

# Making Catholic Social Teaching Come Alive!



by Ivy Wick

What exactly is Catholic social teaching, and how can we help children and teens understand the principles of Catholic social teaching and practice them in their everyday lives?

In this quick overview of the different principles, you'll get some initial ideas to foster understanding and action in order to make the beauty of our Catholic social teaching come alive for children and teens.

## Life and Dignity of the Human Person

All human life is sacred and must be respected and protected at all times. **Emphasize to children and teens that there is no cost to treating people with respect and dignity.** It only takes simple actions of kindness, support, listening, etc.

Even putting down one's cell phone during conversations helps to communicate that relationships are more important than things! Invite children or teens to come up with their own list of actions that could support this principle. Then challenge them to choose one thing to do during the following week or month.

## Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Children and teens can start at the very root of this principle by focusing on being an active part of their family unit. Their impact can be powerful when they care for other siblings or when they take the time to visit their grandparents or other relatives.

**Take the opportunity to gather families when possible and offer suggestions for strengthening the family bond through simple ideas such as family game night** or taking on a volunteer role as a family in the parish or school.

## Rights & Responsibilities

This principle isn't only about voting and civic responsibility. **Empowering children and teens to speak up in class (or even at dinner)** when they hear important issues being discussed is one way to emphasize this principle.

Helping them to understand that silence is agreement will encourage them to take a stand for those who cannot do so for themselves.

## The Dignity of Work & the Rights of Workers

When asked about what careers they might choose, children and teens sometimes reply that they want a certain job because it will make good money.

**We can help them evaluate different career choices for a variety of qualities, including how fulfilling it is or how it contributes in a positive way to society.**

We can also make them aware that everything they purchase has come from the labor of another person and we want to support products that are made by companies that treat their workers fairly and with dignity.

## Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

How can children and teens show a preferential option for the poor? **We can help them evaluate the difference between needs and wants** in order to be conscious about what they ask for themselves.

We can make sure that our prayers always include the needs of those who are poor and vulnerable. And we can encourage parents to purchase fair-trade products and to have family conversations about their spending habits.

## Solidarity

We are not alone, and we do not function in isolation. Even if we can't visit our brothers and sisters around the world, we certainly can try to understand what their day-to-day existence is like.

**Ask children and teens what their needs would be if they were to face extreme poverty, homelessness, or a natural disaster.** Then encourage them to try to meet these needs for others.

Have them collect food, clothing, water, toiletries, and medical supplies to distribute to local agencies, or create a fundraiser to donate to a global charity.

## Care for God's Creation

We do not own the Earth. We have been appointed as God's stewards, responsible for protecting life and using creation responsibly.

Encourage children and teens to recycle or participate in cleaning up local beaches, rivers, and parks. **Help them see how everyday decisions that they make either heal or hurt God's creation.**

Remind them that even if they don't have great financial power, they have the power of their voice to remind others of how precious God's creation is and what an important responsibility we have to take care of it.

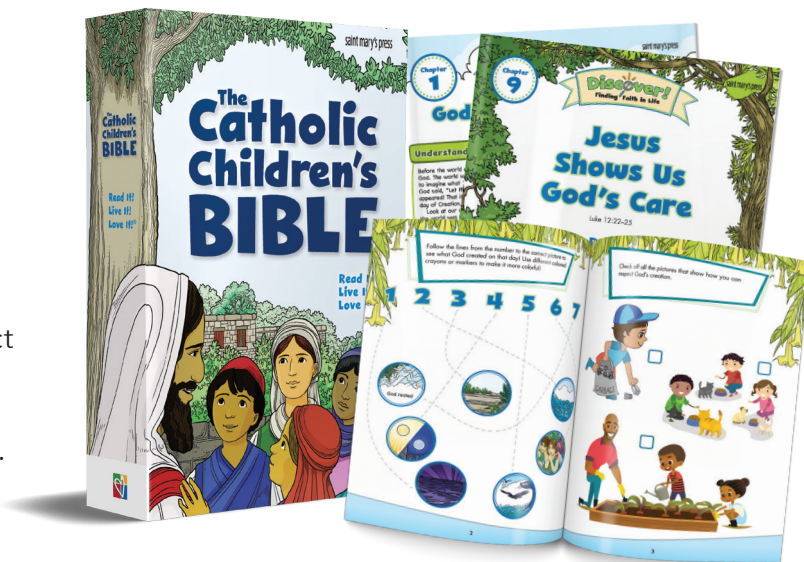
# Bring Catholic Social Teaching Alive!

## Discover! Finding Faith in Life

Curriculum for Grades 1-5

In *Discover! Finding Faith in Life*, kids dive into *The Catholic Children's Bible* from day 1, connect it to Church teachings, and are called to age-appropriate action. Active, engaged learning gets them out of their seats and excited to learn.

Each kit includes *The Catholic Children's Bible*, activity booklets & folder, **\$27.95**



Learn more and request a sample:



If you're at a parish:  
[smp.org/discoverparish\\_try](http://smp.org/discoverparish_try)

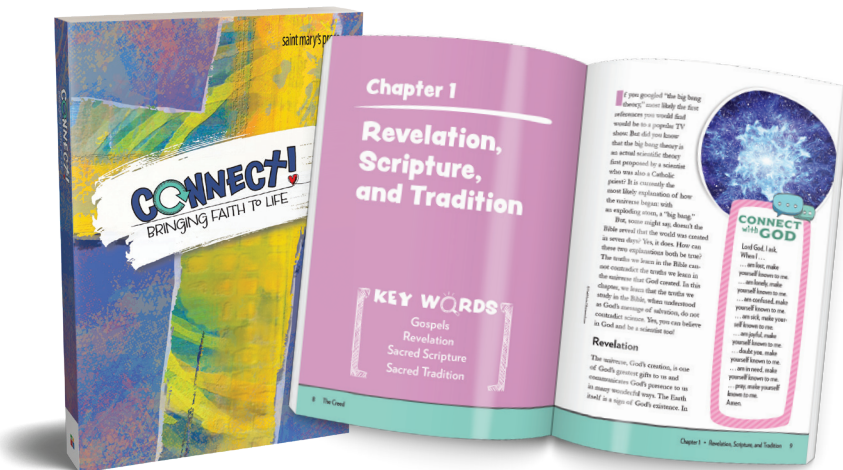


If you're at a school:  
[smp.org/discoverpschool\\_try](http://smp.org/discoverpschool_try)

## CONNECT!

BRINGING FAITH TO LIFE

NEW! *Connect! Bringing Faith to Life* is a three-year interactive program that presents the core teachings of the Catholic faith to 6th-8th graders in way that helps them connect learning with living. Using an accompaniment model, this program meets young people where they are and helps them make the connections that bring faith to life!



Learn more and request a sample:



If you're at a parish:  
[smp.org/tryconnect](http://smp.org/tryconnect)



If you're at a school:  
[smp.org/tryconnectschool](http://smp.org/tryconnectschool)

We're here to accompany you. The Ministry Care Team at Saint Mary's Press  
[smpress@smp.org](mailto:smpress@smp.org) • 1-800-533-8095