes, picking up litter, taking their pet to visit care home residents, growing sunflowers to give a sunflower to people to cheer them up

It was so successful that they went on to do 50 things, then 100 things!! They got their classmates at school involved and set up a Facebook page!

Discuss in your group how you could "Sow Rays of Sunshine" ve a go this week and report back next week! n you think of 10 tasks you could do? 1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	
7)	
8)	
9)	
10)	

# Let us Pray:

If we invite the Holy Spirt into our lives we will change!!



Come Holy Spirit
Fill my heart
Enkindle within me the fire of your love

**Give me WISDOM & KNOWLEDGE** 

So that I may:

Deepen my Faith, discover your presence and be open to your guidance in my daily life.

Give me COURAGE, UNDERSTANDING & RIGHT JUDGEMENT

So that I may:

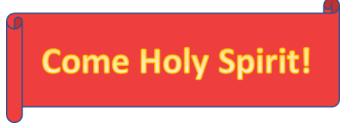
Act as your faithful Ambassador with generosity and courage as I work to build your Kingdom wherever I am. Give me REVERENCE and WONDER & AWE

So that I may:

Never cease to marvel at how much you love me, how much I depend on you and need your forgiveness.

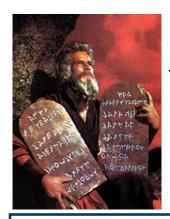
Send forth your Spirit so that I may be recreated and you will renew the face of the earth. Amen.

In quiet moment during the day – keep repeating the simple prayer



# Topic 2: How does God guide me today?

#### **Topic 2—How does God guide me today?**



The 10 Commandments
(Exodus Ch20 v1-17)
Based on the Good News Bible

How the Bible guides me



Which part of the Bible contains the 10 Commandments?

The Bible says that God wrote the 10 Commandments on two tablets of stone and gave them to Moses (See Exodus Ch31 v18).

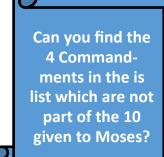
Why did Moses smash these tablets of stone? (See Exodus Ch32 v7-19)

- 1. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt when you were slaves. Worship no God but me. Do not make for yourself images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the waters under the earth. Do not bow down to any idol or worship it.
- 2. Do not use my name for evil purposes.
- 3. Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy.
- 4. You must always love your enemies.
- 5. Respect your father and mother.
- 6. Do not commit murder.
- 7. Do not commit adultery.
- 8. You must keep fit and look after your body
- 9. Do not destroy the planet
- 10. Do not steal.
- 11. Do not accuse anyone falsely.
- 12. Do not desire another man's house.
- 13. Do not desire his wife, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys or anything else that he owns
- 14. You must always pay the labourer a fair wage

The 10 commandments can be summed up in 2: Love God and Love your Neighbour

Which commandments are telling us to Love God?

Which commandments are telling us to love our neighbour?



# The Beatitudes (Matthew Ch5 v3-10) Based on the Good News Bible



- 1. Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them.
- 2. Happy are those who defend the rights of workers; they will see the Kingdom of God.
- 3. Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them.
- 4. Happy are those who are humble; they will receive what God has promised.
- 5. Happy are the politicians who truly work for the Common Good; they will see God.
- 6. Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully
- 7. Happy are those who are merciful to others; God will be merciful to them.
- 8. Happy arer the pure in heart; they will see God.
- 9. Happy are those who work for solidarity with others; for they shall find justice
- 10. Happy are those who work for peace; God will call them his children
- 11. Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them!
- 12. Happy are you when people insult you and persecute you and tell all kinds of evil lies against you because you are my followers. Be happy and glad because a great reward is kept for you in heaven.
- 13. Happy are you who treat animals well; for you shall see God.

Can you find the 4 Beatitudes in the is list which are not part of those given by Jesus?

Why didn't Jesus include these extra Beatitudes?



#### Jesus also gave us other teachings

#### Jesus Teaching matching activity

Match the picture, bible quote and what Jesus taught us

Trust in God

Do not take revenge

Happy are you when people insult you because you follow me

> Always offer forgiveness

Judging others

Blessed are the peace makers

Attitude to riches & Possessions

Give generously

If you have fallen out with someone, try to make up before going to Church















Mt Ch5 v23-24

Mt Ch5 v40-42

Mt Ch18 v21-22

Mt Ch5 v39

Mt Ch5 v9

Mt Ch6 v19-21

Mt Ch7 v7-12

Mt Ch7 v1-5

Mt Ch5 v10-11





## At his last Supper Jesus spoke at length to his disciples—preparing them for the time after he ascended into heaven

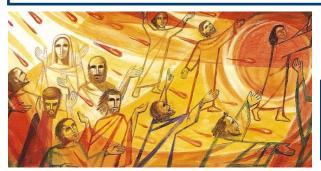
I have much more to tell you, but now it would be too much for you to bear.

When, however, the Spirit comes, who reveals the truth about God, he will lead you into all the truth.



What do you think Jesus meant when he said "it would be too much for you to bear"?

When did the Holy come?



Immediately after Pentecost, the Holy Spirit began to lead the Apostles and the newly formed Christian Church in to "all the truth" as Jesus had promised

Where had Jesus gone?

Now the Apostles and the Church would face many questions and situations for which the Bible did not provide an answer.

They had to apply the teachings of Jesus with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through prayer and discussion to find the right answers

This is called DISCERNMENT

#### The first question they had to answer was:

#### "Should all new Christians become Jews?"



Jesus and the disciples were all Jews living in Palestine

Do you know any Jewish people?

Do you know of any differences between the Jewish religion and Christianity?





The new Christians were usually pagans and came from all over the Roman empire and

The new Christians had no wish to be come Jews. Paul argued strongly that they shouldn't have to, but many of the Jewish Christians said they should

God gives the Holy Spirit to all people equally. We must not burden people with Jewish Laws. We are all saved by believing in Jesus The Apostles and leaders of the Church all met in Jerusalem to discuss the question: "Should all new Christians become Jews?"



Peter stood up and spoke....



Everyone agreed. They sent delegates from the meeting to tell everyone their decision

This was called the Council of Jerusalem
See Acts Ch15 v1-33

# From then, right to our present day, the church has been facing new questions to be answered.



Popes have consulted with Bishops, Priests, Theologians and people to pray, discuss and discover how the Holy Spirit is leading the Church to the truth







#### Leaders of the Church have met in Vatican Councils like the Council of Jerusalem



2nd Vatican Council 1962-1965



They pray



The Holy Spirit guides them

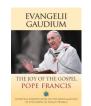


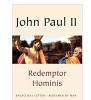
They talk and listen

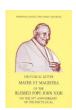












Popes write letters and encyclicals to explain Documents with new teaching are produced the new teaching

Have you ever worked with a group or a team to try to answer a question or solve a problem?

Did you ask the Holy Spirit to guide you?

Over the centuries since the time of Peter and Paul, the Catholic Church has held 21 Councils and the Popes have written a vast number of letters and Encyclicals

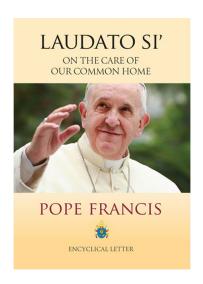
In our present time, one of the greatest questions is:

"How do we respond to the threat of Climate Change?"



What is Climate Change?

What concerns you most about it?



"Laudato Si" is an Encyclical letter written by Pope Francis

# Pope Francis is very concerned.

Our greed and excessive use of resources has created a Climate Change Crisis and widescale poverty

Pope Francis says that we must look after our common home and the poor

#### **Pope Francis says:**

The fate of the planet is tied up with the fate of humanity
We cannot care for the environment without caring for each other

Can you think of people who need help:

- A) In your family or school?
- B) In our country?
- C) In the world?

#### **Group Activity**





#### Campaign

In this activity you will discover some of the ways small farmers in poor countries are being made poorer by the greed of powerful companies.

#### **Tasks**

- Decision Time!
   A quick fire question game to make decisions about how your country will grow food
- 2) Discussion about what was the result of your decisions and how it affected your country and the farmers
- 3) Looking at some real life case studies
- 4) Further background information
- 5) Step up to the plate Action
- 6) Reflect and pray

#### 1) Decision Time!

Each of you is from a different country. You are in charge of making decisions about how your country will grow food.

You need to make good decisions about how to feed the people who live in our world. Countries who make the best decisions, will be the winners.

You have got to answer 4 questions and you will have 5 seconds to decide what to do. *After each question, - someone should explain the reason for their choice* 

Question 1 – You have the chance to buy special seeds that are promised to grow big, healthy crops. Do you say yes, or no?

Yes = 1 point: No = 0 points.

Question 2 – A big company has asked your government to sell them land, so that they can grow large areas of a single crop to sell around the world. Should they say yes, or no?

Yes = 1 point: No = 0 points.

Question 3 – You have the chance to buy chemicals [pesticides] that will make your farms produce a bigger harvest. Do you say yes, or no?

Yes = 1 point: No = 0 points.

Question 4 – A big company wants to buy lots of your land so that it can breed cows [cattle] and produce beef. Do you say yes, or no?

Yes = 1 point: No = 0 points.

# 2) Discussion about what was the result of your decisions and how it affected your country and the farmers

Question 1 – The special seeds you bought had been changed so that the crops did not produce seeds to plant the following year, so the farmers had to buy seeds again and again. They got into debt and could not grow enough food for their families or to sell at local markets

Correct Ans = No.

Question 2 – Selling land to grow a single crop for the world sounded a great idea. But the crop that the big company grew was soya, and it was mostly used for chicken food. Yes, eventually people ate chicken, but when the land was used to grow a variety of vegetables, fruit and grains, it fed far more people in the local community.

Correct Ans = No.

Question 3 – Chemicals [pesticides] sound like a good idea. They helped produce a big harvest the first year, but harvests became smaller as the years went by. They also poisoned the land, so it got harder and harder to grow food. What's more, the price went up and up while the farmers became poorer and hungrier.

Correct Ans = No.

Question 4 – You sold your land to produce beef. But that land was in the rainforest and was being used by local people growing a variety of fruit trees, vegetables and other foods. They lost their land and could no longer feed their families or local communities. What's more, the trees cut down to make room for cattle had been protecting the world from climate change. Increasing storms, floods and droughts due to climate change, mean less food for everyone.

Correct Ans = No

#### The fewer points you got—the better were your decisions!

#### What do you think?

- How did you feel when you were offered the four opportunities?
- How do you think farmers feel when their land is taken from them, or when they
  have to buy seeds every year?
- The way the world grows and shares out food is called the global food system. You
  have just experienced some of the reasons why our global food system is unfair
  and broken. What were they?
- If you were a world leader, what would you do to solve one of those problems?

#### 3) Some real life Case Studies

## Step up to the plate

#### Raimundo and Kelly - Brazil

Kelly and Raimundo and their three children live in a camp on the edge of the Amazon rainforest. Here they are, working in the garden next to their home.

People living in the camp grow food using only environmentally friendly methods - no chemicals are allowed. They are also beginning to plant fruit trees as part of a sustainable plan to farm the forest.

The wealthy cattle farmer who claims to own the land Raimundo, Kelly and their family live on actually only owns 20% of his property legally. He has no legal right to their land but still tries to take it away from them.



Why is it better to use environmentally friendly ways of farming?

How would you feel if your home was taken by someone else?

### Step up to the plate

#### Long Sreyneang – Cambodia

Long Sreyneang works in a local café that serves food from the local farms, like rice and vegetables.

Throughout Cambodia, the climate crisis is causing temperatures to rise. This means rains are becoming less predictable and floods and droughts are happening more often. Extreme weather is destroying the food that farmers are growing. The farmers are having to make big changes to the way they work.

CAFOD's local experts work alongside families most at risk from the climate crisis, training them in new and simpler methods of rice farming, involving fewer sequeless water and no chemicals.



Why is using food grown locally a good idea?

How would you feel if the weather changed so much that you could not grow any food?

# Step up to the plate

#### Toma – Bangladesh

Toma lives in Bangladesh. She loves football, dancing and growing things in her garden.

Rising sea levels lead to more flooding, and climate change means it rains more, and more heavily.

It is hard to grow food because of the flooding, and homes are damaged by storms.

People in Toma's area are working hard to find new ways to protect their crops from the weather.



Why is too much rain bad for growing food?

How would you feel if the waters were rising around you and coming down from above?

# Step up to the plate

#### Cristina - Bolivia

Cristina and her family live in an area called the Altiplano in Bolivia. It is high in the Andes mountains and is hard to grow food.

CAFOD's local experts helped the family to plant a vegetable garden, build a wormery, learn about good nutrition and more.



What would you grow in your vegetable garden?

Why is eating healthily important?

#### 4) Further background information

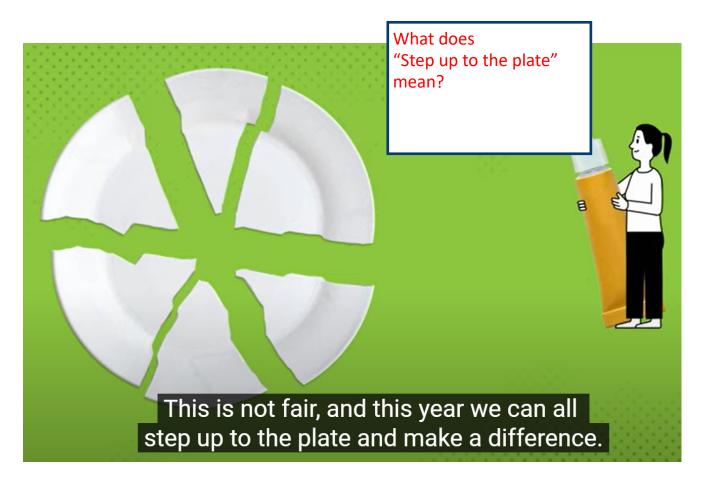


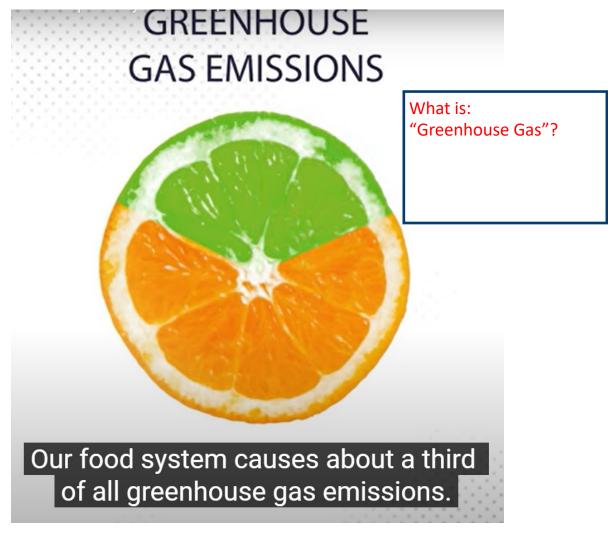


Where are people not getting enough food to eat?





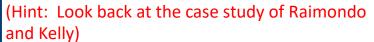








What is the rain forest in Brazil that is particularly under threat?





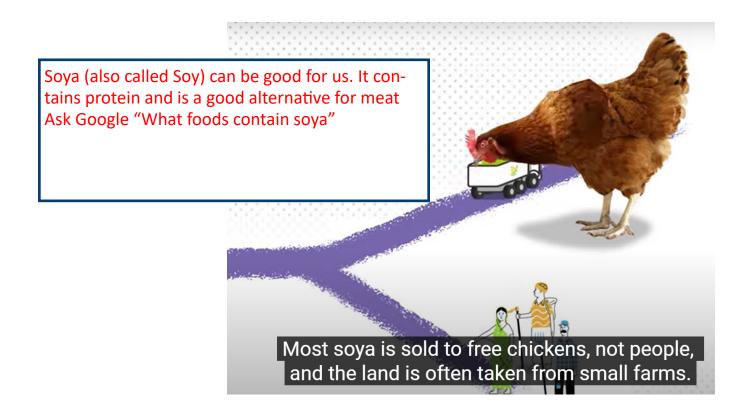


The rainforest gives us air to breathe, rain for our crops, and it's a home for animals.



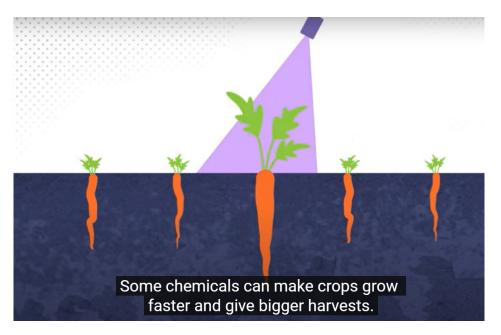


How do cows contribute to Climate Change?























When a country absorbs (eg by planting trees) all the Carbon Dioxide that it produces, it is called "Net Zero"

At the Climate Change Summit in November 2021 (called COP26) our country promised to reach Net Zero in 2050

Many people think that is not enough. Pope Francis says that we must also help to end poverty.

# STEP UP TO THE PLATE

MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD

make our voices heard and make a real difference to our global family.

#### 5) Step up to the plate Action

From all that you have learned from the slides and your discussions,
What shocks you most?
What actions should be taken to help stop poverty and climate change?

Use the "Step up to the Plate" Template on the next page to an action you would like to see taken.

Make a poster showing all the actions. Take a picture of this poster and send it to your MP or your local newspaper describing what action should be taken and why.



#### Jesus,

You understand what it is like to be hungry. Teach us to have grateful and generous hearts.

Forgive us when we waste food or don't want to share.

#### Jesus,

You welcomed everyone to your table. May we always remember that we are one family,

who share one common home, so all are invited to share the feast.

#### Jesus,

You fed the hungry crowds. Open our eyes to the needs of others and help us to follow your example, of love and service.

#### Jesus.

You come to us as bread and wine. Fill us with your kindness. Give us the appetite and strength to change the world for the better. Amen

# STEP UP TO THE PLATE!



