



Pope for a day

In this session, young people consider some current global issues and how some of these issues affect communities in developing countries. They read statements by Pope Benedict, and formulate their own 'papal' statements on global issues.

AIM: To gain a deeper understanding of the Church as a global family, through the challenge of formulating a 'papal' statement on issues that affect communities overseas and the poorest most of all.

YOU WILL NEED:

- Newspapers
- Bibles
- Film clips from CAFOD's website
- Pope Benedict quotations

Starter

Duration: 5 minutes

Using newspapers collected in advance, produce together a list of the main issues in today's world. This could be done by each person cutting out a headline or article, highlighting the issue with a marker pen and placing it on a display board. Examples of current global issues are climate change, conflict and HIV and AIDS.



Activity 1

What should a Pope say?

Duration: 25 minutes

To learn how some issues affect people around the world, go to www.cafod.org.uk/pope to watch film clips¹ about:

- **Kenya: helping people out of poverty** (2:15)
- **Bolivia: the melting glacier** (1:24)

Note that, in both cases, poverty contributes to the problem. Ask: Why is this? If you were Pope, receiving reports from bishops in these countries, what would you say to the Church and the world about these problems? What does a Pope have to consider when he teaches? For example, being faithful to distinctively Catholic teaching even when speaking to non-Catholics, considering the poorest first – a tenet of Catholic social teaching known as the 'preferential option for the poor'. Also worth considering is the need to encourage and challenge, being authoritative yet non-political, and being aware of differing priorities in different countries. Discuss.

Show examples (see page 4) of what Pope Benedict has said about some of the world's problems and what we should do. Ask: Any reactions? What would you have said?

¹ More films are available at CAFODtv on YouTube

Activity 2

Pope for a day

Duration: 20 minutes

Assign each group of four one current world issue, e.g. conflict, racism or hunger. Supply them with a Bible. Tell them they are Pope for a day. Ask them to prepare a papal statement that explains what the Church has to say about the issue. Their statement should include:

- a description of the problem and some of its causes
- how the problem affects people's lives, especially the poorest
- what our attitude should be to this problem and to those affected
- a quote from a Gospel story that backs up their argument (suggest a story of Jesus talking to/helping non-Jews, a story of Jesus feeding the hungry, Jesus speaking about love, or a story Jesus told about the end of time)
- a sentence summarising their message and a call to action.

Suggestion: Each group member could take one of the first four bullets and spend ten minutes writing a rough draft before the group comes together to write its final sentence.

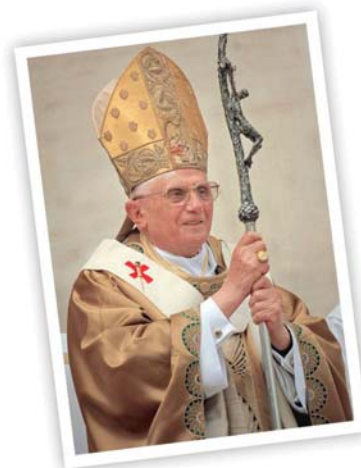
Plenary

Duration: 5 minutes

'Proclaim' the statements read out in sequence as your group 'encyclical'. Prefix your proclamation with: *"To our brother bishops, priests and deacons, men and women religious, all the Christian faithful and all people of good will"*. End with, *"Given in [place], on [day, month, year]"*.

Suggestions:

- The young people's statements may question some aspects of Catholic teaching. Leave time in a subsequent session for clarification and discussion.
- If time is short, ask young people to finish the statements at home.
- Publish completed encyclicals in parish or school newsletters, read them out at assemblies or display them on a notice board.



Arms trade
Biodiversity Climate change
Conflict Consumerism Environment
Fair Trade Globalisation HIV & AIDS
Human rights Hunger & Poverty
Racism

Pope Benedict XVI quotations

"Each day we see how much suffering there is in the world on account of different kinds of poverty, both material and spiritual. Our times call for a new readiness to assist our neighbours in need."

Deus caritas est, #30a

"The Catholic Church is committed – I reaffirm this again today – to tolerance, respect, friendship and peace between all peoples, cultures and religions."

During a visit to Cologne's main synagogue, August 2005

"People from the world's richest countries... should urge their leaders to fulfil the pledges made to reduce world poverty, especially in Africa, by the year 2015."

Statement to the Make Poverty History campaign rally in Edinburgh, 2 July 2005

"More economically developed nations should do all they can to [give] larger portions of their gross domestic product to development aid."

Caritas in veritate, #60

"God gives us the strength to fight and to suffer for love of the common good, because he is our all, our greatest hope."

Caritas in veritate, #78

"I entreat those in authority to resume, with greater determination, negotiations for a progressive and mutually agreed dismantling of nuclear weapons."

Message for World Peace Day, 2008

"It is necessary to [form] a public conscience that considers food and access to water as universal rights of all human beings, without... discrimination."

Caritas in veritate, #27

"The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole."

Caritas in veritate, #48

"Even in the most difficult and complex times... we must above all else turn to God's love."

Caritas in veritate, #79

"If you are willing, the future lies in your hands, because the talents and gifts that the Lord has placed in your hearts, shaped by an encounter with Christ, can bring real hope to the world!"

Message for World Youth Day, 2010