

Live Mercy: In the Marketplace

A faith-sharing resource from Catholic Relief Services for small groups that forms, inspires and prepares communities, as consumers in a global economy, to show Christ's compassionate love to others



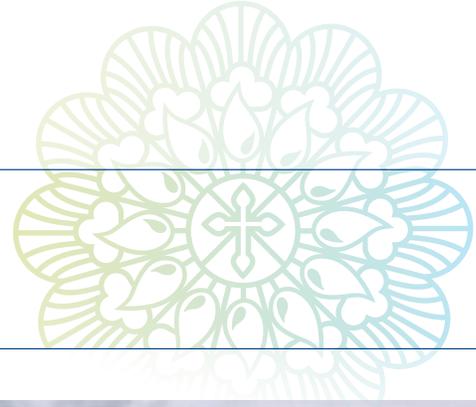
Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS

The Al Naquoura market in the Holy Land sells food products with the help of Adel Fair Trade, which CRS helped launch in 2011.

THREE 90-MINUTE SESSIONS
BEST FOR SMALL GROUPS OF 4-8 PEOPLE
DESIGNED FOR PEER FACILITATION

SESSION ONE

The Church and the Global Economy



CRS Fair Trade Ambassador Elizabeth Hernandez carries out the Gospel message as an active church member and through her daily choices in the global economy.

Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS

MATERIALS

- Bible opened to Matthew 20:1-16
- One copy of “**The Church Responds to the Global Economy through History: Timeline**”
- One copy of “**The Church Responds to the Global Economy through History: Answers**”
- **Timeline Cutouts**, cut into strips and shuffled into a random order
- Table
- Name tags

Welcome and Overview (10 minutes)

- Welcome all participants and introduce yourself.

EXPLAIN

- Jesus' whole life and ministry reveals God's mercy. Jesus pardoned the sinners, cared for the poor, hung out with the marginalized, healed the sick and walked with the suffering. We are to be merciful like the father is merciful, and Jesus shows us exactly what that looks like. An area of our lives that we might not typically think about as an opportunity to show mercy to others is through the choices we make in the marketplace. As consumers, we impact the way other people around the world live. When we buy items that are made overseas in unsafe working conditions at low costs, we contribute to a system that makes it difficult for people to earn enough money to buy food and clothing, pay for medical care or send their children to school.
- These sessions will focus on how we can show Christ's mercy to those who suffer most in the global economy. This session will help us reflect on how the Church has responded as the economy has evolved. The second session will invite us to learn about the conditions of workers around the world and the good work that is being done to help improve their situations. And the final session will challenge us to think about how we can live mercy in the marketplace individually and as a community.
- These sessions are developed by Catholic Relief Services, the official humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. The work of CRS to assist poor and suffering people around the world—including helping people improve their livelihoods—is done in the name of Catholics in the United States.

Group Introductions (10 minutes)

- Invite participants to share their names and a little bit about themselves.

Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

- Begin with an adapted Lectio Divina.
- Explain that Lectio Divina is a practice of meditating with Scripture. It typically includes reading a Scripture multiple times and reflecting on it in different ways. Share that in your adapted version of Lectio Divina, you will read and reflect on the Scripture passage twice.
- Invite two people to read Matthew 20:1-16. (Begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.)
- After the first reader reads the Scripture passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask participants to share what word or phrase resonated with them.
- After the second reader reads the passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask participants to share what resonated with or challenged them.
- Once the sharing is complete, close with a prayer and the sign of the cross.

Reflection (20 minutes)

- Explain that you will now take some time as a group to reflect on why you feel drawn to this topic.

DISCUSS

- What drew you to participate in this group and learn about this topic? Was it a conversation you had, something you read or a recent purchase you made?
- What role do you think our faith should play in guiding how we participate in the economy?
- What do you hope to get out of these three sessions?



Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS

The Church and the Marketplace (30 minutes)

EXPLAIN

- The Church has a strong history of talking about the economy. In 1891, the first formal letter from a Pope—or encyclical—about social issues was written in response to the industrial revolution.
 - Since then, the economy has changed, and the Church has continued to issue statements that respond to its evolution.
 - We will do an activity to get us thinking about how the global economy has changed over time and learn about how the Church has responded.
- Put **“The Church Responds to the Global Economy through History: Timeline”** in the middle of the table.
 - Place **“Timeline Cutouts”** in the middle of the table.
 - Tell participants that each description goes with a year. In each of these years, the Church issued a written response to what was happening in the world. Many of the descriptions address the state of the global economy and its impact on people.
 - Read each description aloud and work as a group to assign the events to a year by placing the slips of paper next to the year.
 - Once you’ve matched years to descriptions, check your answers and make changes as necessary.
 - After the activity,¹ the leader should reiterate that as the economy has changed and become more of a global marketplace, the Church has issued responses encouraging people to make sure that any economic system respects the dignity of the human person and the most vulnerable in society.
 - Pass **“The Church Responds to the Global Economy through History: Answers”** around the room and ask each person to take a turn reading the year and the Church’s response aloud. (Note that there is no need to reread the descriptions.)

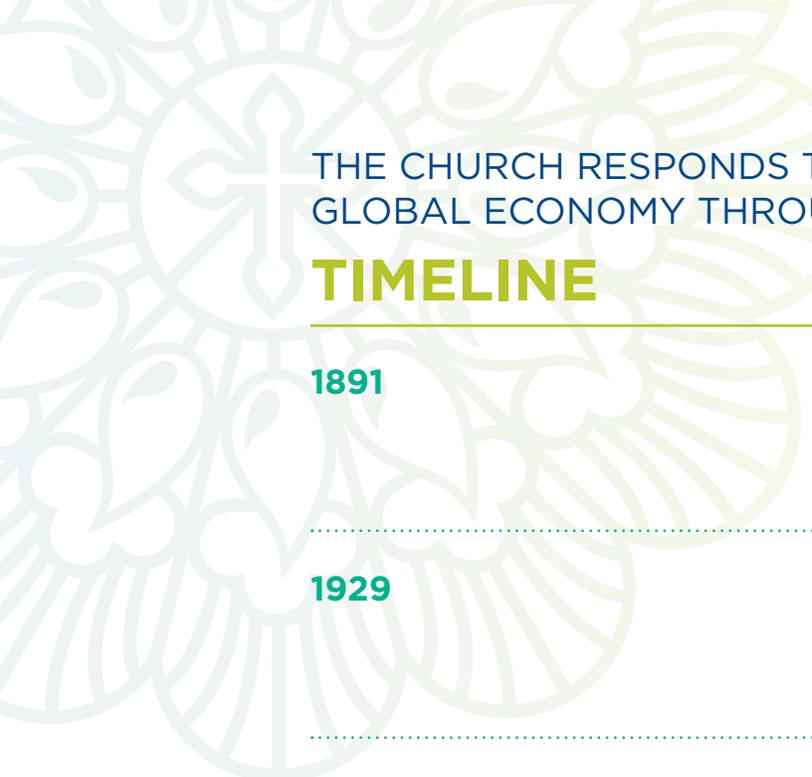
DISCUSS

- Share reactions to this activity.
- Based on the quick summaries we read of Church documents throughout history, what would you say the Church teaches about the global economy?

Announcements (5 minutes)

- Share that in the next session you will reflect on the impact of the economy on the poorest and most vulnerable people around the world, and how we can respond as people of faith.
- Ask participants to choose one product in their house—like an article of clothing, a piece of jewelry or a work of art—and learn about the person or people who made it. It is great if they have a product they can already tell a story about. If they don’t, invite them to try to find out more about the history of an item of their choice. Say that you’ll ask participants to share these stories at the start of the next session.
- Encourage participants to take an inventory of their “stuff” and reflect on areas where they can simplify and reduce consumption in their own lives.
- Make any announcements, including your next meeting time.

¹ Activity adapted with permission from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ “Timeline Activity: How well do you know Catholic Social Teaching?” For the full activity, [visit usccb.org](http://visit.usccb.org).



THE CHURCH RESPONDS TO THE
GLOBAL ECONOMY THROUGH HISTORY:

TIMELINE

1891

1929

1961

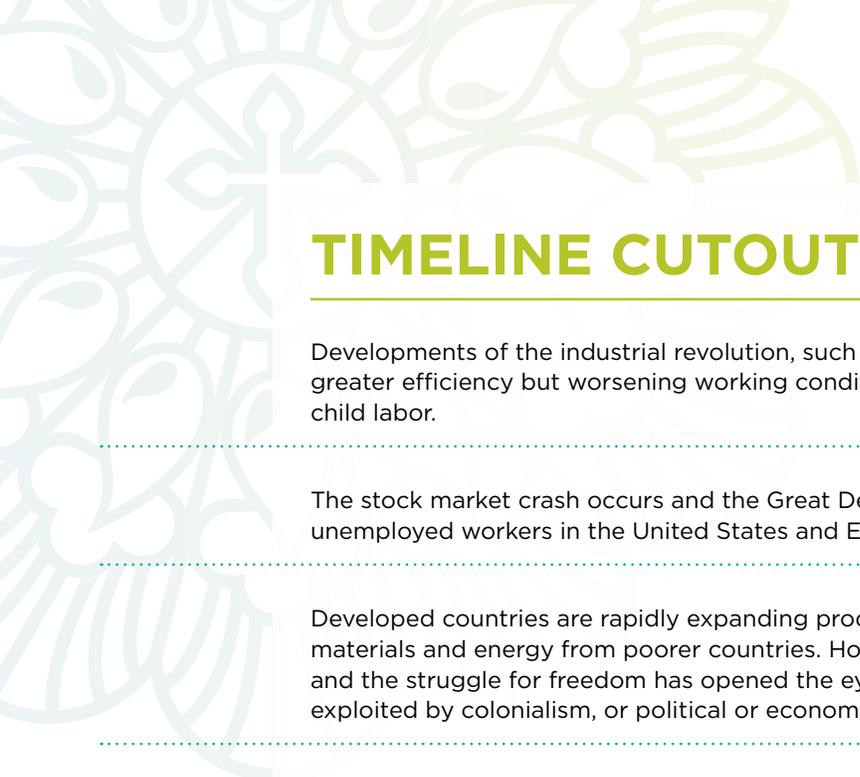
1981

1986

1991

2009

2015



TIMELINE CUTOUTS

Developments of the industrial revolution, such as steam power and machine tools, have led to greater efficiency but worsening working conditions, including long hours, unsafe conditions and child labor.

The stock market crash occurs and the Great Depression begins. There are large numbers of unemployed workers in the United States and Europe.

Developed countries are rapidly expanding production and increasing profits, often by using raw materials and energy from poorer countries. However, poorer nations are not seeing such progress, and the struggle for freedom has opened the eyes of many to how poor countries have been exploited by colonialism, or political or economic control by a stronger country.

Strikes and protests among shipyard workers in Poland lead to the creation of an independent trade union called Solidarity, which grows into a powerful, nonviolent movement advocating for workers' rights that is eventually suppressed by the government. There has been labor unrest in the United States, with strikes by federal air traffic controllers, miners, postal workers, workers on grape farms, and others.

The developed world sees increased economic liberalization—lessening of the rules and restrictions that govern trade, business, and other aspects of economic life—and economic growth. Multinational corporations increasingly move offshore. Developing countries suffer from a severe debt crisis and a widening gap between rich and poor countries. In the United States, there have been cuts in domestic programs and taxes while defense spending increases. Unemployment reaches 10 percent, and many factories close down. Farmers in the United States face increasing difficulty due to the economic crisis, high oil prices, and the growth of factory farms.

The oppression of people in communist countries begins to give rise to protests. The Berlin Wall falls, generating global celebration. The breakup of the USSR occurs and communism collapses. At the same time, debate about the market system the rest of the world uses poses questions about economic inequality, which has reached historic levels.

The world is in the midst of a severe economic and food crisis that is affecting poor countries the most. Global migration had surpassed 200 million people each year, with many people migrating to escape poverty. Reports from the United Nations predict increasing evidence of the impact of climate change, such as rising temperatures, shrinking glaciers and sea ice, rising sea levels and extreme weather.

The global economy continues to grow, leading to rampant consumerism and creating a wider disparity between the rich and poor. Many organizations shift their focus to corporate social responsibility programs and environmental impact. Evidence of climate change spurs research into alternative forms of energy and production, while the poor continue to be affected by stronger storms and prolonged droughts.

The Church Responds to the Global Economy Through History: Answers

1891: Developments of the industrial revolution, such as steam power and machine tools have led to greater efficiency but worsening working conditions, including long hours, unsafe conditions and child labor.

The Church's response: Pope Leo XIII writes "On the Condition of Labor," or "Rerum Novarum." This groundbreaking social encyclical addresses the dehumanizing conditions in which many workers labor, and affirms workers' rights to: just wages, rest, fair treatment, form unions, and strike if necessary.

1929: The stock market crash occurs and the Great Depression begins. There are large numbers of unemployed workers in the United States and Europe.

The Church's Response: Pope Pius XI writes "On Reconstructing the Social Order," or "Quadragesimo Anno." This encyclical reaffirms the Church's concern for workers and defends workers' rights—including just wages—and condemns the increasing disparities between the elite and suffering workers.

1961: Developed countries are rapidly expanding production and increasing profits, often by using raw materials and energy from poorer countries. However, poorer nations are not seeing such progress, and the struggle for freedom has opened the eyes of many to how poor countries have been exploited by colonialism, or political or economic control by a stronger country.

The Church's Response: Pope John XXIII writes "On Christianity and Social Progress," or "Mater et Magistra." Pope John XXIII comments on changes in recent decades such as communication advances, increases in workers' rights and social programs, and the political or economic control of weaker countries by stronger ones. He notes the world's global interdependence and expresses profound concern about the arms race, and the growing inequalities between rich and poor nations, noting that gains in science and technology should not lead to economic disparity but should instead benefit the common good.

1981: In 1980, strikes and protests among shipyard workers in Poland lead to the creation of an independent trade union called Solidarity, which grows into a powerful, nonviolent movement advocating for workers' rights that is eventually suppressed by the government. In the 1970s and '80s in the United States, there is labor unrest, with strikes by federal air traffic controllers, miners, postal workers, workers on grape farms, and others.

The Church's Response: Pope John Paul II writes "On Human Work," or "Laborem Exercens." Pope John Paul II presents work as a fundamental dimension of human existence through which a person achieves fulfillment as a human being. He emphasizes the dignity of labor and notes that, through work, the human person can share in the activity of the Creator. John Paul II reminds readers that labor should be prioritized over capital: that the worker should be valued more than profit. For this reason, we must protect the rights of workers to employment, to just wages and to organize unions, among other rights.

1986: During the 1980s, the developed world sees increased economic liberalization—a lessening of the rules and restrictions that govern trade, business, and other aspects of economic life—and economic growth. Multinational corporations increasingly move offshore. Developing countries suffer from a severe debt crisis and a widening gap between rich and poor countries. In the

United States, domestic programs and taxes are cut, while defense spending increases in the 1980s. Early in the decade there is a major recession, unemployment reaches 10 percent, and many factories close. Farmers in the United States face increasing difficulty because of the economic crisis, high oil prices, and the growth of factory farms

The Church's Response: The United States Bishops write "Economic Justice for All." In this pastoral letter, the Catholic bishops of the United States call for a "new American experiment" for the common good (no. 295) in order to address economic issues related to poverty, employment, food and agriculture, and developing nations. The bishops argue that economic policies should be evaluated based on how they impact the poor and vulnerable. Workers, owners, stockholders, investors, and consumers should all be seen as economic agents, and must play a role in ensuring that people are the center of economic decisions. The bishops highlight the moral implications of the U.S. and global economies, and discuss the need for government guidance to ensure that the free market benefits—rather than hurts—the poor.

1991: The oppression of people in communist countries begins to give rise to protests. The Berlin Wall falls in 1989, generating global celebrations. The breakup of the USSR occurs and communism collapses. At the same time, debate about the market system the rest of the world uses poses questions about economic inequality, which has reached historic levels.

The Church's Response: Pope John Paul II writes "On The Hundredth Year," or "Centesimus Annus." John Paul II writes this encyclical to recognize the hundredth anniversary of "Rerum Novarum". The pope examines the fall of communism, brought about by workers' struggles and the inefficient economic system that failed to protect human rights, private property and economic freedom. At the same time, John Paul II points to the advantages and limitations of the market, which sometimes do not adequately respond to human needs, and may prioritize profit at the expense of human dignity. John Paul II also restates themes of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical and calls for a just society based on the rights of workers, economic initiative and participation.

2009: The world is in the midst of a severe economic and food crisis that is affecting poor countries the most. Global migration has surpassed 200 million people each year, with many people migrating to escape poverty. Reports from the United Nations predict increasing evidence of the impact of climate change, such as rising temperatures, melting glaciers and sea ice, rising sea levels and extreme weather.

The Church's Response: Pope Benedict XVI writes "Charity in Truth," or "Caritas in Veritate." Benedict XVI writes that the human person's ability to love is rooted in the Father's love for humankind and the person's identity as created in the image of God. God's love manifests itself in Christ, who gives of himself freely for the salvation of humankind. The call to love one's neighbor flows from God's love for humanity.

2015: The global economy continues to grow, leading to increased consumerism and creating a wider disparity between the rich and poor. Many organizations shift their focus to corporate social responsibility programs and environmental impact. Evidence of climate change spurs research into alternative forms of energy and production, while the poor continue to be affected by stronger storms and prolonged droughts.

The Church's Response: Pope Francis writes "Praised Be," or "Laudato Si'." Building on a long tradition of Church teaching, Pope Francis explores our unique relationship with the earth, the devastating impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable, and our responsibility to protect the earth and each other. He warns against unbridled economic growth, cautioning that the interests of the market should not lead to destruction of the environment.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...

*Jesus the carpenter,
As you, the laborer,
Built first with wood, and then with spirit,
Transform all our work
So that we may see our labor come alive
In the building of the Kingdom.*

*Let us arise to hear the call of the one
Who has willed us to be fishers of men,
Workers in the vineyard,
Laborers in the field.*

*For, through the love of your Father,
We have become partners in creation,
Transforming the world.
And so may our livelihoods be transformed—
Not to be a daily burden,
An assault on our dignity,
But a vehicle for your grace,
An expression of your gifts,
Your Spirit at work in the world,
Transforming all it touches,
Through the loving heart of the Creator,
Through the hands of his creatures.*

*Lord Jesus, be with all laborers everywhere.
Affirm the dignity of our work,
The meaning of our toil,
The grace to our vocations,
As you were with Peter the fisherman,
Paul the tent maker,
Francis the church builder,
Patrick the shepherd,
Isidore the farmer,
Medical workers like Marianne Cope,
Teachers like Frances Cabrini.
Throughout history, thinkers, smiths, and tradesmen,
Builders, bakers and artisans
Have stood beside kings and nobility
As the greatest of your servants.*

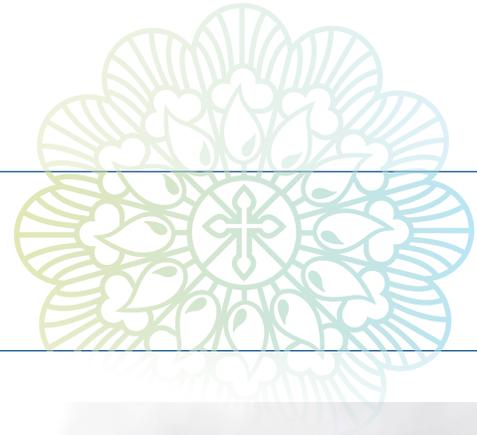
*We lift up all who are unable to find work
And those whose work does not sustain them.
Help us embrace the work you set before us.
May the work of all our hands honor you,
So that like these saints and all your blessed servants,
We may remain with you always.*

Amen



SESSION TWO

Ethical Trade and the Dignity of Work



The Ramirez family, on their coffee farm in Guatemala, has learned new ways to manage their crop with help from CRS.

Photo by Leiva/Oscar Silverlight for CRS

MATERIALS

- Bible opened to 1 Corinthians 12:14–26
- Copies of **“What is Fair Trade?”** for each participant
- Name tags
- Equipment to show the YouTube video **“CST 101: Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers”**
- **“Learning From Labels”** handout for each participant

Welcome and Overview (5 minutes)

- Welcome participants back.
- Explain that this session will invite participants to reflect more deeply on the lives of low-wage workers in other countries. You will learn about how our faith invites us to care for the dignity of work and rights of workers, and how one way of doing this is by purchasing ethically traded products.

Check in (15 minutes)

- Invite participants to reintroduce themselves, if necessary, and to take a few minutes to share about the product they selected to research. If participants struggled to come up with something, invite them to share why this task was difficult.
- Ask: Without checking, does anyone know which country the clothes they are wearing came from?
- Share that more than 97 percent of clothes sold in the United States are made in factories—including sweatshops—overseas.¹
- Explain that we live in a globalized world. Pope Francis talks about how this can lead to a “globalization of indifference,” where we are connected to people around the world and more aware of their suffering than ever, and yet not moved to act on their behalf. We can show mercy as consumers by breaking through the bubble of indifference and getting to know the people who create our products.

Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

- Explain that today you’ll reflect on the reality of workers around the world and how connected you are to them, because sometimes it can be difficult to remember our connectedness to people in other countries. For your opening prayer, you will reflect on this theme by meditating on a Scripture passage through Lectio Divina. Share that in your adapted version of Lectio Divina, you will read and reflect on the Scripture passage twice.
- Invite two people to read 1 Corinthians 12: 14-26. (Begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.)
- After the first reader reads the Scripture passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask participants to share what word or phrase resonated with them.
- After the second reader reads the passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask participants to share what resonated with or challenged them.
- Invite participants to say a silent prayer asking for the grace to recognize the ways that the Holy Spirit is calling them to honor the dignity of all workers and their work.
- Close with the sign of the cross.
- After they have shared, explain:

¹ American Apparel Footwear Association
“AAFA Releases ApparelStats 2012 Report,” www.wear.org/aafa-releases-apparelstats-2012-report/

- It is important to remember that our faith compels us to think about our role in improving the plight of workers around the world.
- We have reflected on the interdependence of members of the human family, using St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, and in our last session we learned about the Church's history of defending a just economy and workers' rights.
- The Church's concern with the plight of workers is rooted in our belief in the dignity of work. Our Catholic social teaching states that work is more than just a way to earn a living; rather, when we work, we participate in God's holy act of creation. Our participation in the act of creation endows work with dignity that must be respected through the guarantee of workers' basic rights.
- We'll take a moment to reflect a bit more on this teaching by watching a video about the dignity of work and the rights of workers.
- Show the video: "[CST 101: Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers.](#)"



In Madriz, Nicaragua, CRS helps farmers to overcome the devastation of coffee leaf rust.

Photo by Leiva/Oscar Silverlight for CRS

Coffee: a Case Study (30 minutes)

EXPLAIN

- As we saw in the video, we are connected to different kinds of workers around the world in many ways—through the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the cars we drive, and the gifts we receive. In this session, we will focus specifically on the working conditions of many coffee producers. Taking a closer look at this commodity can give us insight into the realities of many low-wage workers around the world.
- Many of us drink coffee at home, or live or work with others who drink it. We often serve coffee at parish events.
- Coffee is the United States' largest import, and the world's second most valuable traded commodity. There are approximately 25 million farmers and coffee workers in more than 50 countries involved in producing coffee. Coffee producers are kept in a cycle of poverty and debt by the current global economy, which exploits cheap labor and keeps consumer prices low.²
- We will take a few minutes to reflect on the realities of many coffee farmers around the world by listening to a description of the situation of many producers.
- Invite participants to close their eyes and imagine their life as a coffee farmworker, as you read the following passage:
 - You work in the coffee fields. It's harvest season in Nicaragua, so you and your family have gone to live on the coffee farm for the season. You share one large room with up to 60 other farmworkers and their families. You have no privacy. There are not enough mattresses or blankets for everyone. There are only a few latrines, so sometimes you have to relieve yourself in the coffee field, instead of using a bathroom. You bathe in the river.
 - You face unsafe conditions in the fields each day. Since you typically aren't provided with any gear, you bring your own rain boots, trash bags that serve as ponchos, and even a machete for protection. You face creatures like snakes, spiders and fire ants in the fields. You are required to apply pesticides to plants, which are a health hazard to you, your family and your fellow workers.
 - You work long hours each day throughout the harvest season, but have no control over how much you'll be paid. Even though the minimum wage in Nicaragua is close to \$6 a day, you might make as little as \$2 to \$3, and without a contract—which you don't have—there's nothing you can do about it.
 - Another issue that worries you is that crops across Central America are being wiped out by coffee leaf rust. Climate change is exacerbating the effects of this fungus. Plants are more susceptible to the fungus when they are weakened by major changes like droughts and strong storms; More than 370,000 coffee jobs were lost across Central America in 2012, and you are concerned that yours is next.
 - You also worry about your children. They work the fields with you. You need their help because you will not receive your wages if you do not make the day's quota, which is typically about 100 pounds of coffee. Your children are helping you make your quota, but they are not paid separately. They also face many other violations of their human rights.
- This scenario is based on information from Daily Coffee News, "Farmworkers Left Behind: The

² Daily Coffee News, "Farmworkers Left Behind: The Human Cost of Coffee Production," dailycoffeenews.com/2013/07/17/farmworkers-left-behind-the-human-cost-of-coffee-production/

Human Cost of Coffee Production.”³ For full article, visit dailycoffeenews.com

- Invite participants to open their eyes.

DISCUSS

- What were you feeling as you put yourself in the shoes of a farmworker in Central America?
- What issues surfaced in this scenario that farmworkers typically face? (e.g., poor housing and working conditions, lack of contracts, low wages, the effects of climate change on their livelihoods, child labor)
- What are possible solutions that could help change this reality?
- How does our Catholic faith call us to address these issues? What beliefs or themes from our Catholic Tradition, or stories from Scripture compel us to honor the dignity of workers around the world?

Fair Trade: A Way to Live Mercy (25 minutes)

EXPLAIN

- One way to honor the dignity of work and to ensure that coffee farmworkers—and other low-wage workers around the world—receive a fair wage and work in safe conditions is by purchasing products that were ethically traded. This means that workers who helped create or trade items in any part of the supply chain receive fair and prompt payment, work in safe working conditions and are treated with dignity and respect. Companies that practice ethical trade also exercise environmental stewardship and engage in outreach efforts to support local communities where products are sourced.
- Fair trade is a type of ethical trade that respects workers by maintaining a number of criteria.
- Distribute the “**What is Fair Trade?**” handout and give participants a few moments to read it to themselves.
- Discuss:
 - How would you describe “fair trade” to a family member or coworker?
 - Think back to the last session, where we reflected on the Church teaching on the economy throughout history. How is fair trade consistent with Church teaching?

Announcements (5 minutes)

- Distribute the “**Learning from Labels**” handout. Encourage participants to research the labels further and educate themselves about these and other labels that come onto the market.
- This week, when you’re at the grocery store, try to buy at least one fair trade product, like coffee, tea or fruit. Check to see if it carries one of the fair trade labels that is on the “**Learning from Labels**” handout.
 - In preparation for next week, brainstorm what you might be able to do individually and as a community to live mercy to others in the marketplace by contributing to a fair trade model. Check out ethicaltrade.crs.org for more ideas.

³ Daily Coffee News
“Farmworkers Left Behind: The Human Cost of Coffee Production,”
dailycoffeenews.com/2013/07/17/farmworkers-left-behind-the-human-cost-of-coffee-production/

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

SAY

As we close, we remember in prayer, again, that we are connected to people around the world as one body in Christ. We pray that we will keep this reality in the forefront of our minds as we live each day, and especially as we participate in the marketplace.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...

“But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, Jacob, and formed you, Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine.” (Isaiah 43:1)

Loving God,

*I did not know you
But I was yours.
And they do not know me
And I do not know them
But they are mine
And I am theirs.*

*Let no chasm, no river, no drought or storm,
No war, no exodus, no border, natural or constructed,
No device of man nor devil
Come between us
Or halt the love that burns within me,
The grace that flows from you.*

*Let me think on no man unless I think joyful
thoughts of brotherhood,
Let me think on no woman unless I think tender
thoughts of sisterhood,
Friend and stranger,
Ally and enemy,
Brothers,
Sisters.*

*They are mine
And I am theirs,
Because we are yours.*

Amen



WHAT IS FAIR TRADE?

Fair trade is one model of ethical trade. It embodies a comprehensive set of criteria, including, at minimum, the following commitments:

- Paying a fair wage in the local context
- Offering employees opportunities for advancement
- Providing equal employment opportunities for all people, particularly the most disadvantaged
- Engaging in environmentally sustainable practices
- Being open to public accountability
- Building long-term trade relationships
- Providing healthy and safe working conditions within the local context
- Providing financial and technical assistance to producers whenever possible

These criteria were drawn from the Fair Trade Federation, a trade association for fair trade businesses in the United States and Canada. For more information about these criteria or the Federation, please visit fairtradefederation.org.

How does fair trade affect a supply chain? Because it's focused on a relationship that honors the dignity of the worker, fair trade supply chains cut out a number of steps. Many fair trade coffee suppliers, for example, know the names and the stories of the producers they buy from.⁴



⁴ Equal Exchange, *Bringing Coffee Growers and Coffee Drinkers Closer Together*, Infographic

Learning from the Labels

As demand for economic and environmental responsibility grows, more and more labels and logos are appearing on products to help consumers like you make informed decisions. This guide is designed to help you understand the labeling often associated with fair trade products.

NAME: **FAIR TRADE FEDERATION**

ISSUING ORGANIZATION: **Fair Trade Federation**



The Fair Trade Federation logo is used by members of the Fair Trade Federation, or FTF, an association of organizations fully committed to fair trade principles. It does not represent a third-party inspection and verification system; therefore it is not a certification. It indicates that a company has met the membership criteria of FTF. When you buy from companies authorized to use the FTF label, you can be assured that they are fully committed to fair trade. FTF upholds nine fair trade principles that you can learn about at fairtradefederation.org/fair-trade-federation-principles.

NAME: **FAIR TRADE CERTIFIED**

ISSUING ORGANIZATION: **Fair Trade USA**



The Fair Trade Certified label is regulated by Fair Trade USA (formerly TransFair USA). Products that contain fair trade-certified ingredients, such as sugar or nuts in energy bars, can bear a label noting this. You can learn more at fairtradeusa.org/certification/label-usage. FTUSA certifies transactions, not companies.

NAME: **FAIRTRADE MARK**

ISSUING ORGANIZATION: **Fairtrade International/Flo-Cert**



Fairtrade International, also known as FLO, maintains an international register of fair trade certified cooperatives and plantations that have met its standards. FLO includes farmer representatives in its governance. In late 2012, FLO began operating in the United States to license U.S. companies to sell coffee, chocolate, tea, sugar and other commodities. FLO certifies transactions, not companies. More about the standards and structure of FLO are at fairtrade.net/standards.html.

NAME: **CERTIFIED B CORPORATION/B CORP**

ISSUING ORGANIZATION: **B Lab/B Corporation**



The B Corp label is regulated by B Lab and issued to companies that complete a rigorous on-line assessment and meet the standards set in place. These standards include: social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency.

NAME: **FAIR FOR LIFE**

ISSUING ORGANIZATION: **Institute for Marketecology**



The Swiss-based Institute for Marketecology, or IMO, manages Fair for Life, a neutral third-party certification program for social accountability and fair trade. It complements existing fair trade certification systems and covers many agricultural, manufacturing and trading operations that may be excluded from independent verification and fair trade certification. It also certifies all critical steps in the value chain. Learn more at fairforlife.net.

NAME: **SMALL PRODUCERS SYMBOL**

ISSUING ORGANIZATION: **FUNDEPPO**



The Small Producers' Symbol was launched in 2006 by the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers, known as CLAC. Small producers created, promote, and work to maintain the objectivity of the certification system. The symbol represents a house that has been built solidly and is open to everyone, as well as balance and unity between producers and consumers, between men and women, and between nature and dignified living. Learn more at tusimbolo.org.

NAME: **RAINFOREST ALLIANCE CERTIFIED**

ISSUING ORGANIZATION: **Sustainable Agriculture Network**



Rainforest Alliance Certification promotes the conservation of native ecosystems and forest protection by assuring compliance with a range of environmental, social and organizational standards. The primary focus of Rainforest Alliance Certification is environmental. It is increasingly popular with companies interested in “sustainability.” You can learn more at rainforest-alliance.org/agriculture/standards.

NAME: **CERTIFIED ORGANIC**

ISSUING ORGANIZATION: **United States Department of Agriculture**



The United States Department of Agriculture has established a comprehensive set of standards that anyone who uses the “organic” label in the United States must meet. USDA standards on food focus on the products used in growing and processing food. USDA organic standards prohibit using antibiotics, genetic engineering and most synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. USDA accredits more than 50 certifying organizations that inspect producers to verify compliance. Learn more at ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/nop.

NAME: **WHOLE FOODS MARKET**

CERTIFYING AGENCIES: **FAIR TRADE USA, IMO, Rainforest Alliance, Quality Assurance International—Organics**

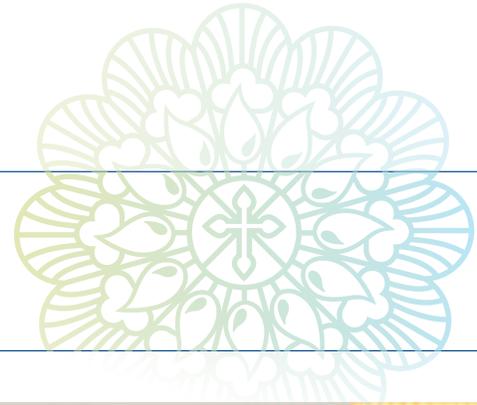


Whole Foods Market works with certifiers to identify products that meet criteria in four specific areas. Similar to Starbucks' CAFÉ Practices, this is a company-driven effort to address concerns related to value-chain practices. The Whole Trade guarantee is concerned with establishing high quality standards, providing more money to producers, ensuring better wages and working conditions for workers, and caring for the environment. Read more at wholefoodsmarket.com/products/whole-trade.php.

The use of certification labels and organizational logos is evolving in today's marketplace. To keep up with the latest developments visit ethicaltrade.crs.org and ftrn.org.

SESSION THREE

Living Mercy in the Marketplace



Friends learn about CRS Community Orders and purchase chocolate, coffee, jewelry and other products from global farmers and artisans.

Photo by Phillip Laubner for CRS

MATERIALS

Bible opened to James 5:1-6

- Copies of the **“Personal and Community Discernment Sheet”** for each participant. (Alternative: Write the questions from the discernment sheet onto a large piece of newsprint.)
- Copies of **“The Closing Prayer”** for each participant
- Reflective music and music player
- Equipment to show these videos from CRS’ YouTube channel:
 - “CRS Consignment Sale”**
 - “CRS Community Orders”**

Welcome and Overview (10 minutes)

- Welcome participants back and ask them to share how their day or week was and whether they purchased a fair trade item from the store since you last met.
- Explain that this will be your final session together and will focus on the ways that you can live mercy in the marketplace in your own lives and as a community.

Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

- Say that embracing the call to live mercy in the marketplace is extremely challenging. It means thinking about how our daily spending affects other people. It also invites us to consider our own lifestyles and whether they are consistent with the Gospel message.
- Explain that the Scripture you will read is challenging and may not seem relevant at first glance, but encourage participants to try to reflect on it in the context of their own lives.
- Share that in your adapted version of Lectio Divina, you will read and reflect on the Scripture passage twice.
- Invite two people to read James 5:1-6. (Begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.)
- After the first reader reads the Scripture passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask participants to share what word or phrase resonated with them.
- After the second reader reads the passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask participants to share what resonated with or challenged them.
- Once the sharing is complete, close with a prayer and the sign of the cross.

Practicing Fair Trade in Your Daily Life and As a Community (15 minutes)

EXPLAIN

- Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. CRS is motivated by the example of Jesus Christ to assist poor and suffering people in more than 100 countries on the basis of need, without regard to race, religion or nationality.
- One way CRS does this is through CRS Ethical Trade. The CRS Ethical Trade program helps us bring the core values of our faith to the choices we make as consumers—choices that have the power to lift our brothers and sisters out of poverty. It supports Catholics around the country to live mercy in the marketplace in their own lives and through their Catholic community.
- In this final session, we will discern how we can live mercy in the marketplace by practicing fair trade in our daily lives and in our communities. The videos and resources we'll explore to help us do that are provided by CRS Ethical Trade.
- We will take some time to brainstorm our own ideas, but before that, we will watch a few videos that can help spark ideas about how we can get involved as a community.
- Some ideas for getting a parish involved in fair trade include:
 - Serving fair trade coffee, tea and sugar at parish gatherings
 - Holding a fair trade Christmas sale before the holidays
 - Using fair trade baskets for the offertory collection

- Giving presentations to parishioners about how they can live their faith as consumers through fair trade
- Purchasing fair trade items as gifts in celebrating the sacraments
- Say that you will watch a short video about how one parish incorporated fair trade into their parish life.
- Explain that there are three ways to bring fair trade products to your parish:
 - 1. CRS CONSIGNMENT SALE:**
A consignment sale is usually held in conjunction with a parish or school event or after Mass. Hosts of a consignment sale order items in advance, unpack them and set up the sale, sell them, mail back unsold items and submit payment for the goods sold.
 - Show the video [“CRS Consignment Sale.”](#)
 - 2. CRS COMMUNITY ORDER:**
A community order can be done as a part of a parish or school community, or with friends and family. It works a bit like ordering Girl Scout Cookies. The host receives an order form and catalog and invites people to place their orders ahead of time. The items are sent to the host, who distributes them.
 - Show the video [“CRS Community Orders.”](#)
 - Explain that with either of these models, the host receives a percentage discount when a certain amount is purchased. This discount either may be applied to the customer’s sales price, or the parish or other host organization can charge the full price and keep the money to use for another good cause.
 - 3. EQUAL EXCHANGE COFFEE SALES:**
Purchase Equal Exchange coffee for your parish and serve it in the rectory, at meetings and at fellowship after Mass. You can also set up monthly orders or a buying club to purchase Equal Exchange coffee and chocolate.
 - For every item purchased through one of our partners, CRS receives a generous contribution to the CRS Ethical Trade Fund. Contributions made to the fund are reinvested in projects overseas to assist farmers and artisans, and here in the United States to build a more just trading system.
 - For more information visit ethicaltrade.crs.org.
 - CRS Consignment or CRS Community Orders: orders@serrv.org or 800-685-7572
 - Equal Exchange Sales: orders@equalexchange.coop or 774-776-7333

Discernment Activity (45 minutes)

- Explain that you will take time to discern how you can respond individually and as a community to Christ's call to live mercy in the marketplace.
- Distribute the **“Personal and Community Discernment Sheet”** (or direct the group to the questions on the newsprint) and give them 10 minutes to silently reflect on the questions. Play reflective music.
- Invite everyone to turn to the person next to them and discuss their responses for 10 minutes.
- Reconvene the group to discuss these questions:
 - What came up in your discussions together?
 - How do you feel called to respond to live mercy in the marketplace as a community?
 - Who feels moved to lead one or two of these ideas—and what are some next steps to move this forward?

Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

- Ask for four readers to help lead the closing prayer. Distribute copies of the prayer .

LEADER: *In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ...*

READER ONE: *“Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.” (Genesis 2:1-3)*

ALL: God, may all workers have time to rest. We pray for an end to unfair work hours for factory workers worldwide.

READER TWO: *“You shall not exploit a poor and needy hired servant, whether one of your own kindred or one of the resident aliens who live in your land, within your gates. On each day you shall pay the servant’s wages before the sun goes down, since the servant is poor and is counting on them. Otherwise the servant will cry to the Lord against you, and you will be held guilty.” (Deuteronomy 24:14-15)*

ALL: God of the poor, may all workers be paid fairly for their work. We pray for an end to labor practices that take advantage of workers, especially migrant workers and immigrants.

READER THREE: *“Woe to him who builds his house on wrongdoing, his roof-chambers on injustice; Who works his neighbors without pay, and gives them no wages.” (Jeremiah 22:13)*

ALL: God of justice, we pray that we do not build our house on wrongdoing. Help us to be more intentional about what we buy and to practice integrity in our workplaces so that we do not benefit from the poor working conditions of our brothers and sisters.

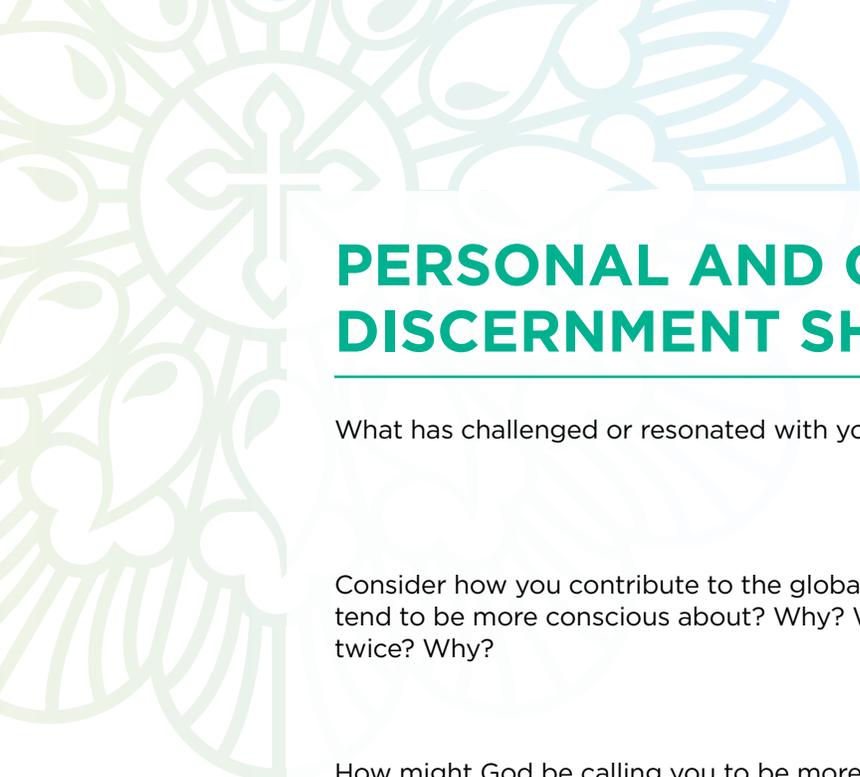
READER FOUR: *“And the crowds asked him, ‘What then should we do?’ He said to them in reply, ‘Whoever has two tunics should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.’ Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, ‘Teacher, what should we do?’ He answered them, ‘Stop collecting more than what is prescribed.’ Soldiers also asked him, ‘And what is it that we should do?’ He told them, ‘Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages.’” (Luke 3:10-14)*

ALL: God of Mercy, show us your mercy as we consider the changes we need to make in our own lives in order to be more merciful to others. We pray that we not live off more than we need or be envious of others who have more than we do. Help us to go out of our way—even when it is inconvenient—to make decisions that serve others.

LEADER: We pray in thanksgiving for our time together over these past three sessions and we ask that God guide us to live mercy in the marketplace on our journey ahead. In Jesus’ name we pray,
Amen.

- Close by inviting participants to share a sign of Christ’s peace.





PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY DISCERNMENT SHEET

What has challenged or resonated with you most from these past few sessions?

Consider how you contribute to the global economy. What kinds of purchases do you tend to be more conscious about? Why? Which purchases do you make without thinking twice? Why?

How might God be calling you to be more intentional about your spending?
(Some examples: Living more simply or buying from second-hand stores, donating to organizations that help support workers around the world, making a deliberate effort to buy fair trade versions of products that you are buying anyway, giving fair trade gifts for holidays, etc.)

What is your parish community already doing to respond to the call to live mercy in the marketplace?

What are one or two ways your parish community could deepen this response?

What gifts do you bring that you could offer in service of such efforts?

WAYS TO SUPPORT ETHICAL TRADE

Programs

CRS Ethical Trade helps us bring the core values of our faith to the choices we make as consumers—choices that have the power to lift our brothers and sisters out of poverty. Ethical trade is a transparent commitment to treat workers and suppliers fairly, care for the environment and invest in the community. ethicaltrade.crs.org

CRS faithACTS invites communities to pray for, learn about and support projects that support people overseas. One project, for example, helps increase the incomes of 6,000 women in the Democratic Republic of Congo by making them better coffee farmers, improving their crop quality and expanding the global market for this country's exceptional beans. faithacts.crs.org

Farmer-to-Farmer is a CRS program that sends people with agricultural expertise on all-expenses-paid volunteer assignments to share their skills and help build the capacity of African farmers, agribusinesses, credit institutions and schools through short-term training and technical assistance projects. farmertofarmer.crs.org

Resources

CRS Ethical Trade Website

Includes print and multimedia resources for various audiences. The website can also help guide you through how to host consignment sales and community orders.

CST 101: The Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers

A video about the Catholic social teaching principle about the role of work

The Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers Lesson Plan

Lesson plans for grades 1-8 about the Catholic social teaching principle the Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers. The lesson plans help explain the principle through the story of a microfinance group in Zambia.

Fair Trade Wedding Flyer

A Pre-Cana resource for engaged couples that invites them to reflect on how they can integrate service to others into their wedding celebration as they prepare for the sacrament of marriage.

Advent Prayers, Reflections and Activities

Celebrate the season of Advent and prepare for the coming of Christ through weekly Gospel readings, reflections and seasonal prayers.