



## Three-Day Lesson Plan: The Human Thread The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers -Advanced-

**DAY ONE: The True Cost**

**DAY TWO: The Human Thread-Theological and Moral Implications**

**DAY THREE: The St. Vincent Pledge**

### Use:

Each set of three lessons is sufficiently developed for experienced and inexperienced teachers to implement with two to four hours of preparation:

- **Studying** the one to two-page overview and the three lessons as presented.
- **Studying** the recommended websites, Scripture citations and contexts.
- **Identifying** potential questions, and rehearsing answers, e.g., What does image of God mean?
- **Making** adaptations if needed.
- **Preparing** materials, and **securing** supplies and equipment as needed.
- **Rehearsing** ways to teach the vocabulary for understanding.

***\*\*Begin each lesson with Laudato Si' Prayer found in the additional resource list at the end of day three.***

**Materials Needed:** Handouts: [Laudato Si' Prayer](#)  
["Fast Facts about Fast Fashion"](#)  
[Discussion Guide for "The True Cost" "ready to talk" questions](#)  
[The Human Thread: Theological/Moral Rationale](#)  
["The St. Vincent Pledge"](#)  
Videos: ["The True Cost"](#) –Watch Prior to Day One  
CRS short video: ["Laudato Si"](#)  
Poster Boards (4)  
Markers, crayons, colored pencils, magazines, etc.

### **Vocabulary:**

- **Solidarity**- the capacity of expressing support of a group or the people in it-helping and thinking of others
- **Laudato Si'**- (*On Care for Our Common Home*) Pope Francis' encyclical addressed to everyone calling for dialogue about the urgency of our environmental challenges and asking us to join him in creating a new way to live on this planet.
- **Outsourcing**- obtain goods or services from an outside or foreign supplier
- **Collective bargaining**- negotiating wages and conditions of employment
- **GMO- genetically modified organism**. An organism whose genome has been altered by genetic engineering. Its DNA contains one or more genes not normally found in the organism.
- **Fair Trade**- products that are made with respect to people and the planet

**Overview**-Rooted in both Scripture and Catholic Tradition is the teaching that “the economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected--the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.”

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching.cfm>

Unfortunately, in practice, this is not how our society has evolved in its treatment of people and the earth. In this three-day unit students will explore the innate dignity of both work and the worker. They will also come to see the effect of consumption and materialism, especially in the clothing industry, on human dignity and on God’s creation.

**Learning Outcome:** Upon completion of this three day unit students will evaluate the human and environmental cost of producing cheap clothing and assess their personal involvement in the culture of consumerism and indifference. They will then analyze and debate the theological and moral rationale behind the mission of the Human Thread. Finally, they will devise an action plan to address the human and environmental toll of our excessive consumption of clothing.

### **DAY ONE: THE TRUE COST (Students will have watched the video prior to this lesson)**

**Class Objective:** Students will formulate and report on answers to discussion questions from “The True Cost” documentary.

**Anticipatory Set:** Have the twelve “The True Cost” dialogue questions cut in strips and placed in a basket prior to class. Partner students as they enter the room and have one of them pick a question from the basket. Tell them to sit together and discuss the questions based on “The True Cost” documentary. Students may use a mobile device to look up terms or concepts that are unfamiliar.

**Procedure:**

**Step 1:** Reconvene into a large group after providing adequate time to thoughtfully prepare answers to questions.

**Step 2:** In pairs, students read their questions and then report and defend their answers to the group. Encourage both challenging and supporting comments.

**Conclusions:** (Review):

Reinforce the idea that our consumption and indifference plays a measurable role in the human and environmental cost of producing cheap clothing.

**Assign:** “The Human Thread: Theological/Moral Rational” to read for homework. Tell them to choose one theological rationale that resonates with them. Put the following questions on the board for consideration:

*Is purchasing clothing related to living one’s faith? Why or why not?*

**Assessment:** Partner Reports

**DAY TWO: THE HUMAN THREAD-THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Class Objective:** Students will be able to articulate and defend the position that the choice to purchase clothing is a moral act and that faith should inform our consumer decisions.

**Anticipatory Set:** Ask students to check the labels on their shirts and identify where they were made. Ask them to share the locations and ask what they all have in common (“developing countries”). Offer up today’s Laudato Si’ prayer for the person who made their shirts. After prayer inform the students that today we are going to explore the connection between our shirts and our faith and morals.

**Procedure:**

**Step 1:** Break into four groups based on which rationale from their reading of “The Human Thread: Theological/Moral Rational” resonated with them. \*  
These groups are classified as (written on board):

Group/Rationale #1: “The Least of Our Brothers and Sisters” (p 1 and 2)

Group/Rationale #2: “The Good Samaritan” (page 2 and 3)

Group/Rationale #3: “Clothed in Christ” (page 3)

Group/Rationale #4: “Solidarity Helps Us to See the Other” (page 3 and 4)

\*If groups are populated in a manner that is markedly uneven ask some students to join the group that represents their second favorite rationale.

**Step 2:** Give each group a poster board. Students will need to have access to markers, crayons, colored pencils, magazines, etc.

**Step 3:** Ask each group to create a visual representation of their rationale. While groups are working they need to discuss how they will present their poster to the class. It should include (written on board):

- 1) The rationale.
- 2) How the rationale relates ties clothing to faith.
- 3) What implications this rationale has for our behaviors.
- 4) Why this rationale is imperative to living one's faith.

**Step 4:** Reconvene as a large group and take turns presenting to the class. If time permits allow time for questions and debate. This lesson could be split into two days to allow ample time for dialogue.

**Conclusion:** (Review):

Remind students that a lived faith permeates every aspect of our lives. That indifference is not an option if we are to authentically answer our call to live the Gospel. Reiterate that by virtue of our Baptism we have “put on Christ” and are called to live in solidarity with the hidden lives of those who are enslaved in order to feed our over consumption.

**Assessment:** Posters and Presentation

**Assign:** Students should read the National Catholic Reporter Article: [“Campaign tells Macy’s, Kohl’s: Put fair trade on the racks”](#) for next class period.

### **DAY THREE: THE ST. VINCENT PLEDGE**

**Class Objective:** By putting the St. Vincent Pledge into practice students will devise an action plan to address with compassion the human and environmental toll of our excessive consumption of clothing.

**Anticipatory Set:** (Wait on prayer today) Ask students where they shop for clothing. Why do they shop there? Ask them what it means to get a “good deal”? Try to incorporate their homework reading assignment into the discussion.

**Procedure:**

**Step 1:** Distribute St. Vincent Pledge to students. Point out that the first step in all that we do is to pray. Pray the Laudato Si’ Prayer.

**Step 2:** Ask students: What is the second action in the pledge? (“Learn”) Conduct a basic student driven basic review with the class of what that they have learned thus far.

**Step 3:** Point out to students that they have already fulfilled the first two actions of the pledge. State that for the next three actions, the three A’s (Assess, Act and Advocate) , they will return to their “Rationale Groups”. Each group will come up with a realistic plan of action to fulfill the St. Vincent Pledge by addressing the three A’s. This plan will be written out in detail by a recorder in their group. Inform them that they can reference the article they read for homework for inspiration.

**Step 4:** Give students class time to work on their St. Vincent Pledge Plan of Actions. Assess whether they will need homework time to complete. Plans can be collected/and or presented. Follow-up could include:

- Students voting on the best plan and then putting it into action as a class
- Students individually putting plans into actions
- Students starting a club to carry out actions
- Student presenting to administration/student council/school board to enact school wide action

**Conclusion:** (Review):

Remind students that it is only through action that we can be the hands and feet of Christ. Taking the [St. Vincent Pledge](#) to atone for our consumption is a wonderful first step.

**Assessment:** St. Vincent Pledge Plan of Action

**Additional Resources:****Prayer from *Laudato Si'****A prayer for our earth*

All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe  
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,  
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live  
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,

help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,  
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,

that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts

of those who look only for gain

at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,

to be filled with awe and contemplation,

to recognize that we are profoundly united

with every creature

as we journey towards your infinite light.

**Basic:****We thank you for being with us each day.****Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle  
for justice, love and peace.****Amen.**

The Human Thread-website: <http://www.humanthreadcampaign.org/>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: [Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching](#)

*Human personhood must be respected with a reverence that is religious. When we deal with each other, we should do so with the sense of awe that arises in the presence of something holy and sacred. For that is what human beings are: we are created in the image of God ([Gn 1:27](#)). (USCCB, [Economic Justice for All](#))*

*There are three stages which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation; secondly, one forms a judgement on it in the light of these same principles; thirdly, one decides what the circumstances can and should be done to implement these principles. These are the three stages that are usually expressed in the three terms: observe, judge act.*

*Pope John XXIII, Mater et Magistra, 1961 (# 236)*