



**PROJECT
COMPASSION**

**UNITE
AGAINST
POVERTY**
this Lent



Catechist Resource
Secondary

 projectcompassion.org.au

Contents

Additional Resources	3
Introduction	4
<i>Unite Against Poverty</i>	5
Catholic Social Teaching (CST) Guide	6
Project Compassion Introduction Film	7
Project Compassion Prayer	8
Where We Work	9
CST Film Study Guide	10
Learning Tasks	
Sisilia's Story (Tanzania): Learning Tasks	11-15
Monoranjon's Story (Bangladesh): Learning Tasks	16-20
Manaini's Story (Fiji): Learning Tasks	21-25
Ahmad's Story (Gaza): Learning Tasks	26-31

Important Student Wellbeing

At Caritas Australia, we believe that all people should be treated with respect and dignity. Everyone has the right to feel safe, especially children and vulnerable adults. **Please consider your audience when selecting which stories and activities to share with your class.**

Our Safeguarding animation recognises that learning about challenges to the health, wellbeing and safety of others and our earth can be hard. It encourages young people to talk to their teacher or trusted adult if they're feeling worried or upset about anything they have learnt through our resources or activities. The animation also acknowledges Caritas Australia's commitment for children and vulnerable adults to feel valued and heard by encouraging them to share their great ideas with us.



[Watch Caritas Australia's Safeguarding Animation](#)

Please note: This resource contains links to external web sites. Caritas Australia takes no responsibility for the content of such sites, nor do links to such sites imply endorsement of the views expressed therein. External links are provided for informational purposes only. Access the full policy here: [Caritas Australia's Copyright Policy](#)

Other Available Resources for Schools

All our resources are online! Access the films and written stories, teaching materials and our fundraising and awareness raising ideas at caritas.org.au/project-compassion. Below is a list and short description of all the resources you can download, as well as suggestions for use.

	Resource	Description/ Suggested Use
For Students	Student Workbook	A fillable PDF students can complete and submit back to their teacher. Use weekly to 'see, judge and act'. Dedicate 20–30 mins of weekly Religious Education classes. Go beyond RE and share tasks or sections of the research with teachers from other subject areas.
	Secondary Deep Dive	An interactive Thinglink image designed as a central location for students to access information about each of the stories, as well as to help them complete activities throughout the workbook.
	AD Stories	Audio described versions of each story.
For Teachers	School's Guide	A guide for the REC, APRE or Social Justice Leader. Includes tips to plan Project Compassion for the whole school.
	Teacher Handbook	Briefly explores the curriculum and learning opportunities for Project Compassion 2026. Send to subject learning area teachers. Use as PD reading if seeking to integrate global education from a Catholic perspective across curriculum areas.
Media	Weekly Films	Watch in homeroom, assembly or as stimulus for learning tasks in the classroom. There are six films: Introduction to Project Compassion 2026, Sisilia's Story (Tanzania), Monoranjon's Story (Bangladesh) and Manaini's Story (Fiji), Ahmad's Story (Gaza), and a Thank you film.
	Photo Galleries	View photos from the field. The photos are available through the Deep Dive (interactive image) for each week. Use these photos to promote rich discussion about the 4 stories.

	Resource	Description/ Suggested Use
All Purpose	Introducing Project Compassion (PPT)	Overview of all 4 stories and the work of Caritas Australia. Share in homeroom or at assembly.
	School's Fundraising Guide	Ideas to inspire fundraising and awareness raising activities that are linked to the Project Compassion stories.
Prayer and Reflection	Ash Wednesday Liturgy	Liturgy of the Word, including distribution of the ashes.
	Prayer (PPT)	Reflection using the Project Compassion prayer and images. Use as a daily or weekly prayer for students or staff, or at an assembly.
	Weekly Reflections	Weekly reflections linking the Project Compassion stories to the Sunday Scripture readings. Use for weekly staff prayer/reflections during Lent or in RE lessons with students.
	Way of the Cross (PPT)	A reflection following the traditional Way of the Cross, to use during Holy Week. Comes with Leaders' Notes.
Telling Others	Newsletter Notices	A brief insert for your weekly school newsletter, explaining the week's Project Compassion story. Include in print/online school communications.
	Social Media Toolkit	Content and assets to share your support of Project Compassion through your social media channels.

Introduction

Welcome to Project Compassion 2026!

Caritas Australia is the international aid and development organisation of the Catholic Church in Australia and is part of one of the largest aid and development networks in the world – Caritas Internationalis – working in over 200 countries and territories.

Each year, Project Compassion runs during the six weeks of the Church season of Lent. We invite people across Australia to help us raise funds AND act in solidarity with the millions of people across the world with whom we work. We ask you to join us in building a more just and fairer world: a world in balance, at peace and free of poverty.

Project Compassion is an opportunity for students to learn about life in different countries through the personal stories of people who have participated in Caritas Australia-supported programs. The notions of our interconnectedness as one human family are embedded throughout the content and suggested learning tasks.

We endeavour to support the integration of a Catholic worldview. Catholicism is a comprehensive way of life that should animate every aspect of how we, as Catholics, view the world.

Resources 2026

The bulk of the learning tasks for each story are arranged in a 'See, Judge, Act' sequence.

This reflection–action process was first used by a Belgian Catholic priest, Joseph Cardijn (who later became a Cardinal) with Young Christian Workers prior to the first World War. This approach was also recommended in the 1961 encyclical letter written by Pope John XXIII called *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher).

See

Students encounter stories of participants involved in Caritas Australia supported projects through the text, films and photographs. Students witness the challenges and positive changes of people who experience extreme poverty and injustice.

Judge

The Catholic Social Teaching (CST) reflection tasks provide students with a framework to 'judge'.

Act

Students, in response to what they have learnt and in light of Catholic Social Teaching, practise planning personal and collective responses and start to see how their local action can have a global impact.

LENT LINK: PRAYER, FASTING, ALMSGIVING

This is a focused Religious Education task for each week that deepens the link between the Project Compassion stories, the Lenten traditions, themes and Scripture.

By making explicit links, students are encouraged to see how their actions to learn and support the work of the church, through Caritas Australia, are an extension of their faith.

Unite Against Poverty

Project Compassion 2026 invites us to **Unite Against Poverty**.

It reminds us that when we work together as a global family, we can make a real difference. Poverty is complex, but it is not inevitable. When we act with kindness, courage and generosity, we can help create a fairer world where everyone has what they need to live and grow.

We can reflect on the example of Jesus, who walked alongside the poor and marginalised and called us to do the same. His message was clear: love one another, stand with the oppressed, and respond to suffering with empathy and action.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.

Matthew 25:35-36

This is the heart of solidarity. When we recognise the dignity of every person and respond to their needs, we participate in God's mission of love and justice in the world.

Project Compassion 2026 shares the stories of individuals and communities who, with your support and the help of Caritas Australia's partners, are overcoming the challenges of poverty. Their stories show us what's possible when we unite in hope and compassion.

Introducing **Unite Against Poverty** to Your Class:

Unite Against Poverty

Help students understand that poverty is not just about lacking money, it can mean going without education, clean water, food, healthcare, or a safe place to live. Explain that by uniting and taking action together, we can make a real difference in the lives of people facing these challenges.

Ask students to think about:

- What does it mean to 'unite'?
- Who are we uniting with?
- What actions can we take as a class or school to show compassion and support?

Invite students to write a message of unity or hope for people experiencing poverty. These could be displayed around a large globe or map in your classroom, showing that we are part of a global community working together to create change.

You might also create a 'Wall of Unity' where students contribute drawings, poems, or pledges that reflect their commitment to ending poverty. These can become prayer or reflection points throughout Lent.

By taking these small but powerful steps, your class can be part of the movement to **Unite Against Poverty**, bringing the message of Jesus to life through action, love and hope.

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) Guide

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) principles cover all spheres of life – the economic, political, ecological, personal and spiritual. The principles are inspired by scripture and the writings of the Pope and other Catholic leaders about social issues.

Caritas Australia's work is shaped by the tradition of Catholic Social Teaching.

HUMAN DIGNITY

We believe every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and therefore has inherent dignity that should always be safeguarded.



SUBSIDIARITY AND PARTICIPATION

We believe all people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Subsidiarity requires that decisions are made by people closest and most affected by the issues and concerns of the community.



SOLIDARITY

We believe we are part of one human family and have a responsibility to help each person achieve their full potential.



THE COMMON GOOD

We believe the good of each human person is intimately related to the good of the whole community. We are all responsible for each other.



PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR

We believe in prioritising the women, men and children most vulnerable to extreme poverty and injustice.



CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

We believe that care for our common home is vital for the common good of all people. We believe a true ecological approach is a social approach. We are to be protectors of creation and of one another.



For more on Catholic Social Teaching, including classroom activities, short films and other resources, visit our [CST Toolkit](#).

Photo credits: Caritas Jerusalem (Middle left). Caritas Australia (remaining photos).

Project Compassion Film



<https://vimeo.com/1127387184>



Caritas
AUSTRALIA

PROJECT
COMPASSION

PROJECT COMPASSION LENTEN PRAYER

God of all love,

We remember that on the night before he died
Your son, Jesus, prayed
that his friends 'may all be one.'

Yet we see so much division in the world.
War, conflict, violence and hatred
must all distress you.

Millions of people suffer
when they don't have peace and respect.
They lack the necessities of life: food, water,
health, education and security.

We pray that we may all
Unite Against Poverty this Lent.
May our support for **Project Compassion**
be a sign to ourselves and others,
of our hope for a better world.

This Lent, we pray that our dedication
to prayer, fasting and almsgiving
will help restore your vision of justice and peace.

Guided by the Holy Spirit,
we pray in Jesus' name,

Amen.



**DONATE
HERE**



Sisilia with her mother outside their home in rural Tanzania. Photo: Caritas Australia.



projectcompassion.org.au



1800 024 413



#projectcompassion

Where we work

For over 60 years, Caritas Australia has stood alongside communities in Australia and around the world, working together to create lasting change.

GAZA



BANGLADESH



FIJI



TANZANIA



WHERE WE WORK (EXC EMERGENCIES)



FEATURED COUNTRIES

CST Film Study Guide



**Sisilia's
Story
(Tanzania)**



**Monoranjon's
Story
(Bangladesh)**



**Manaini's
Story
(Fiji)**



**Ahmad's
Story
(Gaza)**

OVERARCHING QUESTION

How are the principles of Catholic Social Teaching evident in the work of Caritas Australia?

- Human Dignity
- Preferential Option for the Poor
- Care for Our Common Home
- Solidarity
- The Common Good
- Subsidiarity and Participation

GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- **Human Dignity** – How is the Caritas Australia supported program working to upholding the dignity of the people in the community?
- **Common Good** – How are individual and social rights and responsibilities being fulfilled? How is the program benefiting the whole community?
- **Preferential Option for the Poor** – How is Caritas Australia demonstrating their commitment to working with the most vulnerable and marginalised?
- **Solidarity** – How are the Caritas Australia supported programs an example of solidarity? How is supporting Caritas Australia one way we can act in solidarity?
- **Subsidiarity and Participation** – How are the Caritas Australia supported programs enabling people to participate in their own development and in their community? How are the participants empowered to make decisions that affect them and their community?
- **Care for Our Common Home** – How are the programs encouraging environmental sustainability and equity, and respect for the environment?

Sisilia's Story

Tanzania



Sisilia in a classroom in her school in rural Tanzania. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Sisilia's Story

Tanzania

13-year-old Sisilia lives in a village in remote northern Tanzania. Life was not easy for Sisilia growing up. Her father passed away when she was one, leaving her mother to care for her and her four siblings all on her own.

Sisilia currently lives in a small, overcrowded house with only one bed, poor ventilation and no toilet. One of the main challenges she faces is access to clean and safe water. Every day, Sisilia fetches water three times, including before and after school. Prior to the installation of a water distribution point in her village, Sisilia had to walk nearly 30 mins each round trip to collect water from a dirty canal. The water was unsafe, causing frequent illness, and the long walks left Sisilia exhausted, fearful of wild animals and struggling to focus on her studies.

Lack of clean water is a major issue in Tanzania, where nearly 40% of people don't have access to basic drinking water services and 75% don't have access to basic sanitation services. ([World Bank 2022](#)).

With the support of our partner in Tanzania, the Diocese of Mbulu Development Department (DMDD), Sisilia and her school joined the A+ Successor Project.

**UNITE
AGAINST
POVERTY**
this Lent



Sisilia preparing to go to school. Photo: Caritas Australia.

The project has helped improve access to clean water at Sisilia's school by installing clean water taps at the school, a gamechanger for the school community. Children can wash their hands, drink clean water and water the school garden to grow food that they can eat for lunch. It's also easier for the schools to retain talented teachers as they know they have access to clean water on campus.

Sisilia said: **'It has helped us keep our classrooms, surrounds and toilets clean... I can also wash my hands after using the toilet or before eating, and this helps prevent sickness.'**

Through the project, Sisilia participated in a SWASH (School Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Club where she learnt about the importance of handwashing at critical times, boiling unclean water before drinking and keeping the toilets clean.

Sisilia is one of 30 students selected to join her school's SWASH Club, which uses a child-to-child approach to empower students to become advocates for change. Sisilia's active involvement has turned her into a confident leader in her community, using her knowledge to promote hygiene, sanitation and rights awareness in her community. As part of the club, children take part in public demonstrations where they teach their parents and other adults how to maintain good hygiene through the use of songs, dance, games and interactive handwashing demonstrations.

She explained: **'I now talk to parents in my neighbourhood about the importance of sending their children to school, regardless of their financial situation. I explain that education is a basic human right.'**

In addition to providing water sources at her school, the A+ Successor project has helped establish a domestic water point in Sisilia's village. Sisilia now needs to only walk two minutes to collect water, which has drastically cut down time needed on water collection.

Sisilia's story demonstrates how lack of clean water, long walking distances and poor living conditions directly affect children's ability to focus on education. Addressing these needs can lead to improved attendance, performance and aspirations – and young leaders like Sisilia are the catalyst for that change.

With greater access to clean water at school and at home, Sisilia is determined to continue pursuing her education. Her favourite subjects are Science, English and Maths. Sisilia's dream is to one day become a pilot and she hopes the time she saves collecting water can be used to focus on her studies. She also hopes to one day build a sturdy and comfortable house for her mum and siblings to live in together.



A CATHOLIC WORLDVIEW (JUDGE)

The Common Good

- Something 'belonging to all and meant for all', e.g. the climate (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* n23)
- An idea that ensures people reach their full potential as individuals and communities
- What happens when individual rights to personal possessions and community resources are balanced with our collective responsibility to meet the needs of others

A. How does Caritas Australia demonstrate 'The Common Good' in Sisilia's story?

B. How is supporting Project Compassion an example of acting for The Common Good?

Scripture Connection - James 2:14-17



Read the Scripture passage and reflect on the following:

What does it mean to 'act on their faith'?

What's the difference between saying we care about something and actually doing something about it?

Can you think of a time when someone's actions spoke louder than their words? What impact did it have?

How could schools or communities show their values through action rather than just talking about them?

FAITH IN ACTION (ACT)

PRAYER

Write a prayer inspired by Sisilia's story.

FASTING

Reflect on all the ways and times you use water throughout your day (showers, taps, cooking).

Choose one way to reduce water waste each day as an act of solidarity with people who do not have easy access to safe water.

Daily Journal or Reflection

Keep a simple journal about your experience.

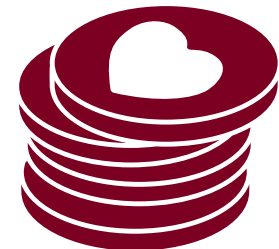
Prompt questions:

- What ways did I use water today that I usually don't think about?
- What change did I make today? Was it easy or hard to make this change?
- How did this activity help me understand what life might be like for someone without safe water?
- What did I learn about myself or my habits through this activity?

ALMSGIVING

Calculate how much you currently spend on one 'extra' (e.g. coffee, snacks, streaming subscription). Imagine donating that to Project Compassion – who support many people like Sisilia in different ways.

Take a moment to reflect on how a small contribution from you could make a big difference for someone else.



Monoranjon's Story

Bangladesh

Monoranjon lives in a region in southwest Bangladesh that is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Photo: Caritas Australia

Monoranjon's Story

Bangladesh

Monoranjon lived a life fraught with challenges before joining Caritas Bangladesh's Community Managed Sustainable Livelihoods and Resilience Program (CMLRP-II). As a day labourer, he struggled to make ends meet, facing the constant threats of natural disasters like cyclones, storms, and heat waves. Poverty, food insecurity, and the threat posed by forest animals compounded his difficulties. With limited education and the responsibility of caring for his family, Monoranjon's life was a constant battle to make basic ends meet.

Without enough income from his crops and fishing, Monoranjon was at risk of being unable to afford school fees and supplies for his children. Without completing school, his children face a high risk of remaining in the cycle of poverty.

Facing severe issues with salinity and sea level rise, it is crucial that more people receive support in the area. Bangladesh's most impoverished populations are disproportionately affected by and vulnerable to the current and predicted effects of climate change.

Monoranjon explained: **'In this dry season no seedlings come out from seeds. Due to heat of the sun and lack of water, plants are dying.'**

**UNITE
AGAINST
POVERTY**
this Lent



Monoranjon lives in a region in southwest Bangladesh that is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Photo: Caritas Australia

In the next decade, 17% of Bangladesh will need to relocate as a result of climate change ([UN, 2021](#)). According to the World Risk Index, Bangladesh is ranked ninth in the world of countries most at risk of being affected by disasters ([World Risk Report, 2024](#)). Home to the world's eighth highest population, this could trigger a crisis of significant magnitude. There is a strong chance that much of the region Monoranjon lives in will be under water within the next thirty years.

Monoranjon also explained:

Disasters come at any time the area gets flooded. Storms devastate us. Our houses are destroyed... Suddenly tide comes from the sea and the area could be flooded, completely – I mean homes. Fish farms are all washed away, with millions of takas lost.

Areas neighbouring to the south have already flooded, and with nowhere to go, Caritas Bangladesh reported families living in flooded homes, on makeshift beds tied to their ceilings to stay dry. In the southwest coastal region alone, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, World Food Programme, and the World Bank have counted almost 10 million people facing poverty, and of those, almost 6 million cannot meet their daily minimum nutrition Needs ([World Bank Group, 2020](#)).

Joining the livelihoods program brought hope back into Monoranjon's life. Through peer learning sessions, he gained invaluable knowledge and skills in climate-resilient farming techniques.

With the support of Caritas Bangladesh, Monoranjon also received co-investment assistance and learned about vaccination techniques, significantly reducing the mortality rate among his livestock. He has been able to share this knowledge with his family, neighbours and local community, which has elevated his standing within the community.

Monoranjon also takes part in local groups that grow mangroves and raise awareness about their role in the climate crisis. Monoranjon works with his community to plant mangrove seedlings on the mudflat coastlines across the delta they live on, to prevent further erosion, flooding and sea level rise of their lands.

Without support, the most vulnerable populations will not only be displaced and landless, but with land loss and reduced livelihoods, at great risk of exploitation. The future doesn't look bright for many who live in the southern region of Bangladesh, but the support of Caritas Australia's donors and others provide a hope that more people will be able to survive this impending emergency.

Along with your generous support, this program is also supported by the Australian Government, through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



A CATHOLIC WORLDVIEW (JUDGE)

Preferential Option for the Poor

CST

- The act of prioritising the needs of the poor over the desires of the rich, the rights of workers over profits and the preservation of the environment over its exploitation
- A way of responding in love to the unjust circumstances in which millions of people live.

A. How does Caritas Australia demonstrate the 'preferential option for the poor' in Monoranjon's story?

B. How is supporting Project Compassion an example of the Preferential Option for the Poor?

Scripture Connection – Matthew 25:31–46



Read the Scripture passage and reflect on the following:

- A.** How does Jesus' teaching in this passage emphasise the importance of caring for the poor and vulnerable as a measure of true discipleship?

- B.** In what ways does this passage challenge us to live out the Preferential Option for the Poor in our everyday lives?

FAITH IN ACTION (ACT)

PRAYER

Write a prayer inspired by Monoranjon's story.

FASTING

Personal Fasting Challenge (24 hours)

Choose a fasting practice (e.g. skip one meal, give up snacks or sweets, or take a break from screens and online activities).

Offer your fast in solidarity with people who are hungry or struggling due to poverty and climate change.

Daily Journal or Reflection (during fast)

Keep a simple journal of your feelings, challenges and any insights about hunger or sacrifice.

Prompt questions:

- How did fasting affect your thoughts or emotions?
- What did you learn about those who fast because they have no choice?
- How can this experience inspire you to act for justice?

ALMSGIVING

Set Up a Fundraising Campaign (2–3 weeks)

Organise a fundraising drive during Lent (can be longer or shorter based on your timetable).

Ideas for fundraising:

- Host a Lent Event
- Run The BIG Water Walk at your school
- Casual dress days with a donation
- Bake sales or food stalls
- Recycle drive or sale of second-hand goods
- Social media awareness posts encouraging donations
- Send money to Caritas Australia to assist them in supporting people like Monoranjon.



Manaini's Story

Fiji

Manaini sells fresh fruits and vegetables by the roadside in a small village in Fiji.
Photo: Caritas Australia

Manaini's Story

Fiji

Manaini lives in a small village in northern Fiji. Life was always a struggle. Almost one quarter of Fiji's people live in poverty, and in rural areas the rate is even higher. Jobs are scarce, and most families survive on what they grow.

Meals in Manaini's home were simple and not always healthy. Sometimes it was just cassava or sweet potato with tea. If she could not afford something, her family went without and the family often lacked variety in their diet. Leftover crops were wasted when fed to pigs and chickens.

Manaini's greatest fear was for her children's future. With tears in her eyes, she said:

The things I worry about the most is my kids' education. The requirements that need to be met are hard for me to try to achieve to suit their needs and wants in their education with my daily income.

Compounding this, communities across Fiji are facing a health crisis. Many families like Manaini's have to resort to buying high calorie food for survival, at the cost of their long-term health. This shift away from traditional diets, once rich in fresh fish, root vegetables, and fruit, has contributed to a drastic rise in preventable health issues, particularly among low-income communities.

**UNITE
AGAINST
POVERTY**
this Lent



Manaini sells fresh fruits and vegetables that she and her community have grown and packaged on their farms, by the roadside in a small village in Fiji. Photo: Caritas Australia

Diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, and heart disease are now common. Four out of five deaths in Fiji are caused by these life-threatening diseases.

Viloki, who works with Caritas Australia's partner, FRIEND (Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development), explained:

Fiji has one of the highest rates in the Pacific in terms of non-communicable diseases. That's like 80% of the people here have one or the other form of non-communicable diseases, including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart related diseases, and these are mostly attributed to the lifestyle they have, the eating habits they have. Every eight hours, there are three amputations.

With the help of local partner, FRIEND, Manaini joined training in food processing. She learnt how to use leftovers from crops like cassava, taro and breadfruit to make flour. She now makes roti and pancakes at home instead of buying expensive flour from the supermarket. This means healthier meals and big savings.

She explained, **'After the food processing training, we learnt how to make use of the food that was available. We learnt a new skill which allows us to make use of the food.'**

Manaini received seeds from the project, enabling her to grow a greater variety of food in her garden. She also learnt to make organic fertiliser and pesticides from plants. With the women's group she bakes cakes and pies from root crop flour to sell at a roadside stall. They have already earned \$200.

Her daughter joined financial literacy training and shared the lessons at home. The family now manages their income more wisely and no longer wastes what they earn.

The project also brought solar lights to the village. Before, nights were dark and unsafe. Families used kerosene lamps if they could afford the fuel. Now, Manaini's children can play safely, and elderly people can walk safely at night.

Manaini is proud of her progress and still dreams of more. She hopes to expand the women's business and one day bring solar power to the village. She said, **'The project as a whole has a lot of value in my life as it totally changed the life of my family and even the community.'**

Finally, she shared her gratitude. **'I'd like to thank those financially supporting this training which has helped us women and our community in general.'**

Along with your generous support, this program is also supported by the Australian Government, through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



A CATHOLIC WORLDVIEW (JUDGE)

Human Dignity

CST

- A belief that every person is made in the image of God and is intrinsically valuable and worthy of respect, simply because they are human
- A quality of being human, independent of ethnicity, creed, gender, sexuality, age or ability
- A reality challenged by poverty, hunger, lack of water and injustice

A. How does Caritas Australia demonstrate 'human dignity' in Manaini's story?

B. How is supporting Project Compassion an example of Human Dignity in action?

Scripture Connection - John 6:1-14



In this Gospel story, Jesus multiplies a small amount of food to feed a large crowd.

Manaini learned to use food that was going to waste to create flour.

What do these stories teach us about valuing what we already have and seeing possibility where others might see limits or waste?

When have you seen something small or simple make a big difference?

How could you use your own talents and skills to help others?

FAITH IN ACTION (ACT)

PRAYER

Write a prayer inspired by Manaini's story.

FASTING

Many people in countries around the world face hunger due to poverty and can only afford very simple meals of rice or grains.

This Lent, challenge yourself to have one simple meal each week in place of a more elaborate one, as a way to stand in solidarity with them and reflect on the gift of food in your own life.

Daily Journal or Reflection

After eating your simple meal, write a short reflection. You could include:

Prompt questions:

- How did eating simply make you feel?
- What did you notice about the difference between this and your usual meals?
- What does this experience teach you about gratitude for the food you have?

ALMSGIVING

Manaini is putting her newly learned skills to good use by growing produce and baking goods to sell.

How can you put your time, talents or treasure towards helping others this Lent?

Responding to Emergencies: Ahmad's Story

Camp for displaced people in Gaza. Photo: Caritas Jerusalem.

Disclaimer

This story was prepared in September 2025. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza continues to evolve daily and circumstances on the ground may have changed since the resource's production.

Content Warning

The following story includes real images and information from Gaza, which some readers may find distressing.

Ahmad's Story

Gaza

When war broke out in Gaza in October 2023, Caritas Jerusalem staff member Ahmad found his life and work transformed overnight. Residents living in the northern Gaza Strip – like Ahmad and his family – were ordered to evacuate.

He recalls:

We felt like this was unlike any other previous wars...we experienced what it was like to leave our homes, our neighbourhoods, our streets, our friends, our family, and the place where we were born and lived our whole lives. We did not want to leave, but the bombing was so cruel that we had to abandon our house in Gaza and head south.

Forced to evacuate under heavy bombardment, Ahmad and his family sought shelter in the city of Khan Younis. Carrying almost nothing – no food, mattresses, or blankets – they sought refuge with friends' relatives. At first, the area was quieter, and they hoped the fighting would soon end. But weeks stretched into months, food prices soared and access to essentials grew scarce.

Their ordeal worsened on December 12, 2023, when the house they were staying in was bombed at 4:00 am. Ahmad was buried under rubble, his eardrum ruptured by the blast. Emerging in darkness and chaos, he discovered that his brother had survived with devastating injuries, losing one leg and suffering severe damage to the other.

**UNITE
AGAINST
POVERTY**
this Lent



Ahmad sits in the rubble of a destroyed building in Gaza. Photo: Caritas Jerusalem

Ahmad said: **'From that moment on, the war changed for me, and my family and I became a significant part of this profound suffering,'**

At the hospital, Ahmad stayed by his brother's side for two months as he underwent daily surgeries. Conditions were dire: too few doctors, limited equipment, and operations that took longer than three hours would often be postponed or cancelled entirely. Meanwhile, Ahmad's parents, displaced again from Khan Younis, rented a single-room shelter in Rafah, only for that, too, to be bombed, injuring his uncle and aunt. With no safe options, his family eventually joined Ahmad at the hospital, living in a tent for months.

Even the hospital, once a place of refuge, became unsafe when fighting reached Rafah. The family was displaced again, moving between a camp in Khan Younis, an empty home in Hamad City, and finally Deir al-Balah. At each stage, they lost everything they had managed to gather.

Through these repeated displacements, Ahmad found strength and solace in his work as part of Caritas Jerusalem's Media and Communications team.

He explains:

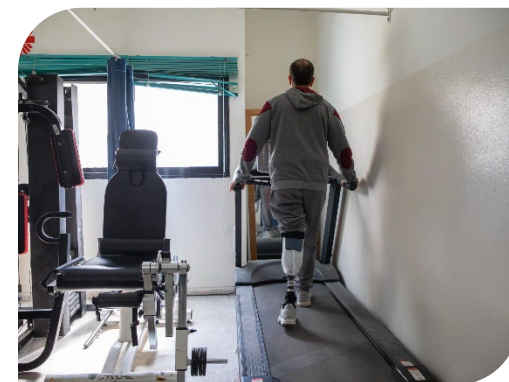
Thank God we work at Caritas, allowing us to serve people in the most challenging conditions despite the lack of medicine, How beautiful it is to see a mother or child come to you for help and to be able to provide them with support in the most difficult circumstances. This organisation helps us make our voices heard, which has brightened our days.

Families in Gaza are enduring catastrophic conditions as hostilities escalate and basic necessities for survival vanish. Deaths from starvation and severe malnutrition are rising daily. Amid relentless violence, people are grappling with death, injury, forced displacement and deep psychological trauma. There is no safe place left in Gaza.

Yet amid devastation, Ahmad's determination to serve his community endures. His faith and his work with Caritas have given him purpose. Even in the face of personal injury, repeated displacement, and loss, he continues to stand with his community, walking side by side with those who suffer, with hope for a better future.

Ahmad stated: **'I hope this ordeal ends so we can go back to rebuild Gaza, our children's future, our country, and our organisation.'**

Ahmad's story is a reminder that Caritas' mission of accompaniment is lived not only through its programs, but through the courage and resilience of its frontline staff.



A CATHOLIC WORLDVIEW (JUDGE)

Solidarity

CST

- A firm and persevering commitment to the common good, which reminds us that everything is related
- The act of standing shoulder to shoulder with others
- A way of saying, 'I'm here with you'.

A. How does Caritas Australia demonstrate 'solidarity' in Ahmad's story?

B. How is supporting Project Compassion an example of Solidarity?

Scripture Connection – Micah 6:8



What does it mean to 'act justly' when we see suffering or injustice in the world?

In what ways does Ahmad demonstrate mercy or compassion toward others in his community?

What does 'walking humbly' mean to you and how might it shape the way you respond to people in need?

FAITH IN ACTION (ACT)

PRAYER

Write a prayer inspired by Ahmad's story.

FASTING

People in Gaza often face power cuts and live with limited access to electricity.

This week, try going without lights, TV, or other powered devices for one evening.

Spend that time reflecting, praying, or talking with others about how you can stand in solidarity with those who live without these basic comforts.

Daily Journal or Reflection

At the end of the week, jot down your thoughts or feelings.

Prompt questions:

- *What was it like to go without electricity?*
- *What did I notice or appreciate more?*
- *How did this help me understand a little more what life is like for people in Gaza?*

ALMSGIVING

In Gaza, families face daily struggles because of conflict and displacement. Yet even in these difficult times, people like Ahmad keep helping others through small but powerful acts of compassion.

During Lent, we can stand with people like Ahmad by turning our own acts of kindness into signs of hope.

Brainstorm small acts of kindness you could do each day or each week during Lent and make a commitment to put these ideas into action.

Some ideas might include:

- Donate to Project Compassion.
- Sit with someone who is alone at lunch.
- Write a thank you note to a teacher, staff member or parent.

You might like to record your acts of kindness in a journal to reflect back on.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA
PROJECT
COMPASSION

Unite Against Poverty this Lent

