

## **Fair Trade & the Care of God's Creation**

All that we have is a gift from God. We need to live in harmony with the rest of creation and preserve it for future generations. Fair Trade demonstrates a dual concern for the environment and the people who rely on it for their livelihoods. Fair Trade products are always *environmentally friendly*. The Fair trade Certified label ensures strict land conservation regulations that promote water conservation, reforestation, species diversity and environmental education.

Pope Benedict XVI connects this concern for our world with our Christian faith, saying “the environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations, and towards humanity as a whole” (Caritas in Veritate, no. 48).



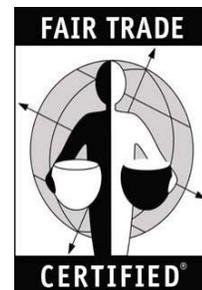
## **Background Information**

### **What is Fair Trade?**

Fair Trade is an alternative approach to international trade that is built on a network of right relationships that respect human dignity, promote economic justice and cultivate global solidarity. The Fair Trade system benefits over 800,000 farmers organized into cooperatives and unions in 48 countries. Fair Trade has helped farmers provide for their families’ basic needs and invest in community development.

### **Fair Trade Principles**

- ★ Producers receive a fair price – a living wage
- ★ Producers have access to financial and technical assistance
- ★ Sustainable production techniques are encouraged
- ★ Working conditions are safe and healthy
- ★ Equal employment opportunities are provided for all
- ★ All aspects of trade and production are open to public accountability



## Catholic Social Teaching & Fair Trade

“The economy should work for people, and not the other way around.”

-U.S. Bishops in *Economic Justice for All*

As members of the Catholic Church, each of us is called to do our part to make sure that the economy works for everyone, especially our brothers and sisters in greatest need. Fair Trade is an important first step. Fair Trade creates opportunities for us to respond in a small but significant way every day through the choices we make as consumers. When we make the conscious decision to purchase Fair Trade items, we are putting the values of Catholic Social Teaching into action, and working to realize our vision of economic justice.

### Fair Trade Lessons



### Elementary Lesson – Fair Trade Chocolate

#### Introduction

Jesus teaches us to *love your neighbor as yourself*. Who are your neighbors? (lead to a globe and people around the world) So treating people around the world as our neighbors and treating them fairly is important. One way we can do this is by the things that we buy.

#### Let's talk about chocolate!

**Materials:** Several chocolate bars including Fair Trade chocolate bars

We probably don't think about the people who make or grow things when we shop but should we? Are they our neighbors?

What makes chocolate special? Why do so many people like it? Where do you think this chocolate comes from? (The Chocolate Activity Book from Global Exchange

<http://www.globalexchange.org/sites/default/files/ChocolateActivityBook.pdf> is a great resource on chocolate production)

Share two children's stories about life growing cocoa beans:

“Hola! My name is **Olga**, and I am 12 years-old. I am happy to meet you. I live with my family in a small village in the Dominican Republic. We have no electricity or drinking water in our house, but I like living here because everyone knows my family. I go to school in a bigger community. It takes me an hour to get there, but I am happy to get an education.

My father is a cocoa farmer. He works in a cooperative, or co-op, which sells Fair Trade cocoa. The work is hard. He cuts the cocoa pods from the trees and at crop time carries the sacks of cocoa from the farm up to the house on horses. My father receives special prices for his cocoa. The co-op is also organizing a project to bring electricity to my village then I would be able to read after it gets dark outside.”

“Ndo (hello), my name is **Isha** and I live in Ghana. My whole family works on a cocoa farm – my mother, my father, my two brothers and me. I am 12 years-old. My oldest brother can read a little bit and is teaching me some words. I would like to go to school, but my family is too poor so we all need to work on the cocoa farm. I work all day clearing the underbrush from the cocoa trees or taking the beans from the cocoa pods. I don't have much time to play. I don't know how cocoa beans become chocolate. I wonder what chocolate tastes like!”

### **Let's talk about Fair Trade!**

Discuss the stories. Many people think that growers around the world should be paid fairly. That's why they support Fair Trade. We can help farmers get paid more, send their children to school and buy medicine when they are sick by buying Fair Trade. Explain that with fair trade farmers and farm workers:

- ★ Get a fair price for their hard work
- ★ Can take care of their families
- ★ Can send their kids to school
- ★ Take care of the environment
- ★ Protect themselves from pesticides
- ★ Work together to make changes in their community

### **How do you know if chocolate you buy is Fair Trade?**

Using the candy bar samples: How can you tell which one(s) is Fair Trade?

Fair Trade certified chocolate has a special label that tells you the farmers were paid the Fair Trade price. You can see the labels on the chocolate wrapper or on the cocoa container.

### **What can we do?**

- ★ Tell your family and friends about Fair Trade

- ★ Buy Fair Trade items whenever possible (Other items include: coffee, tea, rice, sugar, bananas, vanilla, handicrafts, and more)
- ★ Ask stores to carry more Fair Trade items.

### **Zapizapu Crosses the Sea: A story about being fair** by Diane Abad Vergara.

This book is a good introduction to *fair trade* for primary students. The script and colorful illustrations of this children's book work together to simplify the concept of international trade and personify those involved around the world from grower to consumer. In the story you discover that the simple yet important concept of 'playing fair' is important for children and grown-ups alike. (Available from Amazon)

### **Middle School Lesson – Banana Bonanza**

#### **Introduce Fair Trade**

**Materials:** Bag of food items some Fair Trade labeled (coffee, chocolate, rice, sugar, vanilla...and bananas and some not Fair Trade labeled, world map, 30 pennies

Discuss fairness in trade. Explain the Fair Trade principles (see elementary lesson). Note: The use of pesticides in non-Fair Trade bananas is a serious concern) Discuss what this has to do with our faith. (Catholic Social Teaching)

What are things you can buy that are Fair Trade? (remove items as named) Empty bag except bananas. Here's one that may surprise you (bananas)

How do we know that some of these are Fair Trade and some are not? Discuss the Fair Trade label.

#### **Let's talk bananas?**

- What do you know about bananas?
  - Where do they grow? (Show areas on map)
  - How do they grow? (Most grow on farms or plantations)
  - What does a banana plant look like? (Banana is the fruit that comes from the flower)
- Ask students to close their eyes and imagine being a banana farmer (pictures available on-line will help them visualize). Read the following:
 

Imagine you are a banana farmer: You earn about 6 dollars each day and have three children. Your wife also works at the banana plantation. Your mother lives with you since your father died 5 years ago from a lung disease. He used to work preparing the pesticides at the plantation. Now you've heard that he might have gotten sick because of his exposure to the pesticides. You used to earn enough to send your children to school, but then your mother got sick. You don't earn enough money for your mother's medicines and your children's school fees, so your kids started working on the plantation too. You are worried they may get sick, but what can you do?

Ask the students to take turns coming up to the board to write one word to describe how they feel in their role as a banana farmer.

Discuss: Does the farmer get compensated fairly? Do you think he should be able to send his kids to school?

- How many other people have “touched” this banana from farm to store? There are many people and lots of work involved in the banana journey. (Banana worker, plantation owner, shipper, importer and ripener, retailer)
- Hold up the banana again? What do you think this banana costs? (figure 30 cents)  
With a partner draw a banana and divide it into 5 pieces. Label each piece in one of the above roles. Estimate how much of the 30 cents goes to each group.
- Discuss the estimates, then share the actual breakdown:
  - Banana worker – 1 cent
  - Plantation owner – 5 cents
  - Shipper – 4 cents
  - Importer and ripener – 7 cents
  - Retailer – 13 cents

To demonstrate very tangibly this breakdown, have a volunteer assume each role. Give the retailer 30 cents. He keeps his share then passes the rest to the ripener, who keeps his share....

- Read the difference Fair Trade makes:  
Ecuador is notorious in the banana trade for having the lowest wages and worst working conditions. But El Guado cooperative is changing what it means to be a banana farmer in Ecuador. Farmers in Ecuador (the world’s largest banana producer) are legally supposed to receive at least \$3.25 for a 40 lb. box of bananas (about 2 cents per lb.) Compare that to the \$9.50 per box minimum price for Fair Trade. Plus all Fair Trade bananas are organic so they use no pesticides.

### What can we do?

- Tell your family and friends about Fair Trade
- Buy Fair Trade items whenever possible (Other items include: coffee, tea, rice, sugar, chocolate, vanilla)
- Ask stores to carry more Fair Trade items.

### Closing Reflection

Read the following Bible passages: Genesis 1:26, Ezekiel 34:2-4 and Isaiah 24:4-6.

- What do these passages say about our responsibilities towards the environment?
- How are environmental problems connected to social and economic problems?



- Why is it important for us to care about how cocoa is produced?

## Prayer for Fair Trade

Let us bring the needs of producers and families around the world to our loving God

(Respond with: *Lord hear our prayer*)

For farmers struggling because of unfair trade rules

*Lord hear our prayer*

For children around the world who are unable to receive a proper education

*Lord hear our prayer*

For all who have the power to change world trade for the better

*Lord hear our prayer*

For the part we play in making trade fair

*Lord hear our prayer*

Lord, thank you that you hear all our prayers, in the name of Jesus.

*Amen*

## Additional Resources



[www.fairtraderesource.org](http://www.fairtraderesource.org) – offers teaching tools (*learn up*) and an extensive list of resources including a downloadable Power Point file and links to educational sites.



[www.globalexchange.org/fairtrade/cocoa/classroom](http://www.globalexchange.org/fairtrade/cocoa/classroom)

In addition to the Chocolate curriculum, Global Exchange includes resources and links for other Fair Trade items.



[www.crsfairtrade.org](http://www.crsfairtrade.org) - provides a wealth of information on Fair Trade: **Chocolate Project** – Fair Trade and Catholic Teaching: Lesson Plans Grades 1-12

**Free resources** to order or download: handouts, fliers, brochures (including a comprehensive handout on Fair Trade & Catholic Social

## Teaching



<http://www.greenamerica.org/programs/fairtrade/> Green America serves the Fair Trade community as public educators. Resources include: what you can do and the *Guide to Fair Trade*.

Fair Trade coffee from the area of our Archdiocese Sister Parish, La Sagrada Familia, in the Dominican Republic, can be bought from Just Coffee [www.justcoffee.coop](http://www.justcoffee.coop). Look for Dominican Republic Polo on their website