

20. Handle with Care

A teacher resource pack exploring a Christian response to development and the environment. Produced by CAFOD and Christian Aid for ILEA RE Centre.

Few of us can be unaware of the string of disasters, hurricanes and typhoons in the Caribbean and the Philippines. We are learning that these are not isolated events. Rather, they fit together as a jigsaw, providing us with a more complete picture of the world and our place in it. They challenge us to ask whether disasters like these are 'natural' or the result of human destruction and abuse of the environment.

Young people are particularly sensitive to the damage that is being done to the environment and to humanity. So that these issues can be developed more fully in the classroom, CAFOD (the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development) and Christian Aid, have together produced a teacher resource pack entitled *Handle with Care*. Using stories, role play, poetry and prayer, the aim of the pack is to explore the connection between human injustice and care and renewal of the earth. The materials which have been produced with the 11-14 age group in mind, could form the basis for an integrated humanities project or else be incorporated into curriculum work in subjects such as RE, geography and environmental science. The four working sections are:

1. Our changing world environment
2. Pollution of the environment
3. Degradation of the land and earth
4. Additional resources and contacts

Each section begins with activities that draw on young people's own experiences. These are then broadened out to an international setting. Teachers are invited to choose those sections which are most appropriate to the needs and experiences of their students and to the time available.

While *Handle with Care* is produced from a Christian Perspective, it fully accepts that concern for the human impact on the environment is being expressed from many quarters, including scientists, economists and world religious leaders. It recalls that, in the Assisi meeting in 1986, representatives from Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity produced the Assisi Declarations — documents which speak of the values and ethics which challenge many of our assumptions and attitudes towards conservation and the environment. Throughout the pack, teachers are encouraged to foster a sense of hope - a recognition that change which takes into account human need with an understanding and respect for the environment, is possible.

'Handle with Care' is linked with the current CAFOD development education campaign, 'Renewing the Earth'. For this a Study Guide has been produced for use with small groups; it offers agendas and materials for six meetings. People are taken as the starting point throughout; local initiatives to reverse current trends are examined, including the Chipko ('tree-hugging') movement in India and the Greenbelt Movement in Kenya. Religious traditions of respect for all God's creation and relevant scriptural texts help groups to explore ways of working for renewal at local, national and international level. A Study video is available for use with the Study Guide or on its own with accompanying notes. While intended primarily for use with adult groups, this material could be of use to teachers involved with Sixth form student. A Resource Pack for Youth Leaders is in preparation. Full details of all these materials can be obtained from CAFOD, 2 Romero Close, Stockwell Road, London SW9 9TY.

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Handle with Care is £3.00 plus 60p p & p.

Three examples of the materials can be downloaded from www.shap.org