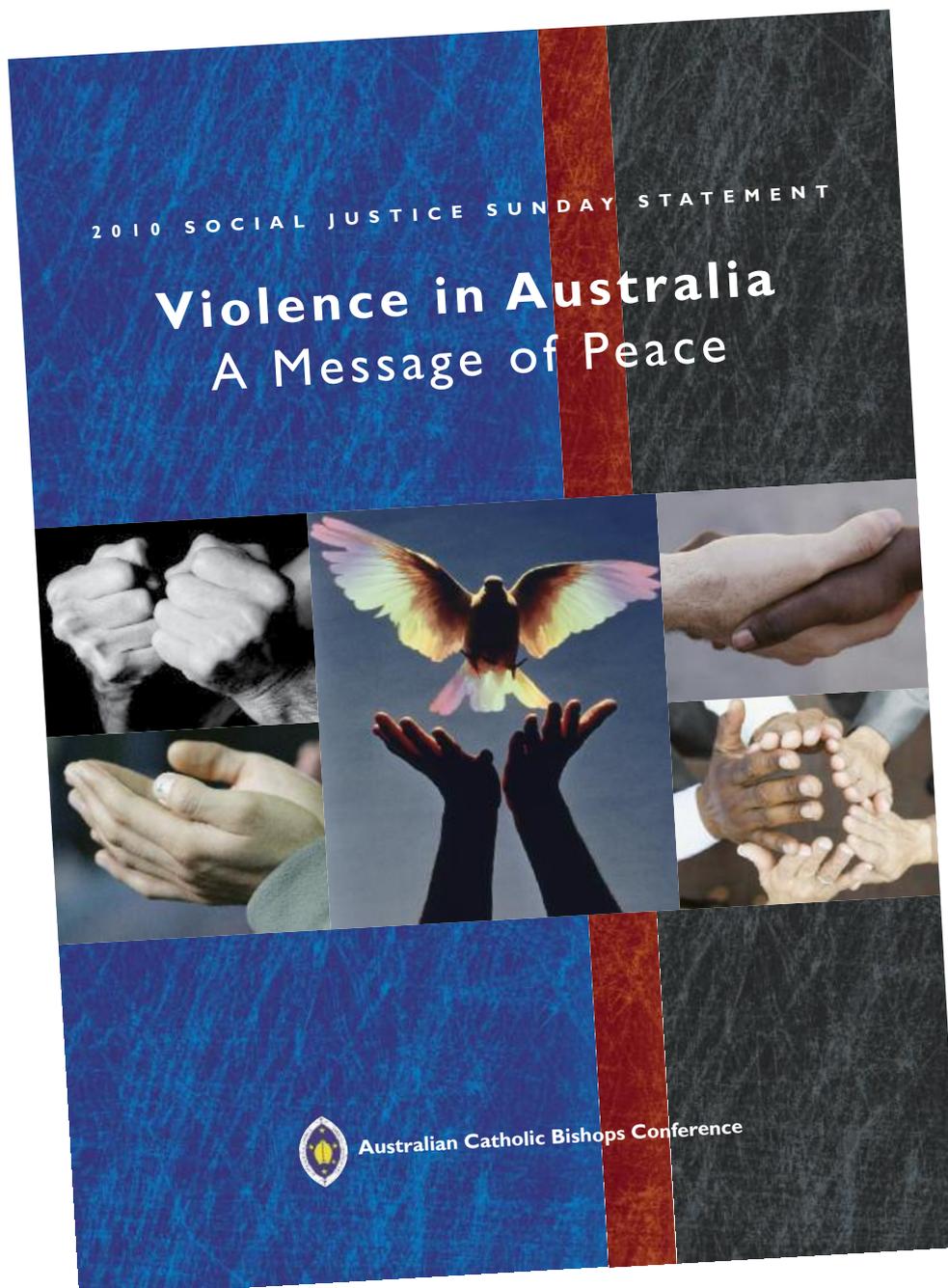


Teaching and Learning Activities  
for use in conjunction with

***VIOLENCE IN AUSTRALIA***  
***A MESSAGE OF PEACE***

2010 Social Justice Sunday Statement



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This resource is offered to secondary school teachers as a means of raising awareness of, and engaging students with, the theme of the 2010 Social Justice Sunday Statement.

Each suggested activity can stand alone, or be undertaken in conjunction with others. Some can be class-based activities, while others will be more extended tasks.

Teachers are encouraged to choose topics that have relevance for their students, or their local context. Some of the suggested activities will be appropriate for students across a range of grade levels, while others will be most appropriate for senior students. Many will allow the class to benefit from the diversity of perspectives and experiences students bring to their learning.

Teachers' professional judgement will help ensure that activities undertaken are appropriate for students in light of their age, ability, culture, experiences and history, and offer opportunities to students with differing learning-style preferences.

The range and style of activity is meant to allow the theme of the 2010 Social Justice Sunday Statement to be explored not only in Religious Education classes, but across the curriculum.

In what ways are peace, peace-making and violence connected? Use the dictionary to find a definition for violence. Then find a definition for peace, and for peace-making. Do these dictionary definitions reflect your own understanding of the connections between the terms?

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What are some symbols that are used to represent peace? Where do they come from? Can you think of some other symbols that might be more relevant for people today?

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Violence occurs in many different places and many different contexts. What are some of the different types of violence we might find in the following situations:

- At school
- In our local community
- Nationally
- Internationally.

What might be some of the reasons why people act with violence in these situations?  
(For a longer project, students could choose one type of violence they've identified and research it in some depth.)

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*Violence was part of the European settlement of Australia. Most significantly, it involved the violent dispossession of Indigenous people. Convicts came from harsh conditions in British prisons, and could be subjected to brutal punishment during their time here. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Chinese people experienced prejudice and often violence. Later in the 20th century, children sent as orphans from Britain were often treated harshly and even brutally in Australian institutions.*

*Today, the legacy of this history of violence and marginalisation persists in aspects of Australian society.*

(2010 Social Justice Sunday Statement)

Do some research to find historical evidence which supports or challenges this statement. Do you think the violence that has been part of our history continues to influence the type of society Australia is? In what ways?

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In the 2009 Social Justice Sunday Statement, the Australian Bishops endorsed the See-Judge-Act method as a way for people and communities to bring about positive change in the world. The model can be represented in this way:

### **See**

1. What exactly is happening?
2. What is this doing to people? (The consequences)
3. Why is this happening? (The causes)

### **Judge**

4. What do we think about all of this?
5. What do we think should be happening?
6. What does our faith say?

### **Act**

7. What exactly is it that we want to change (long term goal)?
8. What action are we going to take now (short term goal)?
9. Who can we involve in our action?

(Adapted from resources developed by Australian Young Christian Students: <http://www.aycs.org.au>)

The See-Judge-Act method provides a pathway for individuals and communities to move beyond today to a better, more hopeful tomorrow.

Use this model to involve students in some positive social action and engagement relating to one of the following issues:

- Violence towards Indigenous people or communities
- Domestic violence
- Violence against women and children in war
- Prison reform
- Human trafficking
- Intercultural violence
- Violence triggered by drugs or alcohol
- Exploring how the language we use affects the ways we think and act.

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In recent times cyber-bullying and road rage have emerged as significant problems in Australia. Do you know of any incidents of cyber-bullying or road rage? How is each a type of violence?

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Women and children often suffer more violence, and are more affected by its consequences. Why do you think that is so? What steps could be taken to decrease violence, and its impact on women and children?

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In small groups in class, design a poster and a slogan to raise awareness of violence against women and children. As you plan, talk about the most important idea(s) you want to have in your message, and how to present it effectively.

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Earlier this year the world's attention was focussed on South Africa for the FIFA World Cup. Many people see football as a way to further the cause of peace in the world. Do you think sport has a role to play in reducing violence and promoting peace? In what ways?

Sometimes sportsfields can seem more like battlegrounds than venues for fun and enjoyment. Do some sports encourage violence among players or supporters? How should coaches, players, supporters and administrators respond to violent incidents on the field?

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*Peace is based on respect for the rights of all. Conscious of this, the Church champions the fundamental rights of each person.*

(Pope Benedict XVI, *The Human Person, the Heart of Peace*, World Day of Peace Message 2007)

What are the fundamental rights of human beings? The Universal Declaration of Human Rights will be helpful here. Can you see any connection between the UDHR and Jesus' message in the Gospels? Can you think of ways in which the Church supports human rights?

The text of the Declaration can be accessed at the UN's website: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

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Using music, song, drama, drawings, photographs, sculptures or other materials, try to represent some of the rights contained in the UDHR, in a creative way. Or perhaps you would like to write a poem or a story inspired by the UDHR.

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Do you think video games like *Grand Theft Auto* make violence fun and therefore make it seem acceptable? What is the difference between violence on the screen where you control a character and violence in real life where you control yourself?

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*Against the conventional teaching that we should love our neighbours and hate our enemies, Jesus instructs his followers to love their enemies (Matt 5:38–42).*

(2010 Social Justice Sunday Statement)

Read St Matthew's Gospel, chapter 5, verses 38–48. What do you make of Jesus' teaching on love of enemies? How might you have to change if you wanted to put Jesus' teaching into practice more?

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*... all human beings are precious because we are all made and loved by God. So each human being has dignity and deserves to be respected by other human beings. That means that they should be secure and free from the fear of violence and from experiences or social structures that undermine human dignity and development.*

(2010 Social Justice Sunday Statement)

Write a letter to your local politician, asking her/him to work to reduce violence and promote peace. Use the ideas quoted above as the basis for your request.

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Find a copy of the Peace Prayer of St Francis. Does it give you some ideas for being a person of peace? Share your thoughts with your class.

Write your own Peace Prayer.

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As a class, brainstorm a list of people who stand out as peacemakers in the past 50 years. What did they do? What made them work for peace? What challenges did they have to face? What can we learn from them, for peacemaking today?

This activity could be extended into an assignment, with each student researching one particular peacemaker.

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*While respecting the differences of the various religions, we are all called to work for peace and to be effectively committed to furthering reconciliation among peoples ... it is important to reaffirm that religions can never become vehicles of hatred; it is never possible, invoking God's Name, to succeed in justifying evil and violence. On the contrary, religions can and must offer precious resources to build a peaceful humanity because they speak of peace to the human heart.*

(Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the heads of delegations to the International Encounter for Peace, Naples, 2007)

Choose a religion other than Christianity, and find out its beliefs about peace. What are some of the practices and rituals of this religious tradition which help its followers become women and men of peace?

In what ways can the religions of the world provide spaces for people to move beyond their differences and work together to further the cause of peace?