

LENT | A Better 2022 | Tomorrow

Religious Education Resource for Children

**'The Lord's Prayer gives me courage,
hope and strength in tough situations.'**

(Thandekile)



Trōcaire

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Thandekile outside her family home cooking dinner. Photo credit: Cynthia Matonhodze, Trócaire



ABOUT TRÓCAIRE

Trócaire was established in 1973 as the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland.

The organisation was created as a response to the widening gap between rich and poor and our collective duty to reduce it. Trócaire is rooted in the principles of Catholic social teaching, which are based on the belief that God has a plan for creation, a plan to build his kingdom of peace, love and justice. Trócaire works in partnership, meaning that we work with individuals, communities and

local organisations to help bring about the change they want to see in their lives. Fundamentally, partnership is about solidarity, respect and empowerment. In the words of Trócaire's founding document, in which the bishops of Ireland gave the organisation a strong and clear mandate, 'We know that we cannot claim to love God if we do not love our fellow men and women.'

TRÓCAIRE'S WORK IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe is a country located in Southeast Africa. It was once regarded as the great hope for Africa.

However, it has not been able to reach its potential due to a series of crises, including climate change and economic and political instability. Zimbabwe has been very badly affected by climate change. Approximately 70 per cent of people in Zimbabwe rely on agriculture, but rising temperatures and worsening droughts are leaving farmers without harvests, making it harder for them to survive.

In Zimbabwe, violations of human rights remain pervasive. Citizens for the most part remain unaware of their civic, economic and social rights. Women suffer disproportionately the effects of poverty and human rights abuses. Violence against women, in all its forms, continues to be recorded at extremely high levels.

Trócaire's work in Zimbabwe aims to achieve:

- The development of **sustainable and resilient livelihoods**. Our partners support communities to increase their resilience to withstand climate shocks, and to increase food production.
- Stronger **human rights** protections. Our partners influence the government of Zimbabwe to address human rights violations and support citizens to demand their rights.
- **Women's empowerment**. To protect women from violence and encourage them to have a stronger voice.

For more information about Trócaire's work in Zimbabwe, click [here](#).



HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This resource has been designed for children who are attending primary school. It can be used in the classroom by primary school teachers, as part of a children's liturgy group or family Mass group. There are four activities in total. Activities one to three should each take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The final activity will take longer and may need to be completed over two sessions.

We recognise that any resources focusing on global issues can resonate with individuals through their lived experience; therefore, we advise that you read through this resource in advance and modify it if you feel that there is anything that may impact on an individual child.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Catholic Pre-school and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland

Strand	Strand Units	Grow in Love
Christian Morality	Human Dignity, Social Teaching of the Church	Lent

Religious Education Curriculum for Northern Ireland

The Revelation of God	The Christian Church	Morality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation and Fall • The Life of Jesus – the Ministry of Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship and Prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for each other • Respect for the environment

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND PARISH LEADERS

The case study shown in this resource is only one perspective from Zimbabwe. Please be aware that not everyone in, or from, Zimbabwe has had the same experiences as those who feature in this resource. Due to the nature of the current worldwide pandemic and the fact that Trócaire's educational resources are often based on real-life stories, Covid-19-related material features in this resource, as it has affected the lives of people

in this part of Zimbabwe; therefore, please be mindful and read through the lesson before using the material with your class/parish group. Given our current Covid-19 situation, the activities have been designed to minimise physical contact and sharing of materials. Please adjust the activities to align with whatever regulations are in place when you are using this resource.

ACTIVITY ONE

Teacher Information: Trócaire and *Laudato Si'*

Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home is Pope Francis' encyclical (long letter) about the environmental crises our world is facing today. Published in 2015, this groundbreaking document calls on 'every single person living on this planet' to urgently listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. *Laudato Si'* deals with many environmental issues, including pollution, climate change, the biodiversity crisis, water availability

and how we need to urgently act to make our world a better place. Pope Francis invites us to work together to create a better, more sustainable future for all, especially the generations to come and the most vulnerable people on our planet. Trócaire is inspired by *Laudato Si'* because our work around the world strives to ease the cries of both the earth and the poor. In Ireland, we also work with parishes to translate the words of *Laudato Si'* into action. You can read *Laudato Si'* [here](#).



CAFOD

[Laudato Si' animation | CAFOD](#)

CAFOD is the international development charity and the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

Trócaire works with many people around the world that are affected by climate change. Like Pope Francis, Trócaire believes we must act to help stop climate change and to help others.

Step 1: Watch the [Laudato Si' animation | CAFOD](#) with your class or group.

Step 2: In pairs, and reflecting on what they have just seen in the video, ask the group to come up with their own definition of 'climate justice' in no more than twenty words.

Step 3: In small groups, discuss the following question: Why do you think Trócaire decided to focus on climate justice as a top priority for their work?

Step 4: Discuss the answers given, then read the following: Trócaire believes that climate change is more than an environmental issue; it is a justice issue. Climate injustice refers to the fact that those who are suffering most because of climate change are the vulnerable women, men and children around our world who have done the least to cause it. This injustice is intensified by the fact that the causes of climate change are related to lifestyles of over-consumption in richer countries. Vulnerable people, whose rights to food, shelter, water and life are already precarious, are being further threatened.

Step 5: Follow the steps below for the guided prayer.

Time for Stillness and Prayer (5–10 minutes)

Calm and relax the group prior to beginning.

- Invite the group to make themselves comfortable; allow them to spread out or lie down if they wish. Encourage no communication with others at all.
- Tell them you are going to count down from ten and at the end everyone needs to be still and calm. They should try to block out all sounds in the room and concentrate only on your voice.
- Speak in a gentle and calm tone of voice throughout. Start the instrumental music, which can be found [here](#).
- Say to the group: We end our time together with a short reflection and prayer. Let us take a few moments in silence to think of all the blessings in our lives: our families, friends, education and the food we have to eat. Let us give thanks to God for these blessings.
- Finally, read the following passage slowly, taking a short pause at each comma or full stop.

In the beginning God created heaven and earth. Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, with a divine wind sweeping over the waters. God said, 'Let there be

light,' and there was light. God saw that light was good, and God divided light from darkness. God called light 'day' and darkness he called 'night'. Evening came and morning came: the first day. God said, 'Let there be a vault through the middle of the waters to divide the waters in two.' And so, it was. God made the vault, and it divided the waters under the vault from the waters above the vault. God called the vault 'heaven'. Evening came and morning came: the second day. God said, 'Let the waters under heaven come together into a single mass, and let dry land appear.' And so, it was. God called the dry land 'earth' and the mass of waters 'seas', and God saw that it was good. God said, 'Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants, and fruit trees on earth, bearing fruit with their seed inside, each corresponding to its own species.' And so, it was. (Genesis 1:1-11)

Creator of the Universe, we pray in gratitude and praise. You were there at the beginning of all things, shaping our world and preparing it for us. You have provided the mountains and the trees, the waters, and the earth. Help us to be caretakers of your gifts, protecting the land from abuse, and ready to share with all in need. Show us how to use our science and technology in creative not destructive ways. Deepen our awareness of our connectedness with all your creation, so that future generations will also enjoy every blessing. Amen.



Local church in Thandekile's community. Photo credit: Cynthia R. Matonhodze

ACTIVITY TWO

Step 1: Read this story for the children.

Meet the Family

Nomatter is eleven years old. She lives in the Bulawayo area with her mum, Thandekile, and little brother, Forward. Forward is three years younger than Nomatter. They are good friends, and love playing games together.

The family's home has two separate rooms in the yard. There are many trees around the household and a wooden traditional place where they wash the dishes. They also have donkeys, goats and chickens.

Nomatter and Forward attend primary school. There are many beautiful flowers growing around the school. The teachers at their school are very kind.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, all the schools in Zimbabwe were closed. Nomatter and Forward had to stay at home for a long period of time. They missed their teachers and their friends at school. Recently, the lockdown regulations have been relaxed, and they have been allowed to come back to school. Nomatter likes writing and playing games with her friends at school. Her favourite subject is mathematics.

When the children arrive home from school, they help their mum, Thandekile, a lot with the household chores. Life was very challenging for Thandekile too when the pandemic arrived in Zimbabwe. Just like here at home, lots of people lost their jobs because many businesses closed. Thandekile and her family had to rely on other sources for help during this very difficult time.

More recently, Thandekile has been able to use some of her savings so she can buy clothes and then sell them at the local markets to help support Nomatter and Forward. She has been determined to provide for her two children. 'My wish is to be able to provide for all their needs, so I hope that my business will grow.' Thandekile hopes that her children will be successful in life. She is glad Nomatter and Forward are back at school, even if it is only for three days a week. She believes that education is important as it gives them freedom to gain a better income and have more career options when they are older. Nomatter has said that she hopes to become a nurse when she is older.

Thandekile thinks it is important that everyone should love one another and be kind. Although life can be difficult at times, Thandekile believes that it is always possible for things to get better. In the future, she is hoping to set up a shop near

her home, where she can sell the clothes that she buys. This will make it much easier for her to do her work and develop her business. She dreams that one day she will be able to get a driving licence, buy a car, have a nice house and that her children will have good lives too.

In the evenings, the family spends lots of time together. They usually have their dinner together in the kitchen. Often, they eat sadza as part of their meals. This is a very popular type of food – like potatoes in Ireland! After dinner, Nomatter and Forward like to play games. Sometimes they play handball and hide-and-seek, which they both like.

Step 2: After reading the story, check the children’s understanding by asking the following questions.

- 1) Why was the children’s school closed last year?
- 2) Why was Nomatter not able to play with her friends at school?
- 3) What job would Nomatter like to do when she is older?
- 4) What do the family usually do in the evenings?

Step 3: Let’s think a little deeper!

- 5) Why do you think life became more difficult for Nomatter’s family when the pandemic arrived in their area?
- 6) Nomatter couldn’t see her friends and play games because of the pandemic. How do you think this made her feel?
- 7) Many people here in Ireland were very lonely during the pandemic because they could not see or visit other people. Nomatter and her brother, Forward, did many acts of kindness to help their mother, Thandekile, at home. Can you think of any acts of kindness that you or your family did for other people?
- 8) In his letter, Pope Francis mentions that we are harming the earth in lots of ways. During the pandemic, we produced less gases that are harmful to the environment because we were not using our cars, buses and aeroplanes as much. How can we continue this trend once the pandemic ends?

| Children getting their temperatures checked as they enter school. Photo credit: Cynthia R. Matonhodze, Trócaire



ACTIVITY THREE

Covid-19 has caused people's lives to change in many ways.

We recognise that any resources focusing on global issues and the Covid-19 pandemic can resonate with individuals because of their lived experience; therefore, we advise that you read through this activity and modify it if you feel that there is anything that may impact an individual child.

Using the worksheet provided, draw and describe how Covid-19 has affected your life.

How Covid-19 has changed my life

(Write a list)

Before Covid-19 ...

(Draw a picture here)

During Covid-19 ...

(Draw a picture here)

In the future ...

(Draw a picture here)

ACTIVITY FOUR

In her story, Thandekile talks about how even in difficult times we must care for one another. In his letter to all of us, Pope Francis also outlines how we need to care for our common home so the world will be a better place for everyone. For this activity, you will need pens, markers, scissors, large sheets of paper, glue and any other materials you would like to use for your mural.

Step 1: In groups, select some of the quotes below from Pope Francis' letter, *Laudato Si'*, and design a mural using them. Be creative! You can cut out the quotes and stick them onto your mural or write them again on your mural using lots of colour.

Step 2: Once your mural is completed, display it in your church/school/setting.

'Because creatures are all connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us living creatures are dependent on one another.' (42)

'The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of dirt. In many parts of our planet, places that were once beautiful are now covered with rubbish.' (21)

'Climate change is a global problem with grave implications.' (25)

'The deterioration of the environment and society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet.' (48)

'Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can think about building a better future without thinking about the impact on the environment and about those who are excluded in the world that we live in.' (13)

'Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving for future generations, we look at things differently.' (159)

'We need a conversation that includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are experiencing affects us all.' (14)

'Reducing greenhouse gases requires honesty, courage and responsibility, above all on the part of those countries which are more powerful and pollute the most.' (169)

Step 3: When you have completed your mural, Trócaire would love to hear from you. Please take lots of photos and send them to: niall.quillinan@trocaire.org

There are seven Laudato Si' Goals that Pope Francis has asked us to work on. You can find out more at: <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>

More resources, including our parish pack, senior primary resource, book of prayers, reflections, photos and videos are available [here](#)

Contributors

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Cover photo: Thandekile with her daughter, Nomatter (11), and son, Forward (8), Zimbabwe.
Photo credit: Cynthia R. Matonhodze

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