Upper Primary

Teacher Handbook









CARITAS AUSTRALIA

PROJECT COMPASSION

Unite Against Poverty this Lent

2027

Caritas AUSTRALIA

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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

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 new Safeguarding animation recognises that learning about challenges to the health, wellbeing and safety of others and our earth can be hard and 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.

Please use our animation before sharing the Project Compassion resources with your students.

RESOURCES FOR LOWER PRIMARY

The Project Compassion stories for Primary (F–2) are presented as Photo Storybooks and are available for download here: Photo Storybooks

There is also an accompanying series of short films suitable for Primary students. Links for these are included in the relevant Learning Tasks.

Learning Tasks include: a weekly story with discussion questions, a photo study, a country study, cross-curricula activities, CST link and RE Link and prayer.

Resource Guide

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

	Resource	Description/ Suggested Use
For Students	Photo Storybooks	A Photo Storybook for each Project Compassion story, designed especially for Primary (F–2) students. Narrated versions and audio described versions also available here.
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	Available in Lower Primary, Upper Primary and Secondary versions, provides an explanation of the Project Compassion resources. Briefly explores the curriculum and learning opportunities within Project Compassion.
All Purpose	Introducing Project Compassion (PPT)	Overview of all 4 featured Project Compassion programs and the work of Caritas Australia.
	School's Fundraising Guide	Ideas to inspire fundraising and awareness raising activities linked to the Project Compassion stories. Visit projectcompassion.org.au/schools to register your fundraising activities!
Media	Films	❑ Project Compassion Introduction Film ❑ 'Day in the Life' films for primary schools: Solomon Islands, Cambodia and Ethiopia ❑ Story film: Patricia (upper primary)
	Photo Galleries	View photos from the field. Photos for each story are available through the interactive Primary Student Zone.

	Resource	Description/ Suggested Use
Prayer and Reflection	Ash Wednesday Liturgy	Liturgy of the Word, including distribution of the ashes.
	Prayer (PPT)	The Project Compassion prayer with beautiful images. Use as a daily or weekly prayer for students or staff, or at an assembly.
	Weekly Scripture Reflections for Teachers	Weekly reflections for staff, linking the Project Compassion stories to the Sunday Scripture readings. Use for weekly staff reflections during Lent.
	Way of the Cross (PPT)	A reflection following the Way of the Cross, to use during Holy Week. Leaders' Notes included.
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. Use on school social media and website.
	Social Media Toolkit	Content and assets to share your support of Project Compassion through your social media channels.

Introduction

Welcome to Project Compassion 2027!

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 understand that the curriculum leaves little room for additional content, so we endeavour to offer compelling and interactive content that can be unpacked with high impact teaching strategies, higher order thinking and collaborative learning tasks that capture your students' imagination, intellect, compassion and will to act for social justice.

Resources 2027

In addition to materials for each week, this year we have we have included general Religious Education tasks to support the ease of integration across Learning Areas:

- **Lent Link (p. 16)** aims to deepen the connection between the Project Compassion stories and the Lenten traditions of fasting, praying and almsgiving. By making explicit links, students are encouraged to see how their actions support the work of the church through Caritas Australia and are an extension of their faith.
- **CST Link** for each story introduces students to Catholic Social Teaching principles and supports them to identify CSTs in action.
- **RE Link** provides discussion questions and suggestions to link Project Compassion stories to the themes and Bible texts in Religious Education curricula across Australia.

We also endeavour to support the integration of a Catholic worldview throughout various Learning Areas.

A series of teacher-led tasks to accompany the written stories are provided. Students encounter a participant in a Caritas Australia project by engaging with their story through the text, films and photographs. Students can witness the challenges and positive changes of people who experience extreme poverty and injustice.

The Project Compassion Student Workbook

This a global education workbook supporting students to learn more about each of the featured countries.

Download the Student Workbook.

For more information about Caritas Australia and Project Compassion, visit our website.

About the Theme

The theme of Project Compassion 2027 is ***Unite Against Poverty***. It reminds us that when people work together, change is possible.

Poverty is more than not having enough money. It can mean not having the things people need to live safely and well, such as food, clean water, shelter, health care, education or opportunities.

As members of God's global family, we are called to care for one another and stand alongside people experiencing challenges. Through prayer, learning, fundraising and action, Project Compassion encourages us to recognise our shared humanity and respond with compassion and hope.

When people come together to share their skills, resources and strengths, they can help build communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. By working together, we can create a fairer and more just world and help bring about God's vision of hope, dignity and peace for all.

> *Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.*
>
> **Galatians 6:2**

Introducing the Theme to Your Class:

Unite Against Poverty

Help students understand that poverty means some people do not have the things they need like food, clean water, a safe home or a chance to go to school. Explain that when we work together and care for others, we can help make life better for people who need it.

Ask students to think about:

What does it mean to work together?

How can we help others who don't have what they need?

What can our class or school do to show kindness and care?

Invite students to draw or write a short message of hope for people around the world. You could display these around a globe or map to show how we are all connected.

You might also make a "Wall of Unity" where students add drawings, kind words, or simple promises to help others. This can be used for prayer or reflection during Lent.

By taking these small but caring steps, your class can help share Jesus' message of love, kindness, and hope.

Curriculum:
Religious Education and beyond

PROJECT COMPASSION AND THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Linking the themes of Project Compassion with the curriculum is an opportunity for students to engage more deeply with justice and the work of Caritas Australia. The stories and learning tasks featured can relate broadly to the following Australian Curriculum areas.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THEMES ACROSS AUSTRALIA

There are many Religious Education curricula around the country, however it is not surprising that there are also many common themes. We have drawn on these common themes:

- Living the mission of Jesus
- Catholic Social Teachings: Human Dignity, Preferential Option for the Poor, Solidarity, Subsidiarity and Participation, Care for Our Common Home and The Common Good
- Initiation and belonging
- Action for justice and peace.

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

People of the Asia region are diverse in backgrounds, experiences, stories, religions, beliefs and perspectives. (AAK1). **Look for Reaksmey's Story (Cambodia).**

Sustainability

Sustainable futures are achieved through informed individual, community, business and political action that values local, national and global equity and fairness across generations into the future (SF1). **Look for Patricia'S Story (Solomon Islands) and Yeshareg's Story (Ethiopia).**

GENERAL CAPABILITIES KEY IDEAS

Intercultural Understanding

Intercultural understanding encourages students to reflect on their thoughts and feelings when taking on a range of perspectives. They learn to mediate perspectives to pursue inclusive and equitable outcomes.

Personal and Social Capability

Students gain an understanding of the role of advocacy in contemporary society. They learn to build their capacity to take responsibility for their social, physical and natural environments.

Ethical Understanding

In developing and acting with ethical understanding, students: understand the role that values (see Catholic Social Teaching Guide page 15), rights and responsibilities, and norms have in ethical decisions.

Curriculum Links

Year 3	Year 4
ENGLISH Understand that cooperation with others depends on shared understanding of social conventions, including turn-taking language, which vary according to the degree of formality. (AC9E3LA01) Identify how images extend the meaning of a text. (AC9E3LA09) Use interaction skills to contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas. (AC9E3LY02) Use comprehension strategies when listening and viewing to build literal and inferred meaning, and begin to evaluate texts by drawing on a growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features. (AC9E3LY05) Plan, create, edit and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive written and multimodal texts, using visual features, appropriate form and layout, with ideas grouped in simple paragraphs, mostly correct tense, topic-specific vocabulary and correct spelling of most high-frequency and phonetically regular words. (AC9E3LY06) **MATHEMATICS** Identify which metric units are used to measure everyday items; use measurements of familiar items and known units to make estimates. (AC9M3M01) Measure and compare objects using familiar metric units of length, mass and capacity, and instruments with labelled markings. (AC9M3M02) Recognise the relationships between dollars and cents and represent money values in different ways. (AC9M3M06) **HASS** The similarities and differences between places in Australia and neighbouring countries in terms of their natural, managed and constructed features. (AC9HS3K05) Why people participate within communities and how students can actively participate and contribute to communities. (AC9HS3K07) Develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues. (AC9HS3S01) Locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources, including annotated timelines and maps. (AC9HS3S02) Propose actions or responses to an issue or challenge that consider possible effects of actions. (AC9HS3S06)	**ENGLISH** Explore language used to develop relationships in formal and informal situations. (AC9E4LA01) Listen for key points and information to carry out tasks and contribute to discussions, acknowledging another opinion, linking a response to the topic, and sharing and extending ideas and information. (AC9E4LY02) Use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning, to expand topic knowledge and ideas, and evaluate texts. (AC9E4LY05) Plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, using visual features, relevant linked ideas, complex sentences, appropriate tense, synonyms and antonyms, correct spelling of multisyllabic words and simple punctuation. (AC9E4LY06) **MATHEMATICS** Choose and use estimation and rounding to check and explain the reasonableness of calculations including the results of financial transactions. (AC9M4N07) Interpret unmarked and partial units when measuring and comparing attributes of length, mass, capacity, duration and temperature, using scaled and digital instruments and appropriate units. (AC9M4M01) **HASS** The importance of environments, including natural vegetation and water sources, to people and animals in Australia and on another continent. (AC9HS4K05) The roles of local government and how members of the community use and contribute to local services. (AC9HS4K08) Diversity of cultural, religious and/or social groups to which they and others in the community belong, and their importance to identity. (AC9HS4K09) Develop questions to guide investigations about people, events, places and issues. (AC9HS4S01) Locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources, including annotated timelines and maps. (AC9HS4S02) Propose actions or responses to an issue or challenge that consider possible effects of actions. (AC9HS4S06)

Curriculum Links

Year 3	Year 4
SCIENCE Consider how people use scientific explanations to meet a need or solve a problem. (AC9S3H02) Pose questions to explore observed patterns and relationships and make predictions based on observations. (AC9S3I01)	**SCIENCE** Consider how people use scientific explanations to meet a need or solve a problem. (AC9S4H02) Follow procedures to make and record observations, including making formal measurements using familiar scaled instruments and using digital tools as appropriate. (AC9S4I03)

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION (HPE)

Investigate how success, challenge, setbacks and failure strengthen resilience and identities in a range of contexts. (AC9HP4P01)

Describe how valuing diversity influences wellbeing and identify actions that promote inclusion in their communities. (AC9HP4P05)

Participate in physical activities in natural and outdoor settings to examine factors that can influence their own and others' participation. (AC9HP4M05)

TECHNOLOGIES (DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGIES)

Describe how forces and the properties of materials affect function in a product or system. (AC9TDE4K02)

Explore needs or opportunities for designing, and test materials, components, tools, equipment and processes needed to create designed solutions. (AC9TDE4P01)

Select and use materials, components, tools, equipment and techniques to safely make designed solutions. (AC9TDE4P03)

Use given or co-developed design criteria including sustainability to evaluate design ideas and solutions. (AC9TDE4P04)

THE ARTS

Use the elements of dance to choreograph dance that communicates ideas, perspectives and/or meaning. (AC9ADA4C01)

Practise and perform dances in informal settings. (AC9ADA4P01)

Use media languages, media technologies and production processes to construct representations that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning. (AC9AMA4C01)

Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning. (AC9AVA4C01)

Share and/or display artworks and/or visual arts practice in informal settings. (AC9AVA4P01)

Curriculum Links

Year 5	Year 6
ENGLISH Use appropriate interaction skills including paraphrasing and questioning to clarify meaning, make connections to own experience, and present and justify an opinion or idea. (AC9E5LY02) Use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning to evaluate information and ideas. (AC9E5LY05) Plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts whose purposes may be imaginative, informative and persuasive, developing ideas using visual features, text structure appropriate to the topic and purpose, text connectives, expanded noun groups, specialist and technical vocabulary, and punctuation including dialogue punctuation. (AC9E5LY06) **MATHEMATICS** Use mathematical modelling to solve practical problems involving additive and multiplicative situations including financial contexts; formulate the problems, choosing operations and efficient calculation strategies, using digital tools where appropriate; interpret and communicate solutions in terms of the situation. (AC9M5N09) Choose appropriate metric units when measuring the length, mass and capacity of objects; use smaller units or a combination of units to obtain a more accurate measure. (AC9M5M01) **HASS** Develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems. (AC9HS5S01) Propose actions or responses to issues or challenges and use criteria to assess the possible effects. (AC9HS5S06)	**ENGLISH** Use interaction skills and awareness of formality when paraphrasing, questioning, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, and sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions. (AC9E6LY02) Use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning, and to connect and compare content from a variety of sources. (AC9E6LY05) Plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts whose purposes may be imaginative, informative and persuasive, using paragraphs, a variety of complex sentences, expanded verb groups, tense, topic-specific and vivid vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and visual features. (AC9E6LY06) **MATHEMATICS** Use mathematical modelling to solve practical problems involving natural and rational numbers and percentages, including in financial contexts; formulate the problems, choosing operations and efficient calculation strategies, and using digital tools where appropriate; interpret and communicate solutions in terms of the situation, justifying the choices made. (AC9M6N09) Convert between common metric units of length, mass and capacity; choose and use decimal representations of metric measurements relevant to the context of a problem. (AC9M6M01) **HASS** The geographical diversity and location of places in the Asia region, and its location in relation to Australia. (AC9HS6K04) Australia's interconnections with other countries and how these change people and places. (AC9HS6K05) Develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems. (AC9HS6S01) Propose actions or responses to issues or challenges and use criteria to assess the possible effects. (AC9HS6S06)

Curriculum Links

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Year 5	Year 6
SCIENCE Examine how particular structural features and behaviours of living things enable their survival in specific habitats. (AC9S5U01) Investigate how scientific knowledge is used by individuals and communities to identify problems, consider responses and make decisions. (AC9S5H02) Use equipment to observe, measure and record data with reasonable precision, using digital tools as appropriate. (AC9S5I03)	**SCIENCE** Investigate the physical conditions of a habitat and analyse how the growth and survival of living things is affected by changing physical conditions. (AC9S6U01) Investigate how scientific knowledge is used by individuals and communities to identify problems, consider responses and make decisions. (AC9S6H02) Use equipment to observe, measure and record data with reasonable precision, using digital tools as appropriate. (AC9S6I03)
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION (HPE) Describe and demonstrate how respect and empathy can be expressed to positively influence relationships. (AC9HP6P04) Describe and implement strategies to value diversity in their communities. (AC9HP6P05) Adapt and modify movement skills across a variety of situations. (AC9HP6M01) Investigate how different movement concepts related to effort, space, time, objects and people can be applied to improve movement outcomes. (AC9HP6M03) **TECHNOLOGIES (DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGIES)** Explain how people in design and technologies occupations consider competing factors including sustainability in the design of products, services and environments. (AC9TDE6K01) Explain how characteristics and properties of materials, systems, components, tools and equipment affect their use when producing designed solutions. (AC9TDE6K05) Select and use suitable materials, components, tools, equipment and techniques to safely make designed solutions. (AC9TDE6P03) Negotiate design criteria including sustainability to evaluate design ideas, processes and solutions. (AC9TDE6P04) **THE ARTS** Explore ways that the elements of dance are combined to communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in dance across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts. (AC9ADA6E01) Manipulate the elements of dance and/or choreographic devices to choreograph dances that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning. (AC9ADA6C01) Practise and perform dances using technical and expressive skills in informal and/or formal settings. (AC9ADA6P01) Use media languages, media technologies and production processes to construct media arts works that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning for specific audiences. (AC9AMA6C01) Experiment with, document and reflect on ways to use a range of visual conventions, visual arts processes, and materials. (AC9AVA6D01) Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to plan and create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning. (AC9AVA6C01)	

Caritas Q&As

Explore the different stories, programs and issues for each of the Project Compassion stories with our Caritas Q&As.

WHAT ARE CARITAS Q&As?

During Project Compassion, Caritas Australia is offering the chance to interact online with our Programs staff.

Caritas Q&As are 30-minute sessions hosted by Caritas Australia on Zoom. The sessions are a unique opportunity for students to connect with Caritas-supported programs and to learn more about the impact of their generous donations.

Caritas Q&As are open to students in Years 4–12 and are available across all time zones.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

Caritas Q&As run across Lent during school term and will focus on a different Project Compassion story and program.

Help prepare your students for a Caritas Q&As by:

- showing them the relevant Project Compassion video
- working through our Project Compassion school resources or relevant social justice resources
- guiding them to create a question to ask Caritas staff.

HOW DO I REGISTER?

Go to the Caritas Australia website to register your class in the session that suits you.

Register your class



Caritas Q&A Timetable

All times listed below are AEDT. Please adjust for your time zone.
Note: Times are subject to change prior to Lent, depending on our program partners' availability. Maximum of 10 classes per session.

		Wednesday 17 February	Thursday 18 February
Patricia's Story (Solomon Islands)	**Primary (Y4–6)**	12:15pm	2:30

		Wednesday 24 February
Reaksmey's Story (Cambodia)	**Primary (Y4–6)**	2:30pm

		Thursday 4 March
Yeshareg's Story (Ethiopia)	**Primary (Y4–6)**	12:15pm



Register at https://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion/caritas-q-a/

Fundraise Online

Raise funds the easy way - online!

No cash at your school? No problem!

Setting up your schools online fundraising page is simple!

Visit: projectcompassion.org.au/schools

Tips for success at your school:

• Create teams for classes or houses to add a little friendly competition!

• Share your fundraising page and QR code with your school community to spread the word!

• Access awesome tools and resources to make Project Compassion at your school the best yet!

Register your fundraiser

Note: If you placed your resource order online, you've already completed this step and set up your page. Simply go to projectcompassion.org.au to log in to your school's online dashboard!

1. HEAD TO: projectcompassion.org.au/schools

2. SEARCH for your school

3. ACTIVATE your school's profile – just create an account and follow the prompts to complete setup.

4. SELECT how your school is going to fundraise!

5. SET UP teams for each class or homeroom to spark some friendly competition!

6. SHARE your school's fundraising page or class pages with your school community. Note: parents can register their child with all online donations made contributing to your class/school total.

7. LET THE FUNDRAISING BEGIN!

Unite your whole school community and take on **The BIG Water Walk** at your school this Lent. Your school will raise funds to bring clean, safe drinking water to communities around the world!

How to host your School's BIG Water Walk:

1. Pick a date: Choose a day during Lent that works for your school.

2. Set your route: You could plan laps around your school oval, circuits through your school grounds, or even a walk to a local park!

3. Consider adding a challenge: Consider carrying water during the walk to simulate the daily journey faced by vulnerable communities.

4.Promote the Event: Share details with students, parents, and staff to build excitement and support



Download The BIG Water Walk Toolkit

Primary Student Zone

The Primary Student Zone is an interactive image created as a central location with everything students will need to complete the student workbook. This includes the stories and videos for each of the stories.

Whenever students see any of the below icons in their workbook, they can go to the Primary Student Zone and find the matching icon to access the information needed to complete the activity.

Here are some icons to keep an eye out for throughout the workbook:





Click here to view:

Primary Student Zone

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). Peter Caton/ Caritas Australia (bottom left and top right), Caritas Australia (remaining photos).

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Lent Link

ABOUT LENT

Class discussion:

What do you know about Lent?

What significance does it have for you?

Explain that every year throughout Lent we commit to strengthening our faith through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These are the three pillars or traditions of Lent.

Pope Francis said:

> …in Lent, *to act also means to pause*. To pause *in prayer*, in order to receive the word of God, to pause like the Samaritan *in the presence of a wounded brother or sister*. Love of God and love of neighbour are one love… For this reason, prayer, almsgiving and fasting are not three unrelated acts, but a single movement of openness and self-emptying.
>
> (Pope Francis's Lenten Message 2024)

Through Project Compassion, we can think about the faces and stories of those in need and learn how, with our support, Caritas Australia is working with local partners around the world to help end poverty, uphold dignity and promote justice. Over the coming weeks, we will hear stories of hope from the Solomon Islands, Cambodia, Ethiopia and Venezuela.

Let's focus on how we can be people of hope in our family, our school community and with our global family – for all future generations.

PRAYER - During Lent, Christians pray for themselves and others. We are encouraged to pray for the people and communities we learn about through the stories shared during Project Compassion.

FASTING - Fasting is about giving something up for a time. Many people give up something they love to eat. This can help us understand a little more about what it's like for somebody who is different from us. We can also give up something we like to do, like spending time watching television.

ALMSGIVING - Almsgiving means donating money or items to people who have less than you. It is a way to show that we care for others and that we are thankful for all God has given us. Caring for others is part of many faiths. Let's be brave enough to give generously this Lent.

What can we go without during each week of Lent? Maybe it's a snack or treat that we have each week. We can place the money saved in our Project Compassion boxes. Our support of Project Compassion is a way of saying we care about creating a fairer world.

Pray – Start with the Project Compassion Prayer (PPT). Each week, students are also invited to write a prayer for the community they are learning about in their Project Compassion Student Workbook.

Fast – Discuss what students might consider to 'give up' for Lent this year?

Give – Discuss way we can give. Look at the 'Your donation counts' poster to explore what your collective community efforts can achieve.

Patricia’s story

Solomon Islands

14-year-old Patricia lives in a rural village in the Malaita province of the Solomon Islands with her parents, three sisters and younger brother. As the eldest child in her family, she has always helped shoulder responsibilities at home. Every day, she supports her family by collecting firewood, grating coconuts, preparing food and caring for her younger siblings.

But until recently, one chore consumed hours of her day and left her too exhausted to think about her future: collecting water.

Before a new water system was installed outside her home, Patricia and her mother had to walk long distances to collect water for their family. The nearest water source was far from home, in a dense and hilly rainforest that is home to poisonous snakes. Because families from surrounding communities relied on the same water source, there were often long queues. Some days, Patricia and her mother would spend hours walking and waiting just to fill their buckets.

The task was physically demanding. Carrying heavy buckets of water over long distances took a toll on Patricia.

"I had to carry very heavy buckets and containers over a long distance," Patricia said. *"It was really hard.“*

On average, collecting water took around two hours every day. During the rainy season, conditions became even more difficult. Flooded rivers and muddy water sources often made access impossible, creating uncertainty and hardship for families who relied on them. For Patricia's father, Lazarus, the daily journey brought constant worry about the safety of his children.

"As a father, I was concerned because the water source was far away and crowded," he explains. *"The water source was so far away that sometimes they returned home after dark. It was not safe."*



Patricia collecting water from a water source that is located in a dense forest 1-2km from her village. Photo: Caritas Australia

Photos: Caritas Australia

The burden of collecting water affected many aspects of Patricia's life, including her education. After spending hours walking and carrying water, she often returned home exhausted.

"The buckets were so heavy, and the water source was so far away," Patricia remembers. *"When I came home, I didn't feel like studying."*

Over time, Patricia lost interest in school and eventually stopped attending. Like many children with significant household responsibilities, the demands of daily life made it difficult to focus on learning.

Access to clean water has been a long-standing challenge for many communities in the Malaita province. Its mountainous terrain and scattered settlements make it difficult to establish and maintain water supply systems.

Many areas lack proper water treatment and distribution infrastructure, resulting in unsafe drinking water. Malaita is also highly vulnerable to climate change, with floods, droughts and cyclones damaging water systems, contaminating freshwater sources and disrupting rainwater collection.

According to the World Bank (2024), at least 28% of the population in the Solomon Islands, more than 1 in 4 people, do not have access to basic drinking water services, and 65% do not have access to basic sanitation services (World Bank, 2024). Only 59.9% of girls successfully complete lower secondary education (World Bank, 2023). Many communities rely on contaminated water sources, leading to waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera. Limited access to safe water also hampers hygiene and increases the risk of malnutrition and child mortality.

The Common Home project, run in partnership with the Catholic Diocese of Auki, works to improve access to water, hygiene and sanitation. The project rehabilitates gravity-fed water systems, constructs sanitation facilities, builds pit latrines and handwash stations, and provides hygiene training.

Today, thanks to the new water system supported by the Common Home project, life in Patricia's village has been transformed. A water tap now stands just metres from Patricia's family's home. Instead of walking long distances every day, Patricia can collect water quickly and safely. Her family can now access clean water whenever they need it.

When Patricia turns on the tap, she is not just accessing clean water. She is gaining time to learn, time to dream and time to build the future she wants. For a 14-year-old who dreams of becoming a teacher and helping her family, that changes everything.







Patricia's Story – Learning Activities

Read Patricia's Story (Solomon Islands) and watch 'A Day in the Life' film and Patricia's Story film.

TASK 1: DISCUSSION

- What challenges did Patricia face every day when collecting water for her family?
- How did spending so much time collecting water affect Patricia's education and daily life?
- How did Caritas Australia help?
- Why is returning to school important to Patricia, and what does she hope to do in the future?
- Where will you share Patricia's story?

Curriculum links: English, HASS

TASK 2: STUDENT WORKBOOK

Complete tasks for Patricia's Story (Solomon Islands) section. Download/print the Student Workbook and direct students to the Student Zone to help them complete the activities.

Curriculum links: HASS, English, Mathematics, Religious Education

TASK 3: PHOTO GALLERY

As a class, view the Photo Gallery for Patricia's story via the Student Zone. Ask students:

- What do the photos tell you about Patricia's life?
- Which photo helps you understand Patricia's story the most? Why?
- What other photos of Patricia's life would you like to see?
- What questions would you like to ask Patricia?
- What do the photos make you think about?

Curriculum links: English

TASK 4: A DOOR TO EDUCATION

Patricia hopes to return to school and one day become a teacher.

Provide each student with a piece of paper as a "door" template and have students fold it in half.

On the outside students write: **Education opens doors to...**

Inside the door they draw or write opportunities that education can create for individuals, families and communities.

Students share their ideas and identify similarities between their hopes and Patricia's aspirations.

Curriculum links: English, HASS

Patricia's Story – Learning Activities

TASK 5: TIME TO SPARE

Patricia spent up to two hours each day collecting water before a new water system was installed in her village.

Ask students to imagine they suddenly had an extra two hours each day.

Students create a visual diary, flowchart or comic strip showing how they would use an extra two hours. They then compare their ideas with the opportunities Patricia now has, such as spending more time learning, helping her family and supporting her younger siblings.

Discuss:

- How can access to time change people's opportunities?
- Why is time sometimes called a valuable resource?
- What activities help you learn, grow and contribute to your community?

Curriculum links: English, HASS

TASK 6: COMMUNITY CHALLENGE & SOLUTION

The installation of a water system improved daily life for Patricia and many members of her community.

In small groups, students identify a challenge in their own school or community.

Examples:

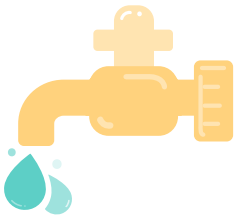
- Waste in the playground
- Traffic congestion
- Lack of shade
- Water wastage

Students work through a simple design-thinking process:

- Identify the problem.
- Describe who is affected.
- Suggest a solution.
- Explain how the solution could improve people's lives.

Groups present their ideas to the class.

Curriculum links: Design and Technologies, HASS, English



Patricia's Story – Learning Activities

TASK 7: TIME TO SPARE

Discuss how a single improvement, such as reliable access to water, can affect many parts of a person's life.

Students create a cause-and-effect diagram beginning with:

Access to clean water

They then map possible impacts such as:

- More time
- Improved wellbeing
- Safety
- Education opportunities
- Family life
- Future aspirations

Students explain which impact they think is most significant and why.

Curriculum links: English, HASS



TASK 8: WATER WALK

Before the water system was installed, Patricia spent up to two hours collecting and carrying water for her family.

Using empty buckets or containers, students estimate how much water they think they use in a day for drinking, washing and cooking. Discuss why carrying water over long distances would be physically demanding.

Students then:

- Estimate the weight of a bucket containing 1L, 5L or 10L of water.
- Predict how carrying water regularly might affect a person's energy levels.
- Reflect on how tiredness could impact learning, play and daily activities.

Extension: Participate in the BIG Water Walk and raise funds for Project Compassion. Through this experience, students can develop a greater understanding of the effort involved in collecting water and reflect on how community-led projects can improve health, education and opportunities for families like Patricia's.

Curriculum links: Health and Physical Education (HPE), Mathematics

Patricia's Story – Learning Activities

TASK 9: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING LINK

Human Dignity

- 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

Student-friendly explanation:

- Every person is made in the image of God.
- We are all valuable and worthy of respect and fairness because we are all human.

A. How is human dignity demonstrated in Patricia's story?

B. How can supporting Project Compassion help people to live with dignity and reach their full potential?

Curriculum links: Religious Education

TASK 10: RE LINK AND PRAYER

> *The Church reminds us, with a firm yet humble voice, that true fulfilment is not achieved by eliminating weakness but through harmonious growth. It is found where freedom and responsibility are intertwined with mutual care and true solidarity, and where progress is measured by the dignity of each person and the good of all peoples.*
>
> (Pope Leo XIV, Magnifica Humanitas, n.12)

In Magnifica Humanitas, Pope Leo XIV reminds us that true progress is measured by the dignity of every person and by how well we care for one another. Patricia's story shows how access to clean water can help people live with dignity, improve their health and create new opportunities for learning and hope.

During Lent, we are invited to stand in solidarity with our global neighbours and work for the common good through prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

- Discuss the quote from Magnifica Humanitas. What does Pope Leo XIV mean by "mutual care", "solidarity" and "the good of all peoples"?
- Explore Patricia's story. How did access to clean water help Patricia, her family and her community?
- Discuss how clean water supports human dignity. Why should access to clean water be available to everyone?
- **Mark World Water Day – 22 March**

Patricia's Story – Learning Activities

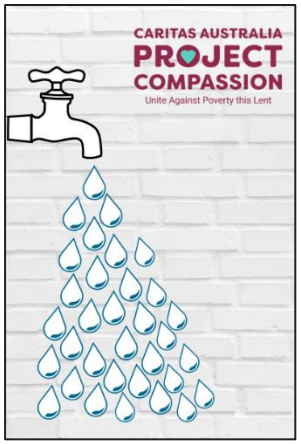
TASK 10: RE LINK AND PRAYER (CONT.)

Create a Tapitas Water Wall with a large paper tap displayed at the top of a classroom wall. Students decorate water droplets and write a prayer, hope or commitment for people around the world who do not have reliable access to clean water. Add each droplet to the display to create a flowing stream of water.

As a Lenten action, invite students to combine prayer and almsgiving by making a donation to Project Compassion. Students may choose to donate a gold coin or another amount as they add their water droplet to the display.

Download the Tapitas template here.

*Tapitas is just a play on the word Caritas.



Conclude with a class prayer:

God of life,

help us to appreciate your gift of water.

As we drink, wash, cleanse and grow,

remind us how brilliant water is

and how precious it is too.

We pray for people living without clean water,

and for those who must travel

long distances to collect it.

We pray that we use water wisely so not to take more than we need.

Bless Caritas Australia's work, supporting families to access clean water.

Amen

(Prayer adapted from CAFOD's Water Assembly)

Curriculum links: Religious Education

Reaksmey's Story

Cambodia

23-year-old Reaksmey is from Kampot province in Cambodia and lives with a hearing disability. After his mother died 15 days after he was born, Reaksmey was raised by his two aunts. Growing up, communication was difficult for Reaksmey and his family, as none of them knew sign language.

'Since I was small until I grew up, I found it very challenging to communicate with family, with my friends, with my community because I have a hearing disability. I can't talk to people and I cannot hear people,' Reaksmey shared.

School was also challenging. He found it difficult to communicate with his classmates and experienced discrimination.

'I went to school to grade six, but I felt sad because I couldn't communicate with my friends, I couldn't hear my friends. I always stayed alone. My other friends just talked to each other, but I was alone,' he shared.

Because of this discrimination, Reaksmey left school after grade six and spent most of his time at home helping on the family farm.

In Cambodia, children with disabilities often face discrimination and challenges in accessing education. Sokny Onn, CEO of Epic Arts, said negative attitudes towards disability remain common.

'The majority of people still think that people with disability was caused by karma, that we were not a good people from previous life,' she said.

The Inclusive Education in Kampot project, delivered with local partner Epic Arts, is dedicated to opening doors for children with disabilities, ensuring they can learn, grow, and thrive alongside their peers. It supports children and young people with disabilities through inclusive education, sign language classes, vocational (job skills) training and art programs.



Reaksmey baking bagels in the kitchen at Epic Arts café. Photo: Caritas Australia

Photos: Caritas Australia







When Reaksmey participated in the project, he was able to learn sign language and discovered a way to communicate for the first time in his life.

The project also helped provide Reaksmey with a bicycle so that he could travel to and from the centre. He made friends, developed new skills and discovered ways to express himself through dance and art.

'Before I joined Epic Arts, I was lost and alone. After I joined Epic Arts, I got the opportunity to draw and paint. The drawing and painting allow me to express my feelings and emotions,' he shared.

Through vocational training, Reaksmey developed an interest in hospitality and applied for a job at the Epic Arts Café, a social enterprise that has employed people with and without disabilities for 20 years.

After successfully completing the interview process, he was hired as a kitchen hand. He now prepares ingredients, makes bread and bagels, and works alongside colleagues, many of whom also have hearing disabilities.

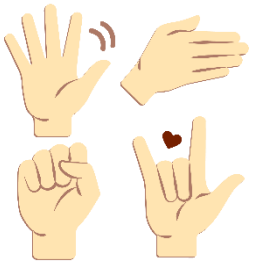
'What I enjoy the most is cooking and making food at Epic Arts café. At the same time, I can make friends and that makes me happy,' Reaksmey shared. *'My hope for the future is to continue working at Epic Arts café for a long time. I also want to learn different skills so I can earn better income in the future.'*

Sokny said Reaksmey's journey has also helped his family better understand the rights and abilities of people with disabilities.

Reaksmey has a simple message:

'Please encourage people with disabilities to have the opportunity to participate, to have the opportunity to find jobs, just like everyone else.'





Reaksmey's Story – Learning Activities

Read Reaksmey's Story (Cambodia) and watch 'A Day in the Life' film.

TASK 1: DISCUSSION

- What challenges did Reaksmey face growing up?
- How did learning sign language change Reaksmey's life and help him connect with others?
- How did Caritas Australia help?
- What skills and opportunities has Reaksmey gained through Epic Arts, and how have they helped him become more independent?
- Where will you share Reaksmey's story?

Curriculum links: English, HASS

TASK 2: STUDENT WORKBOOK

Complete tasks for Reaksmey's Story (Cambodia) section. Download/print the Student Workbook and direct students to the Student Zone to help them complete the activities.

Curriculum links: HASS, English, Mathematics, Religious Education

TASK 3: PHOTO GALLERY

As a class, view the Photo Gallery for Reaksmey's story via the Student Zone. Ask students:

- What do the photos tell you about Reaksmey's life?
- Which photo helps you understand Reaksmey's story the most? Why?
- What other photos of Reaksmey's life would you like to see?
- What questions would you like to ask Reaksmey?
- What do the photos make you think about inclusion and belonging?

Curriculum links: English

TASK 4: EXPRESS YOURSELF THROUGH ART

Art gave Reaksmey a way to express himself and connect with others.

Students create an artwork that represents something that makes them unique. Encourage them to include colours, symbols, patterns or images that communicate their interests, strengths or hopes for the future.

Display the artworks in a class gallery and invite students to share the meaning behind their work.

Curriculum links: The Arts, English

Reaksmey's Story – Learning Activities

TASK 5: INCLUSION POSTER CAMPAIGN

Reaksmey hopes people will stop discriminating against people with disability.

Students design a poster (digital or on paper) encouraging inclusion and respect for people of all abilities. Posters should include:

- A slogan
- An image or illustration
- A positive message about inclusion and belonging.

Curriculum links: The Arts, English, HASS, HPE

TASK 6: STRENGTHS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Reaksmey discovered new talents and skills through Epic Arts.

Create a class "Strengths Tree". Each student writes one of their strengths or talents on a paper leaf and explains how that strength can help others.

Discuss:

- How are our strengths different?
- How can different strengths help a community thrive?
- Why is it important that everyone has opportunities to participate and contribute?

Curriculum links: English, HASS

TASK 7: DANCE OF CONNECTION

Dance helped Reaksmey grow in confidence and develop friendships.

In small groups, students create a short movement sequence that communicates a feeling, message or story without using words.

For example:

- Friendship
- Belonging
- Kindness
- Hope
- Inclusion

Curriculum links: The Arts, HPE



Reaksmey's Story – Learning Activities

TASK 8: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING LINK

Subsidiarity and Participation

- From the Latin word *subsidium*, meaning support or assistance
- The idea that people and groups have the right to participate in decisions that affect them and, when they can't meet their own needs, other parts of society (e.g. the government) act according to their duty to assist with resources and support
- An approach to common life that promotes participation and ensure people are architects of their own development

Student-friendly explanation:

- All people should be able to participate in their community and have a say in decisions that affect them.
- When they cannot meet their own needs, other parts of society should step in to offer support and assistance.

A. How is Subsidiarity and Participation demonstrated in Reaksmey's story?

B. How did the support Reaksmey received help him participate more fully in his community and contribute his skills and talents to others?

C. How can supporting Project Compassion help people participate more fully in their communities and achieve their goals?

Curriculum links: Religious Education

TASK 9: RE LINK AND PRAYER

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Provide students with several puzzle pieces (or cut a large puzzle shape into pieces beforehand). Ask a few students to each hold a single puzzle piece and ask:

- Can one puzzle piece show the whole picture?
- What happens when pieces are missing?
- What happens when all the pieces are joined together?

Assemble the puzzle and discuss how every piece is important.

St Paul teaches that the Church is like one body with many parts. Every person has different gifts, talents and abilities, but each person is important and has something valuable to contribute.

Reaksmey's story shows how learning sign language, building confidence and developing new skills helped him participate more fully in his community and share his gifts with others.



Reaksmey's Story – Learning Activities

TASK 9: RE LINK AND PRAYER (CONT.)

Discuss:

- What gifts and talents did Reaksmey discover through Epic Arts?
- How did learning sign language help Reaksmey connect with others?
- Why is it important that everyone has opportunities to participate and contribute?
- How can we make sure everyone feels welcomed, included and valued at school, at home and in our community?

Create a large "One Body, Many Gifts" classroom display. Each student decorates a puzzle piece and writes or draws:

- a gift or strength they have
- a way they can include others or
- a way they can use their gifts to help their community.

Join all the puzzle pieces together to create a class puzzle that reminds students that everyone belongs and everyone has something valuable to offer.

Conclude by writing a class prayer asking God to help us recognise the gifts of others, include everyone and use our own gifts to serve others throughout Lent.

Pray the prayer regularly during Lent.

Curriculum links: Religious Education, English



Yeshareg's Story

Ethiopia

30-year-old Yeshareg lives in the Kaffa Zone of south-western Ethiopia with her husband, Tamiru, and their two children, Henok and Mintamir.

Life has not always been easy for Yeshareg and her family. In the area where they live, droughts and floods often make it difficult to grow food. There were times when her family struggled to find enough to eat and could only afford one or two meals a day.

'Back then, hunger was a constant struggle. Life was very difficult. On good days, we ate only twice. Other days, we had just one meal,' Yeshareg shared. *'We rarely washed our clothes because we couldn't afford soap.'*

In Ethiopia, more than 10 million people face hunger and malnutrition and 55% of children under five are suffering from malnutrition (World Food Programme 2025). Fuel shortages linked to the war in the Middle East have also sharply increased fuel prices countrywide, with the cost of staple food prices rising sharply.

The CLEAR project (Innovative Climate-Smart Livelihood Enhancement for Resilience Building Project), run by Caritas Ethiopia, helps communities improve food security and income through improving farming skills, income diversification and access to basic services such as clean water and sanitation.

Through the project, Yeshareg joined a women's savings and potato-farming group. She learned how to grow vegetables including potatoes, cabbage, beetroot and carrots in her garden.

'Since joining the organisation, I've learned to grow cabbage, potatoes, beetroot, carrots and other vegetables in my garden,' she said. *'Our garden is a model for our community. We grow potatoes, eat some, sell the rest, and save the income.'*



Yeshareg cultivating sweet potatoes in her garden in her village.
Photo: Peter Caton/Caritas Australia

Photos: Peter Caton/Caritas Australia







Last year, Yeshareg harvested 400 kilograms of crops. She sold 300 kilograms and kept 100 kilograms to feed her family. The money she earned helped pay for her children's school uniforms, exercise books and other school supplies.

'Our lives are much better now. We've gained so much and improved our lives. Before joining, even fruit was hard to get. Now my life has completely changed,' Yeshareg said.

The project also helped Yeshareg and other women in her community learn how to save money together. Their savings group now has 50,000 Birr set aside to support members and help them plan for the future.

As part of the project, Yeshareg received a sheep, which later had lambs. She sold one of the lambs and used the money to help pay for her children's education expenses.

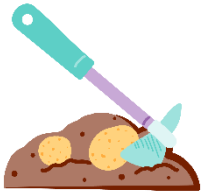
Yeshareg hopes that one day her community will have better health services and access to clean drinking water.

'We also need clean drinking water. Our children don't have clean drinking water,' she said.

From struggling to find enough food to providing three meals a day for her family, Yeshareg's life has changed significantly through the support of the CLEAR project.

'We're happy with our life now. If we keep this up, our future will be even better.'

Along with generous donor support, the CLEAR project is supported by the Australian government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



Yeshareg's Story – Learning Activities

Read Yeshareg's Story (Ethiopia) and watch 'A Day in the Life' film.

TASK 1: DISCUSSION

- What challenges did Yeshareg and her family face before joining the CLEAR project?
- How did learning new farming skills help improve Yeshareg's life?
- How did Caritas Australia help?
- How will the women's savings group help Yeshareg support her family and plan for the future?
- Where will you share Yeshareg's story?

Curriculum links: English, HASS

TASK 2: STUDENT WORKBOOK

Complete tasks for Yeshareg's Story (Ethiopia) section. Download/print the Student Workbook and direct students to the Student Zone to help them complete the activities.

Curriculum links: HASS, English, Mathematics, Religious Education

TASK 3: PHOTO GALLERY

As a class, view the Photo Gallery for Reaksmey's story via the Student Zone. Ask students:

- What do the photos tell you about Yeshareg's life?
- Which photo helps you understand Yeshareg's story the most? Why?
- What other photos of Yeshareg's life would you like to see?
- What questions would you like to ask Yeshareg?
- What do the photos make you think about food, farming and caring for a family?

Curriculum links: English

TASK 4: FROM SEED TO HARVEST

Yeshareg harvested 400 kilograms of crops in one year.

Students investigate the life cycle of a crop such as potatoes, onions or sweet potatoes.

Create a labelled diagram or timeline showing each stage from planting to harvesting and selling produce.

Extension: Compare growing conditions in Ethiopia and Australia.

Curriculum links: Science, HASS

Yeshareg's Story – Learning Activities

TASK 5: GROWING FOR THE FUTURE

Yeshareg learned new farming techniques that helped her grow potatoes and other vegetables for her family.

Plant seeds in a classroom garden, vegetable patch or recycled container. Students observe and record growth over several weeks, noting changes in height, leaves and root development.

Discuss:

- What do plants need to grow?
- Why is farming important for communities?
- How can growing food help families become more self-sufficient?

Curriculum links: Science, Mathematics

TASK 6: MARKET DAY MATHS

Yeshareg sold vegetables to earn income for her family.

Create a classroom market using vegetables or pictures of produce. Give students a budget and price lists.



Students:

- calculate totals
- work out change
- compare prices
- decide how to spend their money wisely

Curriculum links: Mathematics

TASK 7: FOOD ON OUR PLATES

Yeshareg's family now enjoys three meals a day because of improved farming and income.

Students keep a simple food diary for a day and identify where different foods come from.

Create a class chart showing:

- foods grown in Australia
- foods grown in other countries
- foods produced from plants and animals

Discuss:

- Why is access to nutritious food important?
- What challenges might make it difficult for some communities to access food?

Curriculum links: Science, HPE

Yeshareg's Story – Learning Activities

TASK 8: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING LINK

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

Student-friendly explanation:

- We should always try to think about what is good for everyone, not just ourselves.
- It's about living together in a community.

A. How is the Common Good demonstrated in Yeshareg's story?

B. How is supporting Project Compassion one way you can demonstrate a commitment to the Common Good?

Curriculum links: Religious Education

TASK 9: RE LINK AND PRAYER

Read Mark 4:30-32 (The Parable of the Mustard Seed).

Provide each student with a seed (or show a variety of seeds). Ask students:

- What do you notice about the seed?
- Does it look important or powerful?
- What might happen if it is planted and cared for?

Discuss how a tiny seed can grow into a plant that provides food, shelter or shade. Jesus used the example of a mustard seed to teach that small actions can lead to great things.

Yeshareg's story reminds us that positive change often begins with small steps. By learning new farming skills, joining a savings group and working together with others, Yeshareg was able to create new opportunities for her family and build hope for the future.

Discuss:

- What small steps helped change Yeshareg's life?
- How did the CLEAR project help Yeshareg grow opportunities for her family?
- What "seeds of hope" can we plant in our own lives through our words and actions?
- How can prayer, fasting and almsgiving during Lent help build a more just and compassionate world?

Yeshareg's Story – Learning Activities

TASK 9: RE LINK AND PRAYER (CONT.)

Create a large "Seeds of Hope" classroom display. Cut out seed shapes, leaves or vegetables and invite students to write or draw:

- a hope they have for the world
- a way they can help others during Lent
- a blessing they are thankful for
- a small action they can take to care for people and creation

Arrange the seeds to create a class garden display. Throughout Lent, encourage students to add new seeds of hope as they continue their Project Compassion journey.



Conclude with a class prayer

Loving God,

Thank you for the gift of creation and for the food that nourishes us each day.

We pray for Yeshareg, her family and all people who work to grow food and care for their communities.

Help us to recognise the blessings in our lives and to share generously with others.

Teach us to plant seeds of hope, kindness and compassion wherever we go.

May our prayers, our generosity and our actions this Lent help build a brighter future for people around the world.

Amen.

Curriculum links: Religious Education

Emergency Response

Venezuela

On 24 June 2026, two powerful earthquakes struck Venezuela just minutes apart. Homes, schools and other buildings were badly damaged, and thousands of families were affected. More than 6,000 people were confirmed dead, while thousands more were injured or missing. Buildings and homes collapsed or became unsafe, vital infrastructure was severely damaged, and essential services were widely disrupted.

The earthquakes happened at a time when many families in Venezuela were already facing challenges such as food shortages and limited access to healthcare. The disaster made life even harder for people who were already struggling.

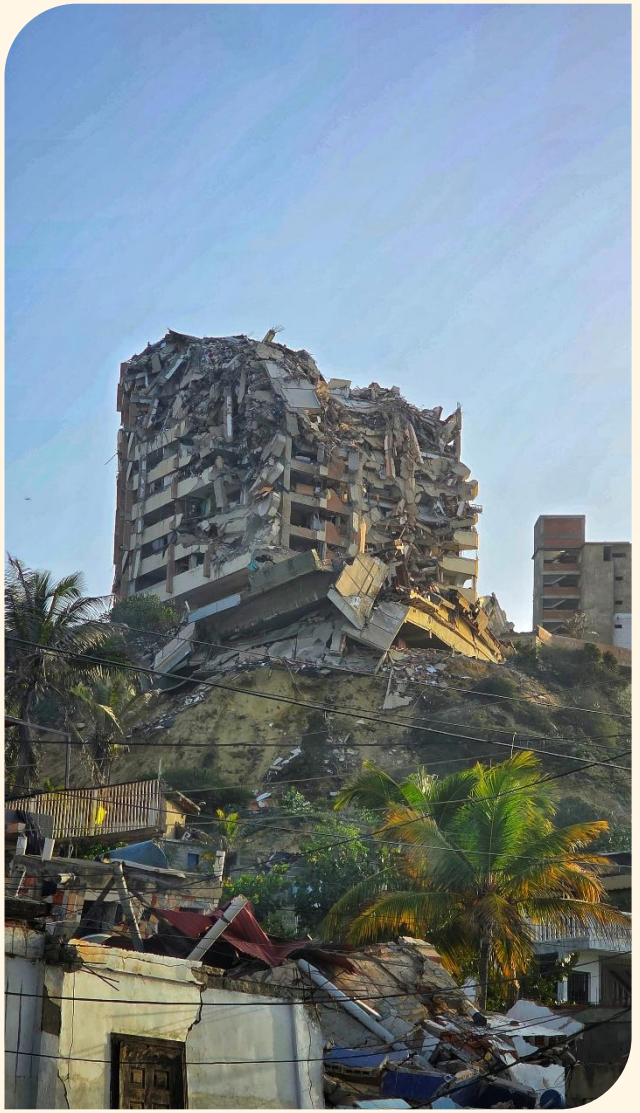
When the earthquakes struck, local Church parishes were among the first places people turned to for help. Parishes opened their doors to families who needed shelter and shared emergency supplies with those affected. This immediate response became the foundation for a larger relief effort coordinated by Caritas Venezuela.

Caritas Venezuela has been supporting communities across the country for many years, including in remote areas. Working together with local parishes and volunteers, Caritas Venezuela quickly organised emergency assistance for families affected by the disaster.

Within just a few weeks, Caritas Venezuela had distributed food, clean water, hygiene kits, medicines and other essential supplies to thousands of families. More than 10,000 volunteers helped receive, sort, pack and deliver aid to communities in need.

Janeth Márquez, Executive Director of Caritas Venezuela, said helping people affected by the earthquakes was the organisation's first priority.

'Our situation is difficult; we have experienced two earthquakes in the midst of a crisis that has lasted 10 years,' she said. *'Our first priority is to save lives and search for the injured. Very soon we will need to provide supplies, water, food and hygiene items for those in disaster relief centres or on the streets.'*



A building destroyed by the Venezuela earthquake. Photo: Caritas Venezuela

Photos: Caritas Venezuela







Caritas teams are not only providing emergency supplies. They are also offering care and support to people who have lost family members or are finding life difficult after the earthquakes. As the response develops, Caritas Venezuela plans to assess people's situations more fully so assistance can address their needs holistically.

Monsignor José Luis Azuaje Ayala, President of Caritas Venezuela, spoke about the importance of solidarity and helping one another during difficult times.

'We are visiting the affected areas, as you can see, the scale of which has truly shaken us, sharing the suffering of the people and above all looking forward to the solidarity of the Venezuelan people is what fills us with hope at all times.'

Although much has already been achieved, many families are still living in temporary accommodation while they rebuild their homes and lives. Continued support will help communities recover and create hope for the future.

The response to the earthquakes shows the power of people working together. Through local parishes, dioceses, volunteers and partners, Caritas Venezuela is standing alongside communities across Venezuela and helping families begin the journey towards recovery.



Emergency Response – Learning Activities

Read how Caritas Australia supports emergency response efforts in places like Venezuela.

TASK 1: DISCUSSION

- What happened in Venezuela in June 2026?
- How did the earthquakes affect people, families and communities?
- How does Caritas Australia help communities during emergencies and natural disasters?
- Why is it important for people around the world to support communities affected by disasters?
- Where will you share Venezuela's story?

Curriculum links: English, HASS

TASK 2: STUDENT WORKBOOK

Complete tasks for the emergency response (Venezuela) section. Download/print the Student Workbook and direct students to the Student Zone to help them complete the activities.

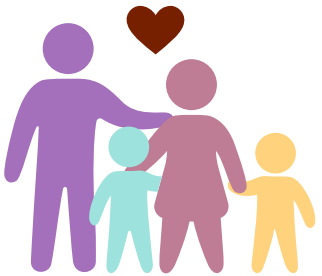
Curriculum links: HASS, English, Mathematics, Religious Education

TASK 3: PHOTO GALLERY

As a class, view the Photo Gallery for emergencies via the Student Zone. Ask students:

- What do the photos tell you about the impact of the earthquakes on communities in Venezuela?
- Which photo helps you understand the story the most? Why?
- What do the photos show about the challenges people face after a natural disaster?
- What questions would you like to ask someone affected by the earthquakes?
- What do the photos make you think about helping others in times of need?

Curriculum links: English



Emergency Response – Learning Activities

TASK 4: EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERS

The earthquakes in Venezuela caused significant damage to homes, schools and other buildings.

Working in small groups, students design and build a model structure using materials such as straws, paddle pop sticks, paper or recycled materials. Test each structure by placing it on a tray and gently shaking it to simulate an earthquake.

Discuss:

- What helped the structure stay standing?
- What improvements could be made?
- Why is safe building design important in earthquake-prone areas?

Curriculum links: Science, Design and Technologies

TASK 5: EMERGENCY SUPPLY CHALLENGE

Following the earthquakes, many families needed access to basic supplies and support.

Students work in groups to create an emergency kit for a family affected by a natural disaster.

They can only choose 10 items from a provided list.

Students must explain:

- why each item is important
- how it would help a family during an emergency
- which items were hardest to leave out

Curriculum links: HPE, HASS

TASK 6: NATURAL DISASTERS INVESTIGATION

Earthquakes are one type of natural disaster.

Students research a natural disaster that occurs in Australia or elsewhere in the world, such as:

- Earthquakes
- Floods
- Bushfires
- Cyclones
- Droughts

Create an information poster explaining:

- how the disaster occurs
- where it happens
- how communities prepare and respond

Curriculum links: HASS, Science, English

Emergency Response – Learning Activities

TASK 7: COMMUNITY HELPERS

After emergencies, many people work together to support affected communities.

Students create a mind map identifying people who help during emergencies, such as:

- emergency services
- health workers
- Volunteers
- community leaders
- aid organisations

Discuss:

- Why is teamwork important during a crisis?
- How does Caritas help communities recover after disasters?

Curriculum links: English, HASS



TASK 8: WATER, FOOD AND SHELTER PRIORITIES

When a disaster occurs, people's basic needs become especially important.

Provide students with a scenario involving a family affected by an earthquake.

Students rank essential needs such as:

- clean water
- Food
- Shelter
- Healthcare
- Education
- Communication

Discuss:

- Why are some needs urgent after a disaster?
- How can communities and aid organisations respond to these needs?

Curriculum links: HPE, HASS, English

Emergency Response – Learning Activities

TASK 9: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING LINK

Solidarity

- 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'.

Student-friendly explanation:

- We are all connected.
- We need to work together and support each other as one human family.

A. How is solidarity demonstrated through the response to the earthquakes in Venezuela?

B. How is supporting Project Compassion one way you can stand in solidarity with people affected by disasters and emergencies around the world?

Curriculum links: Religious Education



TASK 10: RE LINK

Read Luke 10:25-37 (The Parable of the Good Samaritan).

After reading the scripture, discuss:

- Why did the Good Samaritan stop to help the injured man?
- What risks or sacrifices did he make to help another person?
- How did he show compassion in action?
- How does this story connect to the people affected by the earthquakes in Venezuela?
- How do organisations like Caritas Australia act as a "Good Samaritan" when communities experience disasters and emergencies?

Explain that after the earthquakes in Venezuela, many people lost homes, schools and access to important services. When disasters happen, people often rely on the support of others to help them recover and rebuild their lives. Just as the Good Samaritan responded to someone in need, Caritas Australia and its partners respond with practical support, care and hope.

Invite students to create their own prayer of hope and thanksgiving for all the "Good Samaritans" in our world who support people in times of need.

Curriculum links: Religious Education

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