



## **Fair Trade Chocolate and Catholic Social Teaching**

### **Module 3: Human Rights and Responsibilities/ The Human Face of Chocolate**

#### **3.1 Objectives:**

- Analyze what the terms “fair” and “unfair” mean.
- Recognize that as humans we have certain basic rights and along with these rights come certain responsibilities.

#### **3.2 Curriculum Links:** Economics, Religion

#### **3.3 Background Information for the Teacher**

##### ***Fair Trade***

When a person in the United States tears open a chocolate bar wrapper and savors the rich, creamy sweetness of the chocolate inside, she generally does not think about all the people that worked on getting it to her. In the conventional cocoa trading system, the cocoa bean from a farm or plantation in the tropics passes through many different hands before becoming the chocolate bar we recognize. In many cocoa-growing regions, farmers often cannot earn enough money to cover their costs of production, let alone to support their families.

Fair Trade provides an alternative to the business-as-usual model. Under this system small farmers form cooperatives and sell their cocoa under Fair Trade terms to buyers in Europe, North America and Asia. Buyers and farmer cooperatives draw-up long-term contracts in which they agree on prices and quantities of cocoa to be bought. This provides more stability for small farmers since they are assured a market over the long-term. All buyers seeking Fair Trade certified cocoa guarantee a minimum price to farmers, which is often higher than the global market price. The farmers' cooperatives re-invest a portion of their profits into their communities by funding various development projects, including the improvement of educational and health services and the development of new production techniques, which are more ecologically sound. In this way, growers and their families are ensured a more sustainable livelihood.

The seven principles of Fair Trade as defined by the Fair Trade Federation include:

- Fair wages
- Cooperative workplaces
- Commitment to consumer education
- Environmental sustainability
- Financial and technical support for disadvantaged producers
- Respect for cultural identity
- Public accountability

In this module, students will explore these seven principles.

Additional Sources of Information:

- Catholic Relief Services Fair Trade programs <http://www.crsfairtrade.org>
- Fair Trade Federation <http://www.fairtradefederation.org>
- Ransom, David. *The No-Nonsense Guide to Fair Trade*. Oxford, England: New Internationalist Publications, 2001.
- Transfair USA <http://www.transfairusa.org>

### **3.4 Materials:**

“Is It Fair?” Worksheet (Worksheet 3.1); pieces of paper with numbers from 1-5 written on them; tape; “Fair Trade Principles” Worksheet (Worksheet 3.2)

### **3.5 Lessons 1 and 2: Is It Fair?** (Adapted from Eastern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Cooperative’s “Trading Fairly in Our World” <http://www.eoccc.org>)

1. Introduce the activity by explaining to the students that they will be exploring what they see as fair and unfair in economic systems. They will explore this issue from the points of view of the growers, company owners and consumers.
2. Give the students the “Is It Fair?” worksheet (Worksheet 3.1) and have them fill it out on their own.
3. While the students are completing the worksheet, create a number line in the classroom using the pieces of paper with the numbers. When the students have finished the worksheet, read off each statement. The students should stand by the number that shows where their opinion falls in relation to the statement. As the students move around, the teacher should record which statements

have high levels of consensus and which ones show very differing opinions.

4. Divide the class into small groups (3-4). In their groups the students should discuss the results of the survey from the previous activity, particularly looking at the statements that elicited the most agreement and the most disagreement. Have them discuss the following: Why did they choose the response that they did for the various statements? Would the answer they chose change if they were a cocoa grower? Would it change if they were the CEO of a chocolate company? What makes something fair or unfair? Give them time to discuss this thoroughly.
5. Once they have discussed the above, ask them to come up with three lists of “fair economic principles”—fair labor principles; fair trading principles; and fair consumer principles. Each group should present their principles to the rest of the class.
6. Once everyone has shared their principles, give the students the “Fair Trade Principles” worksheet (Worksheet 3.2), which outlines the Fair Trade Federation’s seven principles of Fair Trade. Read over them as a class. Discuss the similarities and differences between these and the lists that the students created. Discuss what Fair Trade is with the students.
7. Read Matthew 20:1-16 as a class. Discuss some of the themes that come out of this passage, and how it relates to the previous activities the students have done. The following questions can help guide your discussion:
  - Does this story seem fair to you? Are things that are fair for some, but not for others?
  - What connections do you see between this story and the principles of Fair Trade?
  - How does this parable relate to the idea of free will? You might want to connect the theme of free will both in terms of our faith—we can come to Jesus and God at any time in our lives and we will still be welcomed. At the same time, you could discuss how since we have free will, God does not control our actions. We have the freedom to make certain decisions, but in order to lead a Catholic life, certain responsibilities come with that freedom. What are some of those responsibilities? What responsibilities do we have as consumers? What responsibilities do we have to farmers in other countries?



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### **Worksheet 3.1: Is It Fair?**

Read each statement and circle the number that matches your level of agreement.

1=                      2=                      3=                      4=                      5=  
Strongly Agree    Mostly Agree       Neutral            Mostly Disagree    Strongly Disagree

1. I would pay more money for a Fair Trade product, so that I know the person who made it has enough money to pay for food, shelter and schooling.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. Farmers should produce as much as they possibly can and not worry about cutting down forests for farmland.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. People should receive a high enough wage from their job to pay for basics necessities for their family.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. Large businesses in the wealthy countries should have control over the products that are grown in other countries.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. People should work as many hours as possible, everyday of the week.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

6. I want to pay the lowest price possible for a product even if it means that the person who made it earns less.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

7. What I buy directly affects the people who made the product.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

8. Companies that buy raw materials or crops from other countries should know how they were extracted or produced.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

9. People or groups of people should be able to own their own land and work it independently.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

10. The government of a country has the right to take over land or force farmers to grow certain crops for export.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

11. It is better to buy a product for the cheapest possible price.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

12. Companies should be responsible for telling us where their products come from and how they are made.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5



## **Worksheet 3.2: Fair Trade Principles**

The following are the seven principles of Fair Trade as designated by the Fair Trade Federation. The Fair Trade Federation is an association of Fair Trade wholesalers, retailers and producers. All members of the Fair Trade Federation adhere to these principles.

### **Fair Wages**

Fair Trade guarantees farmers a fair price for their products—one that covers their costs of production *and* meets the basic needs of their families and them.

### **Cooperative Workplaces**

Under the Fair Trade system, small farmers and artisans form cooperatives or producer associations, which sell their products directly to Fair Trade businesses in the North. By working together, cooperatives provide cultural, social and economic benefits to entire communities. Profits are often distributed more equally under the Fair Trade system, and a portion of these profits is reinvested in community projects, such as health clinics, schools and literacy training. Farmers also develop long-term relationships with businesses in the North, which provides economic stability for the community.

### **Consumer Education**

Fair Trade organizations demonstrate a commitment to educating consumers about the importance of purchasing fairly traded products. They provide information about producers' history, culture and living conditions. Through this education, consumers become more aware of the connections between people in the North and people in the South. At the same time, Fair Trade helps us as Catholics to live our faith more fully by applying its values to the choices we make as consumers.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Fair Trade forbids the use of the most hazardous pesticides, creates economic incentives for organic certification, and helps train farmers in environmentally friendly production techniques. These measures are good not just for the Earth but also for farmers and their families.

## **Financial and Technical Support**

Small-scale farmers and artisans in developing countries often lack access to affordable loans or other forms of financial support. Under the Fair Trade system, Fair Trade businesses in the North provide low-interest loans or advance payment for crops, which can help them survive the lean season between harvests. Farmers also often receive access to technical assistance, such as market information, product feedback and financial management through their relationship with Fair Trade businesses in the North.

## **Respect for Cultural Identity**

Fair Trade promotes the production and development of goods based on producers' cultural traditions. In this way, farmers and artisans are able to maintain their cultural traditions in an ever-changing world.

## **Public Accountability**

The finances, management policies and business practices of Fair Trade businesses and producers are open to the public and subject to monitoring by third party organizations.