



# ECO JUSTICE GROUP TOOLKIT

## TERM 4 2021

A Secondary school resource to support leaders of ecological justice groups.

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Oliva tending her garden in Zimbabwe. Credit: August Lucky

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# INTRODUCTION



Welcome to Catholic Earthcare Australia's Toolkit for Social Justice Leaders in Secondary schools. This resource is to support your work with coordinating the ecological justice action groups in your school. Each session is designed to be short as we know many school groups meet in their lunchbreak.

Catholic Earthcare is encouraging all schools and parishes to take action for our common home in answer to the urgent appeal from Pope Francis' encyclical and the Action Platform for Laudato Si'. We are also responding to the call from our Australian Catholic Bishops in the Social Justice Statement 2021-22, "Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor".



Cloud formation. Credit: David Conser

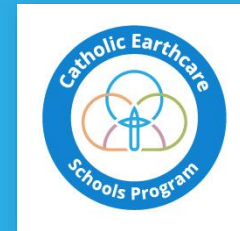
## Catholic Identity

An active and effective social and ecological justice group can contribute to the Catholic identity of your school by:

- giving prominence to the Gospel and person of Jesus Christ, as well as the Catholic Social Teaching principles
- being committed to the Christian vision of the dignity of each human person
- giving value and meaning to life, by encouraging students to aspire not to have more, but to Be More
- challenging students to understand and make sense of the world we live in
- enabling and empowering students to take action for a more just and fair world with direction, meaning, purpose and hope.

# CATHOLIC EARTHCARE AUSTRALIA

## A PROGRAM OF CARITAS AUSTRALIA



### About Catholic Earthcare Australia (CEA)

Catholic Earthcare Australia was first established in 2002 by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. It aims to promote an understanding among people that creation is sacred and endangered and must be protected and preserved for present and future generations.

Catholic Earthcare was incorporated into Caritas Australia in 2018 to create synergies between agencies that service the 'cry of the earth' and the 'cry of the poor'.

There are currently three programs: Catholic Earthcare Schools and an emerging Catholic Earthcare Parishes and Catholic Earthcare Family Program.

Our schools program aims to transform hearts and minds and enhance the Catholic identity of schools. There are five levels of accreditation with a star awarded for each level on a certificate. Professional support and resources are available.

Find out more and register to become a Catholic Earthcare School at: <https://catholicearthcare.org.au/earthcare-certified-schools-program/>

### About Caritas Australia

Caritas Australia assists marginalised communities to end poverty, uphold dignity and promote justice.

Caritas Australia works in partnership with communities in 18 countries around the world, as well as with First Australian communities. Caritas Australia provides various training programs; for example, how to grow food in a sustainable way, how to access clean water, ways to produce an ongoing income and much more.

Learn more using the ["Introduction to Caritas Australia"](#) PowerPoint.



Harvesting rice in Vietnam. Credit: Nguyen Minh Duc/ Caritas Australia



# PLANNING ACTION



## Plan how your group/school can take care of our common home.

Speak to your teachers, principal and deputy principal about setting up a Laudato Si' Group in your school. Ask one teacher to oversee the program.

Register to become a Catholic Earthcare school at <https://catholicearthcare.org.au/earthcare-certified-schools-program/>

Meet with your group and discuss which sustainability issue you would like to work on first.

## Tools to assist you

Use the environmental audits on the Catholic Earthcare website at Level 2 <https://catholicearthcare.org.au/earthcare-certified-schools-program/>

Use Caritas Australia's [Social Justice Action Planner \(caritas.org.au\)](https://caritas.org.au) to help you plan an effective action.

## Ideas

Create a garden with a particular purpose such as attracting birds, reducing the organic waste produced by the school, reducing the use of single use plastic, saving water or energy. The options are endless!

Contact [gwen.michener@caritas.org.au](mailto:gwen.michener@caritas.org.au) for assistance.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTION PLANNER

Planning group members:

What is the focus of your campaign?  
Why is this issue important?

1. Think

2. Learn

What facts and figures do you need?  
What links with the Catholic Church or Catholic-Australian community does your issue have?

3. Tools

Think about the way you will reach people, such as: newspaper, radio, video from the Catholic website, issues, or event or assembly presentation.

4. Contacts and permissions

What are the opportunities to use your links to get to the school? What permissions do you need and how can you get them?

5. Set a date

When will your presentation take place?

What resources do you need to make it? (e.g. Principal, teachers, parents, etc.)

What will you need to make it happen?

What is the date of your presentation? (e.g. Principal, teachers, parents, etc.)

What do you need to make it happen?

Justice begins with me!

What action will you take to make a difference?  
What action will you take to make a difference?

Reflect on faith and action:  
What Catholic teaching or values guide you?  
What action will you take to make a difference?

## ACTION PLAN

WHAT WILL BE YOUR:	WHAT TASKS NEED TO BE DONE?	WHY IS THIS A GOOD IDEA?	WHO WILL DO IT?	WHAT DATE IS IT DUE?
FUNDRAISING ACTION \$				
AWARENESS RAISING ACTION 👥				
SOLIDARITY ACTION 🌍				
JUSTICE ACTION ⚖️				

# PRAYER



*"Our common home is part of our family, like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us." Francis, Laudato Si' n1*

Creator God

Let us hear the call

To see the fragility of creation and beauty in the smallest of creatures

To nurture creation and to live in simpler ways

Enable our indigenous brothers and sisters to teach us to care for country

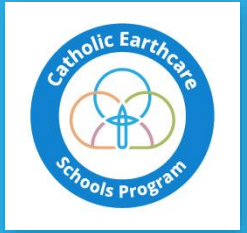
To participate fully and act to care for our environment

Your gifts of creation are crying out for care, let us hear the call

Amen



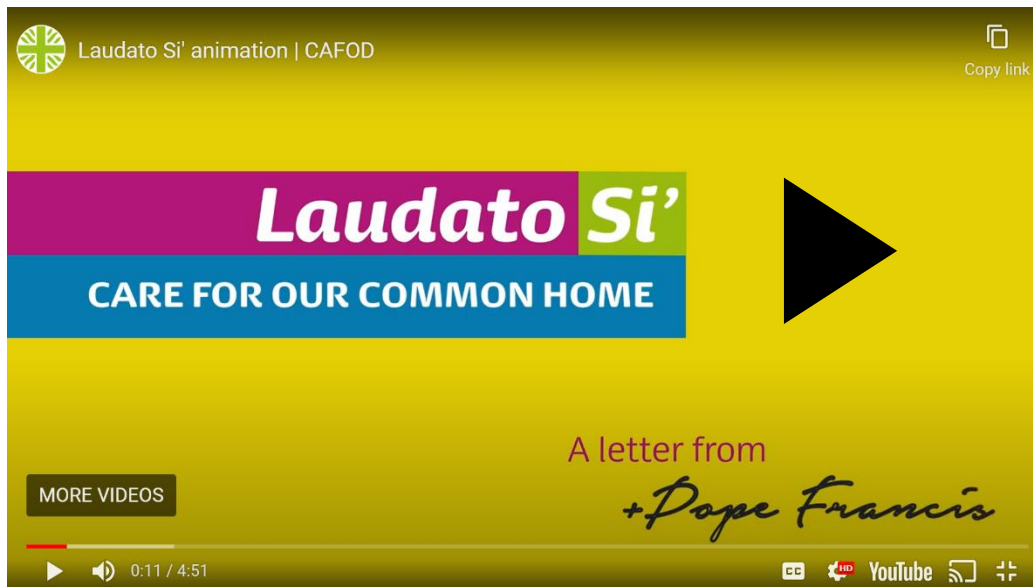
# FORMATION OF THE HEART



## Laudato Si'

Pope Francis' second encyclical is an urgent appeal asking us to care for our common home and our people. He called this encyclical or long letter *Laudato Si' Mi Signore* which means *Praise to you my Lord!*

Find out more by watching this [video](#) from CAFOD (Caritas England and Wales).



For more information about the Catholic Social Teaching principle, [Care for our Common Home](#).

## Discuss

God has provided all the gifts we need for our survival and to live in harmony with nature.

- How do we depend on our common home for our survival?
- Are we living in harmony with creation?
- What does eco-conversion mean?
- Do you think we are sharing the worlds' resources equally?
- What is Pope Francis calling us to do?
- What can we do to change what is happening to our common home?

# FORMATION OF THE HEART - INTEGRAL ECOLOGY



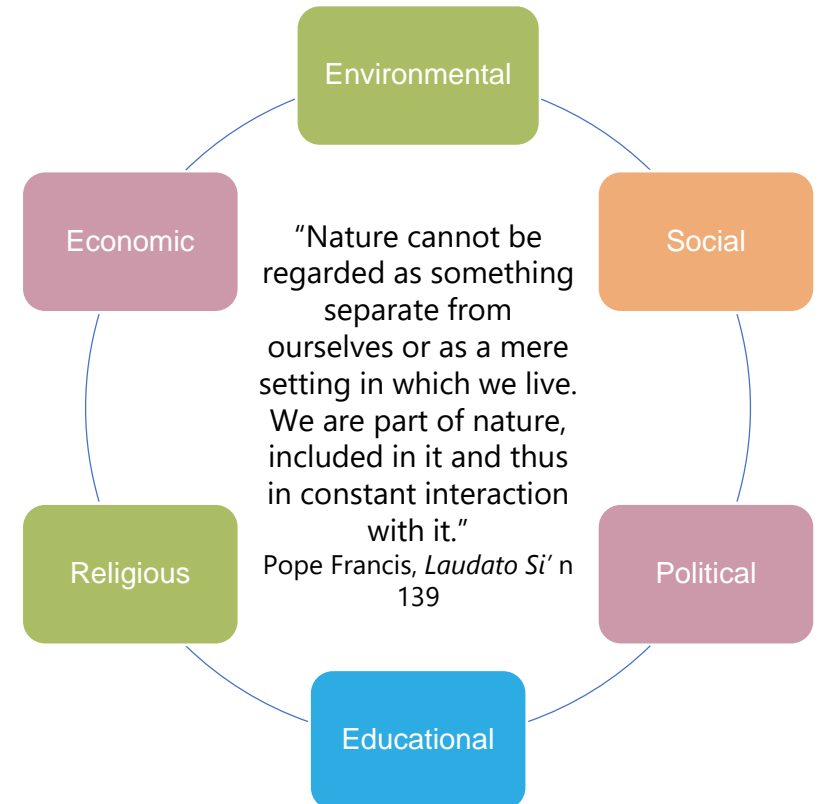
## What is integral ecology?

- Use a dictionary to find out what integral and integrated means?
- Find out what ecology means?
- Write your own definition for integral ecology.



**Watch** this video on [Integral Ecology](#) (5.5 mins)

- Which parts of our common home are connected? How are various systems in our society connected?
- Are people in different parts of the world connected to our common home in different ways?
- Explain this phrase used by Pope Francis, "Cry of the Earth and Cry of the Poor."
- Humans always find a way, should we be developing new technologies to solve our environmental problems?
- Explain what integrated ecology means to a grade 5/6 student.





# FORMATION OF THE HEART - SCRIPTURE



Love for Creation is a theme throughout the Old and New Testaments. We should thank and praise God for providing the gifts of creation.

*"The Lord took Adam and settled him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." Genesis 2:15*

God has given us a garden to keep and till. What do you think "keep" means?

- What do you think "till" means?

*The Lord entrusted all of creation to their responsibility, charging them to care for its harmony and development. Genesis 1: 26 – 30*

- What do you think this reading means?



## Extension

Find other Bible readings where caring for the natural environment is mentioned? Summarise the message in your own words.

Clue: Look in Psalms and Romans.

# URBAN OCTOBER



*"Nowadays, for example, we are conscious of the disproportionate and unruly growth of many cities, which have become unhealthy to live in, not only because of pollution caused by toxic emissions but also as a result of urban chaos, poor transportation, and visual pollution and noise." Francis, Laudato Si' n 44*

**Urban October** was established by the UN General Assembly in 2013 and relates to Sustainable Development Goal 11; to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Learn more about the [Sustainable Development Goals](#)



**World Habitat Day is on the 4 October** and the theme for 2021 is ["Accelerating Urban Action for a Carbon Free World"](#).

**World Cities Day is on Oct 31** and the theme is [Adapting Cities for Climate Resilience](#).



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- Most people in Australia live in cities and we produce a large amount of greenhouse gases. Make a list of activities that produce greenhouse gases in a city.
- Can you think of some ways we can reduce these greenhouse gases in our cities?
- What could local and state governments do to make our cities more liveable?
- What could you do at your school to make the environment more liveable? **Tip** Plants absorb carbon and produce oxygen.
- Calculate your carbon footprint using the [UN Carbon Footprint Calculator](#)
- Discuss with your family how you could reduce the amount of carbon you produce at home.



# AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE



*"Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another. Each area is responsible for the care of this family." Francis, Laudato Si' n 42*

There is a combination of threats to our planets' wildlife; among these are warmer and drier conditions, the clearing of habitats to make way for an increasing world population, the land needed to grow food for people as well as the use of pesticides and chemicals.

**Australian Wildlife Week** is commemorated during the **first week of October** each year, this week aims to encourage a positive relationship between humanity and nature. Further information at [Australian Wildlife Week](#)

## LEARN

- Australia is considered to be a megadiverse country but we have one of the worst mammal extinction records in the world. Why do you think this is the case?
- What is **Biodiversity**? Test your knowledge using the [Biodiversity Quiz](#)
- Learn about the work done by the [Australian Wildlife Conservancy](#)

## ACT

- Plant native and indigenous plants in your home and school garden to provide food and shelter for our native animals.
- The Australian Wildlife Society is running a project called [#SnipRingsforWildlife](#). This is an easy project everyone can get involved in; simply cut any plastic circular rings **before** placing them in the recycle bin. If you live in NSW, you can also sign their petition.



Koala by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

# DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



## The International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction is the 13 October.

Some of the impacts of climate change are a rise in sea levels due to the melting of ice masses and an increase in extreme weather events such as typhoons, large tides and earthquakes. The communities that Caritas Australia works with are suffering from the effects of climate change. A change in weather patterns and irregular rainfall is making it difficult for people to grow plants for food and raise animals. Caritas Australia works through its partners with communities to reduce these impacts by providing training to prepare for emergencies, for example planting drought/salt resistant crops and using drip irrigation to reduce water consumption.

**Watch** this case study from the [Philippines](#) and then discuss these questions:

- From an ecological point of view, why is it so important to plant mangroves?
- How are you being an ecological change leader in your school?
- Find out what intergenerational solidarity means. Does this story illustrate this?

### Role play

Learn about Disaster Risk Reduction through a role play based on a real life situation, working collaboratively to determine possible solutions and outcomes. Download resource [here](#).

**Learn more** about Caritas Australia's work in [Disaster Risk Reduction](#).



Flooding caused by Typhoon Goni in the Philippines. Credit: NASSA/Caritas Philippines



# FOOD



*"...approximately a third of all food produced, is discarded, and whenever food is thrown out, it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor." Francis, Laudato Si' n 50*

**World Food Day is on the 16 October.** It aims to raise awareness about poverty and hunger.

The world produces enough food for everyone, but up to 811 million people go to bed hungry every night. [Source](#)

A United Nations Environment Program report found that consumers threw away 17% of all the food they bought! [Source](#)



Read this [article](#) about the environmental effects of food waste and discuss what you learnt with a partner.

## What can we do about global food security?

Brainstorm some ideas and put them into action!

Here is some inspiration.

- **Reduce food waste:** plan meals, be creative with "leftovers", compost
- **Raise awareness** speak at assembly, place information on social media
- **Advocacy:** write a letter to your MP asking about what Australia is doing to assist people suffering from a lack of food.



Sakun preparing food at her home in India. Credit: Caritas Australia



# POVERTY



*“A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach, it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” Francis, Laudato Si’ n 49*

## International Day for the Eradication of Poverty – 17th October World Day of the Poor – 14th November

**Research** the causes of poverty in the world today. Look at how the pandemic has impacted poverty rates.

How can you raise awareness about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on poverty rates around the world?

### Other Caritas Resources

[Poverty Quiz](#)

[Global Reality Meal](#) (simulation experience)

### “Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor”

Write a prayer for marginalised communities around the world who are suffering from poverty during COVID-19.



Lat at his long bean farm. Photo: Sam Rinang

# WATER



*"... water pollution particularly affects the poor who cannot buy bottled water." Francis Laudato Si' n 48*

**National Water Week 18-24 October**

**Watch** this Catholic Earthcare Australia/EcoJesuit [video](#) about how girls are creating change in Borneo, Indonesia from 3.00 – 9.00 mins



- Why are indigenous people selling their land in Borneo?
- Where does Novita's' hometown get their water from?
- How is this water supply impacted on, as a result of palm oil plantations and mining?
- How did Novita act to solve her village's water problem?
- What do you think Pope Francis would say this about this situation?
- How is this an example of ecological justice?

**Did you know** that 1 in 3 people do not have access to safe drinking water and 2 out of 5 people don't have a hand washing facility. [Source](#)

**Research and design an infographic** about water facts to raise awareness in your school community about this issue.

## **Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor**

Write a prayer for communities around the world, who may not have access to clean water close to home.



# RECYCLING



*"We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them." Francis, Laudato Si' n 22*

National Recycling Week is the 8-14 November, however the **Schools Recycle Right Challenge** runs from the **4 October - 12 November**.

**Get involved!** The theme for 2021 is 'Recovery - A future beyond the bin'. The aim of national recycling week is to help reduce waste and assist people to recycle correctly.

**Watch** this 4.15 min video about [The Story of Plastic](#)

- What are the raw materials used to make plastic?
- Who is being affected the most, by pollution from fossil fuels?
- Draw a pie graph to show the proportions of each possible pathway for plastic (include downcycling, recycled, re-purposed, landfill and incinerated).
- What is the best solution for this issue?
- What is a circular economy?



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## Did you know?

The best way to create less waste is **not** to use single use plastics **or buy** products with too much packaging in the first place. For example, **instead of** buying packaged fruit and vegetables, leave them loose or place them in a reusable bag.

# RECYCLING



We have become really good at recycling our paper and cardboard, 87% is recycled.

However, we are not doing very well when it comes to plastics, only around 9% **are** recycled. [Source](#)

## Recycling Plastics Right!

### Raise Awareness

If the plastic can be crunched and squashed, it is generally a soft plastic which means you can take it to a REDcycle collection bin at most supermarkets, examples are cereal bags and bubble wrap. 8 out of 10 councils find that soft plastics get caught in their recycling machinery and cause an issue. Unfortunately, only 47% of people know about this soft plastic recycling system. [Source](#)



Make a 1-2 min video to educate others about soft plastics recycling. You could use [wevideo](#) to make it.

Have a look at this [site](#) to give you some ideas.



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**Avoid, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**

# SANITATION



## World Toilet Day is observed on the 19 November

Many people around the world do not have access to a toilet or a place to wash their hands. At Caritas Australia we call this WASH Water and Sanitation Hygiene. World Toilet Day is observed to inspire action to tackle this issue and raise awareness.

It might surprise you to learn that 673 million people in the world practice open defecation. [Source](#)

2 out of 5 people in the world don't have a hand washing facility. [Source](#)

This means that there is a higher chance of bacteria and viruses spreading. This has become even more important with the COVID-19 pandemic.



### Activities

- Create an infographic poster to attract peoples' attention and educate them about water and sanitation issues around the world, in particular, not having access to a toilet and wash basin.
- Arsad is a farmer from Indonesia. His family had no toileting facilities in their home. With the support of Caritas Australia, Arsad took part in hygiene and sanitation training and built a toilet in his own home. Now, he is teaching others in his community to build toilets too. Watch [Arsad's Story](#)



Arsad washing his hands next to his new toilet. Credit: Laz Harfa



# SOIL



*"Another determining factor has been an increase in changed uses of the soil, principally deforestation for agricultural purposes." Francis, Laudato Si' n 23*

## The 5 December is Soil Day.

The roots of plants hold the soil together and prevent the soil from being eroded away by wind and water.

Soil is of vital importance as it is the first stage of nutrient cycling for all food webs. Plants absorb nutrients from the soil, animals and humans eat these plants and/or other animals in order to obtain their nutrients.



## Activities

Look at these [resources](#) and write down five things you learnt from these infographics. Do they inspire you to raise awareness about the importance of soils? Create your own infographic or poster to raise awareness in your school and community.

## Become a Soil Sleuth!

You are more likely to find critters in the top layer of moist, organic soil in the morning. You will need a small ice cream tub or a tray, a magnifying glass, a paddle pop stick, a digging stick or small gardening trowel for each pair of students. A video microscope would be the best way to look at the animals. Remember to be gentle with all God's creatures and return them to their home when you are finished looking at them.

Use this Field Guide [App](#) to help you identify what you find. There is one for each state and it's free. There are many other references you can Google to assist you or to carry out extension work after this activity.

# COASTCARE



*"The depletion of fishing reserves especially hurts small fishing communities without the means to replace those resources; water pollution particularly affects the poor who cannot buy bottled water; and rises in the sea level mainly affect impoverished coastal populations who have nowhere else to go." Francis, Laudato Si' n 48*

## Coastcare Week is celebrated from the 6-12 December



The majority of Australia's population lives on the East coast near the Pacific Ocean. Watch this [video](#) and discuss 3 new facts you learnt.



Use your persuasive text writing skills to write a newspaper or magazine article on the importance of our oceans and how to care for them.



We all love going to the beach in warmer weather or even walking along the sand when the weather is cooler. Brainstorm as a group what are some caring for our coast actions you could take while you are visiting the beach?



Learn about Landcare Australia's [Coastcare](#) groups



Use these tips to help you organise a beach [clean](#) up!

# SOLIDARITY



*"We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference." Francis, Laudato Si' n 52*

## International Human Solidarity Day - 20 December

In Laudato Si' Pope Francis talks about intergenerational solidarity; "We can no longer speak of sustainable development apart from intergenerational solidarity. Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others. Since the world has been given to us, we can no longer view reality in a purely utilitarian way, in which efficiency and productivity are entirely geared to our individual benefit. Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us." Francis, *Laudato Si'* n 159

**Discuss** the statements above as a class and then answer these questions.

- What is solidarity?
- What is intergenerational solidarity?
- What is Pope Francis saying about our current economic system?
- Learn more about Catholic Social Teachings, in particular Solidarity



Rosette in the DRC. Credit: Caritas Bukuvu

# THANK YOU!



[catholicearthcare.org.au](https://catholicearthcare.org.au)