CONFIRMATION SESSION
Brentwood Catholic Children's Society and Catholic Social Teaching

THEME AND OPENING STATEMENT

Today we will be looking at and talking about Catholic Social Teaching with an emphasis on the dignity of the human person, solidarity and options for the poor and vulnerable and how these impact the work of the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society.

OPENING PRAYER (say together)

Loving God,
You created every person with dignity and worth.
Open our hearts to defend the life and dignity of all your people.
Strengthen our families and communities so we may work for the common good.
Guide us to stand in solidarity with our neighbors, especially the poor and vulnerable.
Bless all workers and help us uphold their rights and dignity.
Teach us to be faithful stewards of your creation, protecting the earth and all its creatures.
Lead us to build peace in our world through justice, compassion, and participation in public life.
Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Opening questions to introduce the topic

Who are the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society (BCCS) and what do they do?

BCCS is a mental health charity who support the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people in Essex and East London working both in schools, the community and in person at their Billericay centre.

What is Catholic Social Teaching?

Catholic Social Teaching emphasises the dignity of all people, the importance of community, and the need to care for the vulnerable.

How is Catholic Social Teaching relevant in our lives?

Through service to others.

How does Catholic Social Teaching relate to the work of the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society?

Let's look at some suggestions.

THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Do we respect others?

If we see someone in need, do we offer to help or do we cross the street to avoid?

If we are made in the image and likeness of God, then we are entrusted with obligations to value the dignity of every human being. This is a gift that we all share as fellow human beings; we are all infinitely loved by our Creator.

Jesus said 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' and as Saint Paul said, 'he who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law' referring to the commandments.

ACTIVITY:

Breakout discussion for three minutes:
What does Saint Paul mean when he said this? Why are there laws?

The prophet Jeremiah (1:5) wrote, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" and as a result every human being is both unique but connected through the image of God. Remembering that each human being is known by God and has a unique value should encourage others to consider the other person as something other than faceless.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that 'instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy'.

BCCS provides counselling to children and young people respecting the situations they are facing. This is meeting people at their needs.

SOLIDARITY

What is solidarity?

It can be a mutual interest or mutual support within a group. It can be Christian kinship, walking with one another, and committing ourselves to the common good.

It is not just feeling sympathy for someone in a situation but showing empathy for someone and standing alongside them when challenges are faced whether they are economic, emotional or social. This can be very similar to the dignity of the human person.

“In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers [or sisters] of mine, you did it to me”. Matthew 25:40.

Solidarity arises when we remember that we belong to each other. We reflect on this in a special way at Mass.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states,

“The Eucharist commits us to the poor. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognise Christ in the poorest.”

Groups such as the Saint Vincent De Paul Society (SVP) are dedicated to helping people in poverty and need through direct, practical support and personal visits.

ACTIVITY:

Breakout discussion for three minutes:
What examples do you see in your parish community?
For example, do you carry Mass books for an elderly person who struggles to walk to their pew?

BCCS face issues together with those who use their services. BCCS also has a family support fund and here is a case study example of how BCCS helped a young person in solidarity.

Nawaaz was a Year 11 pupil, benefitting from sessions with his BCCS therapist Susie. He is aware of financial pressures his family are under and is desperately trying to get a part time job.

His friends regularly meet up and get lunch or coffee out. Nawaaz says he is busy, but simply cannot afford to join them.

The fund provided a £25 Costa gift card and he was so appreciative.

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

Catholic social teaching frames poverty not only as a lack of material resources but also as deprivation of dignity, rights, and opportunities.

Saint Martin de Porres said “Pray not for wealth or success, but for the opportunity to serve others”.

ACTIVITY:

Breakout discussion for three minutes:
How can the confirmandi engage with the poor and vulnerable?

Are you the ‘Good Samaritan’ who will help those who need help?

Pope Francis said that the poor were not just statistics but individuals.

Do we consider the poor as a faceless collective or as individuals?

How do BCCS engage with the poor and the vulnerable?

BCCS work with children and families irrespective of their background, race, religion or no religion. Their support is centred around the child and they often support families that are referred by a Catholic priest. These families may need both material help as well as help through someone to talk about their issues with.

CONCLUSION

Take what you have learnt today and put it into practice.

Catholic Social Teaching calls for action through faith.

Saint James said that faith without works is nothing.

Do something to help someone in your parish.

Raise some funds and pray for the work of BCCS and pray for the children that they are working with.

CLOSING PRAYER

We close with the prayer of Saint Ignatius Loyola

Dear Lord,
teach me to be generous;
teach me to serve You as You deserve;
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labour and not to ask for reward
save that of knowing I am doing Your Will.
Amen

CALL TO ACTION

Want to support the work of BCCS?

Follow them on social media, promote their work, and raise some funds or sponsorship.

Visit **https://www.bccs.org.uk/get-involved/** for ideas for how to support BCCS.

bccscharity bccs_charity