

A FILM BY EVGENY AFINEEVSKY

# FRANCESCO

OSCAR® NOMINATED DIRECTOR OF "WINTER ON FIRE"



Curriculum Guide

**JOURNEYS IN FILM™**  
educating for global understanding





# *Francesco*

## Curriculum Guide

Journeys in Film

[www.journeysinfilm.org](http://www.journeysinfilm.org)



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# About Journeys in Film

Journeys in Film is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization that amplifies the storytelling power of film to educate the most visually literate generation in history. We believe that teaching with film has the power to help educate our next generation with a richer understanding of the diverse and complex world in which we live.

We transform entertainment media into educational media by designing and publishing cost-free, educational resources for teachers to accompany carefully chosen feature films and documentaries while meeting mandated standards in all core subjects. Selected films are used as springboards for lesson plans in subjects like math, science, language arts, social studies, and more. Our resources support various learning styles, promote literacy, transport students around the globe, and foster learning that meets core academic objectives.

In addition to general subject areas, Journeys in Film's programs engage students in meaningful examinations of human rights, poverty and hunger, stereotyping and racism, environmental issues, global health, immigration, and gender roles. Our teaching methods are successful in broadening perspectives, teaching for global competency, encouraging empathy, and building new paradigms for best practices in education. We seek to inspire educators, school administrators, community members, and home-schooling parents to use our innovative curriculum to capture the imagination and curiosity of their students.

We also develop discussion guides for films that don't necessarily lend themselves to academic standards but cover topics and themes that are valuable for classroom discussions and in other settings, such as after-school clubs, community screenings, and college classes.

## Why use this program?

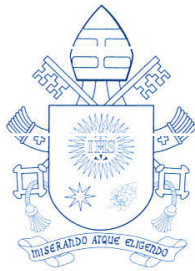
In an age when literacy means familiarity with images as much as text, and a screen has become a new kind of page, 21<sup>st</sup>-century students are more connected to media than any previous generation. This offers educators unprecedented opportunities to engage students in learning about a variety of subjects and issues of global significance. Films, television, documentaries, and other media platforms can provide an immediate, immersive window to a better understanding of the world and matters affecting all of us.

We teach our students literature that originated from all around the world, but we tend to forget that what often spurs the imagination is both visual and auditory. Films evoke emotion and can liven up the classroom, bringing energy to a course. We believe in the power of films to open our minds, inspire us to learn more, provide a bridge to better understanding the major issues of 21<sup>st</sup>-century concern, and compel us to make a difference.

When properly used, films can be a powerful educational tool in developing critical thinking skills and exposure to different perspectives. Students travel through these characters and their stories: They drink tea with an Iranian family in *Children of Heaven*, play soccer in a Tibetan monastery in *The Cup*, find themselves in the conflict between urban grandson and rural grandmother in South Korea in *The Way Home*, and watch the ways modernity challenges Maori traditions in New Zealand in *Whale Rider*. Journeys in Film brings to the classroom outstanding and socially relevant documentaries that teach about a broad range of social issues in real-life settings, such as famine-stricken and war-torn Somalia, a maximum-security prison in Alabama, and a World War II concentration camp near Prague. They explore complex and important topics like race and gender. Students tour an African school with a Nobel Prize-winning teenager in *He Named Me Malala* and experience the transformative power of music in *The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma & the Silk Road Ensemble* and *Landfill Harmonic*.

Our hope is that this generation of youth will contribute to the betterment of humankind through kindness and understanding, together with scientific knowledge, to help solve some of the world's most pressing issues.

Our goal is to create relevant and engaging curricula and programming around media that encourages cross-cultural understanding, empathy, and knowledge of the people and environments around the world. We aim to prepare today's youth to live and work as globally informed, media-literate, and competent citizens.



## A Letter from Pope Francis

Querido maestro, querida maestra:

Nuestro mundo, tan abrumado, te necesita de manera especial. En la historia de la humanidad se están escribiendo nuevas páginas, muchas de ellas llenas de sufrimientos, otras tantas, repletas de esperanza. Y vos desde tu lugar, cada día, cada mañana o cada tarde, cuando te encuentras con tus alumnos, estas construyendo parte de esa historia.

Desde aquel momento en que descubriste tu pasión por educar, casi sin darte cuenta, asumiste la misión de encontrar en la persona de tus alumnos y alumnas, alguien que espera, un corazón que quiere ser amado y aprender a amar, una vida que no quiere perder la esperanza. Así, en cada encuentro con un chico y una chica, vos sos protagonista de una página de la historia que se escribe en el corazón de cada uno de ellos.

La docencia, el educar, el hacer crecer, no es solo un trabajo remunerativo, sino que va más allá. Asume el desafío de recibir la vida como viene: la toma de la mano con ternura y escucha sus inquietudes sin imponerse, sino más bien, proponiendo un camino a seguir. Es una tarea que solamente puede hacerse con el corazón.

Por eso, te pido que no te olvides nunca que ser docente es mirar con amor y transmitir a las nuevas generaciones la pasión por el bien, que quiere luchar por un mundo más justo y fraterno.

Ser docente también es construir, a través de los pequeños gestos, la cultura del encuentro, que solo es posible si tenemos presente que *nadie se salva solo*, aun cuando muchas veces reina el *sálvese quien pueda*.

Educar es crecer y sólo se crece en el seno de un pueblo y de una familia. Vos que sabes la importancia de la memoria y del recuerdo, ayudá a tus alumnos a recordar las miradas de ternura que los fueron construyendo. Enseñales a descubrir la mirada de Jesucristo, que nos mira con misericordia y nos elige. Sólo se crece donde hay entusiasmo, donde hay alegría, donde hay sencillez de corazón. Sólo se crece donde no hay egoísmo, donde se sale de sí mismo para encontrar al otro; donde se piensa en los más pobres y en los que más necesitan y se los incluye en el pueblo, en la familia. Sólo se crece donde hay Amor. No tengas miedo de hacer de la educación un gesto de amor.

Gracias por todo lo que haces. Rezo por vos. Que Jesús te bendiga y la Virgen Santa te cuide. Y por favor, no dejes de rezar por mí.

Fraternalmente,

Francisco



# A Letter from Pope Francis (English translation)

Dear teacher:

Our world, so overwhelming, needs you in such a special way. In the history of humanity, new pages are being written, many of them filled with sufferings, others full of hope. And you, from your place, every day, every morning or every afternoon, when you meet with your students, are building part of that history.

From that moment in which you discovered your passion for teaching, almost without realizing it, you assumed the mission of finding, in the person of your students, someone who hopes, a heart that wants to be loved and learn how to love, a life that doesn't want to lose hope. So, in each encounter with a boy or girl, you are the main actor of a page of history which is written in the heart of each one of them.



Education, teaching, allowing for growth is not only a paid job, but rather something that goes further. It assumes the challenge of receiving life as it is; taking their hands with tenderness and listening to their worries without imposing oneself, but rather proposing a path to follow. It is a task that can only be done with the heart.

For this reason, I ask you to never forget that to be an educator is to look on with love and to transmit to new generations the passion for that which is good, fighting for a fairer and more harmonious world.

Being an educator also is building, through small gestures, the culture of coming together which is only possible if we remember that “no one is saved alone,” even as “save yourself” is often the main belief nowadays.

To educate is to grow, and one only grows in the haven of a community and a family. You who know the importance of memory and memories, help your students to remember the tender glances that have been forming them. Teach them to discover the vision of Jesus Christ, who watches us with mercy and chooses us. It only grows where there is enthusiasm, where there is joy, where there is simplicity in one's heart. It only grows where there is no selfishness, where one comes out of oneself to find another; where you think about the poorest among you, who are in the most need and include them in the community and in the family. It only grows where there is LOVE. Don't be afraid to make teaching an act of love.

Thank you for everything that you do. I am praying for you. May Jesus bless you and may the Holy Virgin take care of you. And please, don't stop praying for me.

In brotherly love,  
Francisco

*Francisco*

# A Letter from Evgeny Afineevsky, Oscar - and Emmy-nominated director/producer



The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically pulled back the curtain on the 21<sup>st</sup> century to reveal the most pressing, existential problems of our time: the failure of local, national, and global health systems to protect citizens, including the most vulnerable amongst us; wide-scale economic, race, and gender inequality; the

climate crisis and rejection of facts and science by demagogic leaders; religious intolerance and xenophobia; the immigration crisis; profound human rights violations; the failure of leaders in the richest and most sophisticated countries in the world to anticipate what the outcomes would be if our aging and failing health, infrastructure, and educational systems—meant to keep people safe, prosperous, and healthy—were tested beyond anything known before.

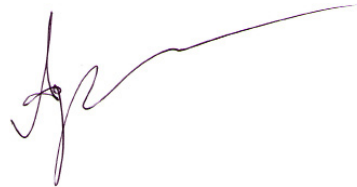
Without question, we are at a critical intersection in our human history that cries out for new voices to be heard—voices of hope, connection, optimism, innovative ideas, imaginative solutions, and bold action. We are at a moment in time that requires inspired leadership to guide us out of the wilderness as a global community and into a more purposeful, generous, compassionate, equitable future. Is there a key voice—one that resonates widely with courage, wisdom, experience, and the command of world-wide respect—to issue a clarion call to the world, inspiring leaders and citizens alike to address the most pressing problems of our time by acting together for a better, shared, and stronger future?

Perhaps that person is Pope Francis—an inspired and revered man of faith, science and action. The Pope demonstrated that all of these issues are inextricably linked together, and thus must be dealt with holistically if we are to have a future that will be safe, equitable, and healthy for all. With compassion and insight, he challenged the world community to address these crises with our inherent sense of hope, resilience, optimism, and indefatigable can-do human spirit. His daily activity and his wisdom on these issues provide direction for all of us and can ultimately serve as a guide for future generations. Through these lessons, we can build great future leaders and a healthier and more equitable and diverse society—one that can be enjoyed for generations to come.

The Francesco movie and these six lessons are not a biographical project about Pope Francis in the traditional sense. Rather, the film and this curriculum show us the world as it is today and give us a path to create a better future through education. Through Pope Francis' remarkable work in the areas of climate change, migration, refugees, peace and religious tolerance, gender and identity justice, health and economic equality, he demonstrates the meaning of inspired leadership.

I hope this project will inspire you all, as it inspired me and changed my life.

Sincerely,



# Introducing *Francesco*

Christianity is the largest religion in the world, and Roman Catholics make up half of the world's Christians. In 1910, 65% of the world's Catholics lived in Europe and 24% in Latin America. In 2010, 24% were in Europe and the largest share was 39% in Latin America and the Caribbean. Given this shift, it is not surprising that the newest head of the Church, Pope Francis, is also the first pope from an American continent. Elected by the College of Cardinals in 2013, Argentinian Jorge Mario Bergoglio became the first Jesuit pope and the first pope from outside Europe since the eighth century.

The film *Francesco*, directed by Evgeny Afineevsky, gives the viewer an introduction to the life of this extraordinary man. Because of their friendship, Afineevsky was able to film very personal moments that give us insight into this pope whose humility and sense of humor contrast with the formality of Vatican traditions.

Like his chosen namesake, Saint Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis is concerned with the lives of the poor and speaks forthrightly about economic injustice. His particular concern seems to be those people who have been forced—through war, persecution, climate change, violence or poverty—to abandon their homes and take perilous journeys in search of a better life. We see him defending the Rohingya in Myanmar and comforting Syrian refugees in Lesbos. He undertakes dangerous trips when he sees them as necessary, such as his visit to the war-torn Central African Republic.

The environment is another issue which moves Pope Francis, and he sees a need for humans to step up to protect it. His encyclical *Laudato Si'* laid down a challenge for us all to become better stewards of the planet and to protect those who are bearing a disproportionate level of harm from climate change.

The film also tackles some of the difficult issues currently roiling the Catholic Church, including the treatment of LGBTQ Catholics, the role of women in the Church, and clerical sexual abuse. However, as in his outreach to leaders of the Jewish and Islamic faiths, his goal is to “build bridges, not walls.” The film doesn't offer easy solutions, but it shows us a compassionate man trying hard to heal divisions and find solutions.

**DIRECTOR:** Evgeny Afineevsky

**PRODUCERS:** Evgeny Afineevsky, Den Tolmor, Eric Esrailian, Teri Schwartz

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS:** Ted Hope, Colleen Camp, Mark Monroe, Tomás Srovnal, Michelle Bertrán Neve, Svetlana Chistyakova, Bonnie Abaunza, Bohdan Batruch, Regina K. Scully, Elba Luis Lugo, Geralyn White Dreyfous, Robert Fyvolent

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS:** Rose Pacatte, Gisella Marengo

**EDITED BY:** Dan Swietlik, ACE

**MUSIC BY:** Adam Peters

**CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Evgeny Afineevsky, Teodora Totoiu

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Eric Esrailian

Bonnie Abaunza

Hernán Reyes Alcaide

Mr. Tony Bury and Bury family

Loyola Productions

Edward J. Siebert

*For more information on the movie, news and where you can watch it or get a copy for yourself, please go to: [www.francescofilm.com](http://www.francescofilm.com)*

# To the Teacher

This curriculum guide, like other **Journeys in Film** resources, is based on a few fundamental beliefs:

- That a well-made, relevant film is an excellent way to convey information and teach students important critical thinking skills.
- That an interdisciplinary approach will reach students who have different learning modalities and interests.
- That talented teachers interacting with real students on a daily basis are best positioned to write good lesson plans.

There are six lessons in this guide. Although it is possible to use all of these lessons, most teachers will select just one or several to use with their classes. You might wish to consider a team approach built around *Francesco* for a memorable experience for your students.

Lesson 1 teaches students about Pope Francis' life in the years before he was elected to the papacy by the College of Cardinals. They complete a timeline about this son of Italians who had moved to Argentina. His early education as a chemical technician yielded to a vocation to the priesthood. Students follow his path from priest to archbishop, including an "exile" in the Argentine city of Córdoba which led to a spiritual transformation. They also study the life of his chosen namesake, Saint Francis of Assisi, and discover parallels in the lives and interests of the two men. The third part of the lesson is devoted to the pope's own words, as students paraphrase his statements and interpret them in a visual format.

Lesson 2 deals with Pope Francis' concern for the environment. After reading the first part of the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, students divide into groups to learn more about the encyclical's treatment of such issues as pollution and climate change, the scarcity of potable water, the loss of

biodiversity, the decline in the quality of human life, global inequality, and the inadequate responses to date. Then they sketch their own "environmental identity" in the form of a tree with roots (past environmental experiences), branches and leaves (actions they have taken to help the environment), and trunk (their environmental values).

Lesson 3 helps students to understand the world of migrants and refugees. Small groups research the causes for migration and current living conditions for refugees featured in the movie *Francesco*; these refugees come from Myanmar (the Rohingya), Syria, the Central African Republic, and Central America. Optional but highly useful extension activities include an oral history project in which students interview refugees in their own community and a community service project designed to help migrants or refugees.

In Lesson 4, students will examine key sections from the "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," an international agreement that defines the criteria for determining genocide. They will then compare this with nine historical incidents of possible genocide in an effort to understand what genocide is, why it happens, and its result. Then they will view videos about contemporary genocides and clips from the film *Francesco* to learn about Pope Francis' public recognition of these genocides. You may wish to proceed cautiously if you have younger students or if there are students in your classes who might be particularly sensitive because of their own experiences.

Lesson 5 follows another interest of Pope Francis, the commonalities among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In the film, we see Pope Francis reaching out to the Islamic world in a number of different situations, including the visit to Iraq, where he met with Muslim leaders. In Abu-Dhabi in 2019, he signed a joint statement with Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, Grand

Imam of Al-Azhar, that outlined how different faiths can live peaceably. Students learn about what these three religions have in common and create a Venn diagram outlining similarities and differences. The lesson also introduces the “Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together” and asks students to write an essay on what divides us and what can be done about these divisions.

Finally, Lesson 6 grapples with difficulties that Pope Francis has had to face in caring for the approximately 1.2 billion Roman Catholics in his charge. Issues such as the role of women in the Catholic Church, the position of LGBTQ people in the Church, and the clerical abuse scandals have created divisions within the Church. In the lesson, students view clips from the film *Francesco* and research current news articles to ascertain what actions Pope Francis has taken and what his goals are with respect to these issues.

# Who is Pope Francis?

## Enduring Understandings

- Reflecting upon the early lives of major world and religious leaders can lead to a better understanding of one's own life and potentially motivate one to bring about positive change.
- At the core of every leader—at the local level or on the world stage—is an individual human being with personal inspirations, challenges, and goals.
- St. Francis of Assisi was a role model for Pope Francis because of his concern for the poor and his love of nature.

## Essential Questions

- How did Pope Francis' early life shape his empathy and ability to have compassion in his role as Pontiff?
- How did his time as a Jesuit priest (and subsequent exile) affect his eventual appointment as Archbishop of Buenos Aires?
- How did the actions of St. Francis of Assisi inspire Pope Francis?
- What is significant about Pope Francis' connection to St. Francis of Assisi?

## Notes to the Teacher

In this lesson, students will become acquainted with Jorge Mario Bergoglio, who was elected the 266<sup>th</sup> pope of the Catholic Church, and the first pope to come from the Americas. He was the child of Italians who left their home in the 1930s and moved to Argentina. At first, he earned a diploma as a chemical technician; later, he began to prepare for the priesthood in the diocesan seminary and then moved on to the Society of Jesus where he was ordained. He taught literature and psychology at Catholic colleges in Argentina and also served as a Jesuit provincial. Later on, he was exiled in the Argentinian city of Córdoba, where he underwent a spiritual and philosophical transformation. He embraced many issues like poverty, inequality, and economic injustice. Returning to Buenos Aires, he rose to become Archbishop of Buenos Aires, then a cardinal, and eventually pope.

In the first part of the lesson, students will view the film and complete **Handout 1: Pope Francis Timeline** as they watch. The handout will help students understand how the events in Jorge Mario Bergoglio's (Pope Francis') life led to his rise to leader of the Roman Catholic Church.

(Note that there are currently several movies titled *Francesco*. Be sure you select the 2020 film by Evgeny Afineevsky, an Israeli director and a close friend of Pope Francis.) Students may be surprised to find that Pope Francis (then Padre Bergoglio) was sent into temporary exile by the Jesuits. You can learn more about this time in his life from an article in *The Atlantic* magazine entitled "Where Pope Francis Learned Humility," by Paul Vallely. It may be found at <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/08/pope-francis-cordoba-exile-humble/402032/>. Telling students about this period in Francis's life will pave the way for the reflection question at the end of **Handout 1**. The goal of the self-reflection journal entry is for students to put themselves in the mindset of Pope Francis and reflect upon where they may be at various stages of their own lives.

In the second part of the lesson, students research to learn more about the life of St. Francis of Assisi. Using the internet to find background information is dependent upon students having prior knowledge about finding reliable internet sources and the ability to decipher a source's currency (How up to date is it?), reliability (Is it opinion or fact? Is it balanced?), authority (Who created it and what are the author's credentials?), and purpose/point of view (Is it biased?). An excellent source for questions to evaluate a website is at <https://ccconline.libguides.com/c.php?g=242130&p=2185475>. Even if students are frequent users of the internet for research, it is always useful to remind them of these principles of online research.

The third part of the lesson gives students an opportunity to reflect on the words of Pope Francis. After discussing what the words mean, students choose one quote and use it as the basis of a poster. You may wish to display the finished posters in a gallery in your classroom or in the hallway.

*For more information on the movie, news and where you can watch it or get a copy for yourself, please go to: [www.francescofilm.com](http://www.francescofilm.com)*



### Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1**

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2**

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9**

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.5**

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, and nuances in word meanings.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1**

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4**

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

### Duration of Lesson

2–3 class periods, plus time to view the film

### Assessments

Completion of **Handout 1: Timeline of Pope Francis' Life**

Completion of **Handout 2: Two Men Named Francis**

Class discussions

Quotation poster

### Materials

Access to film *Francesco* (2020)

**Handout 1: Timeline of Pope Francis' Life**

**Teacher Resource 1: Timeline of Pope Francis' Life**

(Answer Key)

**Handout 2: Two Men Named Francis**

**Teacher Resource 2: Two Men Named Francis**

(Answer Key)

Writing utensils and/or computer access for those with computer accommodations

Access to the Internet or reliable print sources about St. Francis of Assisi

**Handout 3: Words from Pope Francis**



# Lesson 1 (English Language Arts, World Religions)

## Procedure

### Part 1: Preparing for a Life of Service

1. Explain to students that they are going to watch a documentary film today about the life of Pope Francis and the issues he is most interested in. Distribute copies of **Handout 1: Timeline of Pope Francis' Life**. Have students read the directions silently to themselves or read them aloud yourself. Ask students if there are any questions and clarify as necessary.
2. Start the film *Francesco* and have students complete the handout as they watch the film. You may wish to help students by starting and stopping the film as each question is covered. An answer key is available on **Teacher Resource 1**.
3. At the film's conclusion, ask students to share their answers, reviewing one question at a time. You may answer the question about what he initially studied (to be a chemical technician) or have students look this up for homework.
4. Give students time to answer the reflection question at the end of the handout or assign for homework. Take time to discuss the answer when they have finished. Ask them how they think their own lives so far have prepared them for what they will do in life.

### Part 2: Two Men Named Francis

1. Ask students to share what they know about St. Francis of Assisi before they begin their research.
2. Explain to students that they are going to do some research on the life of St. Francis of Assisi. Remind them how important it is to be sure a website contains good information; there is too much misinformation masquerading as truth on the Internet today. Project the website at <https://ccconline.libguides.com/c.php?g=242130&p=2185475> or have your students access it on their devices. Work through the list of questions to be sure they understand how you expect them to judge the validity of any website they use.

3. Break the class into pairs or prompt students to choose a research partner. In the computer lab or on their laptops, have students conduct preliminary background information research on St. Francis of Assisi. Remind them to keep in mind the importance of currency, reliability, authority, and purpose/point of view for all Internet sources.
4. Distribute copies of **Handout 2: Two Men Named Francis**. Have the students complete the chart, entering information about the lives of St. Francis and Pope Francis in the appropriate column and looking for similarities. Each pair should then complete the Reflection Question and be prepared to share their answers with the class. Allow class time for a discussion of their answers to this question. There are some suggested answers on **Teacher Resource 2**.
5. Conclude by asking students: Do you think Jorge Mario Bergoglio chose the right papal name for himself?

### Part 3: Pope Francis' Words

1. Distribute copies of **Handout 3: Words from Pope Francis**. Read through the quotes one by one with your class, taking time to have students share what they think Pope Francis meant by a particular statement and whether the statement under discussion has meaning for their own lives. If you prefer, you can have students access one of the multiple websites that collate quotes from Pope Francis.
2. Ask students to choose the quote that seems most meaningful to them. Have students work individually or in pairs to make a poster according to the directions on the handout. Remind them to have (a) the quote itself, (b) their interpretation of the quote in their own words, and (c) images that convey the meaning of the Pope's words.
3. When the posters have been completed, arrange to display them in your classroom or in the hallway where other students might see them.



**Lesson 1** (English Language Arts, World Religions)

Handout 1

# Timeline of Pope Francis' Life

Directions: Read through the questions below before watching the film *Francesco* so that you know what information you are expected to record. Complete the timeline below, answering each question as the answer appears in the film. (Please note that this timeline is in chronological order, but the film does not present this information chronologically). Consult other resources as necessary. After you finish completing the timeline, answer the final reflection question at the end.

Prior to his birth	From where did his family emigrate? Why?
1930s–1940s	He was born in (location and year): The name he was given at birth: Family member who influenced him while he was young:
1950s	What did Jorge Mario Bergoglio initially study for a career? (You will have to look this one up!) What happened to Jorge Bergoglio when he was 17? What two things did he decide to do as a result?
1960s	Why wasn't Padre Bergoglio permitted to do missionary work? What religious order did Padre Bergoglio join?
1970s–1980s	(Became provincial in charge of the Jesuits of Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay in 1970.) List two ways the young provincial assisted people in escaping the Argentine government persecution during the Argentinian dictatorship. Where was he sent during his "exile"?
1990s	(Became Archbishop of Buenos Aires in 1998.)
2000s–2010s	(Became Cardinal in 2001.) How long did the conclave meet at the Vatican before Cardinal Bergoglio was elected pope in 2013?
2020s	What issues seem to be of most concern to Pope Francis today?

**Lesson 1** (English Language Arts, World Religions)**Handout 1**

# Timeline of Pope Francis' Life

**Reflection Question**

Before Pope Francis was elected pope by the Cardinals, the consensus among the Conclave was that the Church needed to be a much humbler institution. In a short paragraph, explain how Pope Francis' early life has allowed him to lead as a humble and empathetic leader.

**Lesson 1** (English Language Arts, World Religions)**Handout 2****Two Men Named Francis**

According to the film, Nonna Rosa, Jorge Mario Bergoglio's grandmother, was his mentor. She gave her young grandson a book on St. Francis of Assisi. When he was elected to the papacy, Pope Francis was told to "remember the poor," and the first person to come to mind was St. Francis of Assisi.

Directions: With a partner, brainstorm answers for the comparison graphic below. If you are not familiar with St. Francis of Assisi, conduct background research about him on the Internet to learn more about the Catholic saint who was the Founder of the Order of the Friars Minor (Franciscan order) and who is the patron saint of Italy. (Make sure to consider the credibility, reliability, authority, and point of view of any website used.)

<b>Pope Francis</b>	<b>Similarities</b>	<b>St. Francis of Assisi</b>

**Reflection Questions**

What are the three most important ways Pope Francis and St. Francis of Assisi are similar?

a.

b.

c.

*Answers to Reflection Questions will vary.*

**Lesson 1** (English Language Arts, World Religions)**Handout 3**

## Words from Pope Francis

Directions: Choose one of the following quotes or find one you prefer on the Internet. Write your own explanation of what the quote means. Then make a poster on which you place the quote, your interpretation of it, and any images that you think will help to illustrate the meaning.

Human rights are not only violated by terrorism, repression, or assassination, but also by unfair economic structures that create huge inequalities.

Together with a culture of work, there must be a culture of leisure as gratification. To put it another way: people who work must take the time to relax, to be with their families, to enjoy themselves, read, listen to music, play a sport.

Although the life of a person is in a land full of thorns and weeds, there is always a space in which the good seed can grow. You have to trust God.

The worship of the golden calf of old has found a new and heartless image in the cult of money and the dictatorship of an economy which is faceless and lacking any truly human goal.

Politics is a noble activity. We should revalue it, practice it with vocation and a dedication that requires testimony, martyrdom, that is to die for the common good.

May the noise of weapons cease! War always marks the failure of peace, it is always a defeat for humanity.

Look upon your brother's sorrow and do not add to it, stay your hand, rebuild the harmony that has been shattered; and all this achieved not by conflict but by encounter!

These days there is a lot of poverty in the world, and that's a scandal when we have so many riches and resources to give to everyone. We all have to think about how we can become a little poorer.

Money has to serve, not to rule.

How do we help our young people not to see a university degree as synonymous with higher status, with more money or social prestige? It is not synonymous with that. How can we help make their education a mark of greater responsibility in the face of today's problems, the needs of the poor, concern for the environment?

Our common home is being pillaged, laid waste, and harmed with impunity. Cowardice in defending it is a grave sin.

Teacher Resource 1

## Timeline of Pope Francis' Life (Answer Key)

Prior to his birth	<p><b>From where did his family emigrate? Why?</b> Bergoglio's grandparents fled Italy during the rise of Fascism/Benito Mussolini.</p>
1930s–1940s	<p><b>He was born in (location and year):</b> 1936 in Buenos Aires, Argentina</p> <p><b>The name he was given at birth:</b> Jorge Mario Bergoglio</p> <p><b>Family member who influenced him while he was young:</b> Nonna Rosa (grandmother)</p>
1950s	<p><b>What did Jorge Mario Bergoglio initially study for a career? (You will have to look this one up!)</b> He earned a chemical technician's diploma.</p> <p><b>What happened to Jorge Bergoglio when he was 17?</b> He felt called to become a priest.</p> <p><b>What two things did he decide to do as a result?</b> Join a congregation and become a missionary</p>
1960s	<p><b>Why wasn't Padre Bergoglio permitted to do missionary work?</b> He had a pulmonary condition; part of his right lung had been removed as a result.</p> <p><b>What religious order did Padre Bergoglio join?</b> The Jesuits (also known as The Society of Jesus)</p>
1970s–1980s	<p><b>(Became provincial in charge of the Jesuits of Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay in 1970.)</b> <b>List two ways the young provincial assisted people in escaping the Argentine government persecution during the Argentinian dictatorship.</b> Answers will vary, but may include helping his fellow Jesuits get out of prison, getting people travel documents, helping people cross the Rio de la Plata to freedom, giving people money, etc.)</p> <p><b>Where was he sent during his "exile"?</b> Córdoba, Argentina</p>
1990s	<p><b>(Became Archbishop of Buenos Aires in 1998.)</b></p>
2000s–2010s	<p><b>(Became Cardinal in 2001.)</b> <b>How long did the conclave meet at the Vatican before Cardinal Bergoglio was elected pope in 2013?</b> 25 hours</p>
2020s	<p><b>What issues seem to be of most concern to Pope Francis today?</b> Migrants, poverty, social justice, the environment, genocide, and the sexual abuse scandal in the Church.</p>

Reflection Question

Answers will vary.

**Teacher Resource 2**

## Two Men Named Francis (Answer Key)

According to the film, Nonna Rosa, Jorge Mario Bergoglio’s grandmother, was his mentor. She gave her young grandson a book on St. Francis of Assisi. When he was elected to the papacy, Pope Francis was told to “remember the poor,” and the first person to come to mind was St. Francis of Assisi.

Directions: With a partner, brainstorm answers for the comparison graphic below. If you are not familiar with St. Francis of Assisi, conduct background research about him on the Internet to learn more about the Catholic saint who was the Founder of the Franciscans and whom is the patron saint of Italy. (Make sure to consider the credibility, reliability, authority, and point of view of any website used.)

Pope Francis	Similarities	St. Francis of Assisi
<p>Lives in the Casa Santa Marta (not the Vatican papal apartment).</p> <p>Pope Francis’ exile in Córdoba, Argentina, was “...a period of spiritual darkness” that the pope used to make himself stronger both emotionally and spiritually.</p> <p>Pope Francis’ goals and work in Latin America predicted the interests and methods he would pursue as pope.</p> <p>His efforts as Archbishop of Buenos Aires on behalf of his people, especially the poor, and his connection to St. Francis of Assisi.</p> <p>His awareness of the importance of women in roles in the Church</p> <p>His awareness of the need for the Church to be inclusive. His outreach to those of other faiths</p> <p>His awareness of the global warming crisis</p>	<p><i>Answers will vary according to sources used and interpretation of those sources.</i></p>	<p>Established communities for both men and women.</p> <p>Captured in battle and spent a year in an underground cell waiting to be ransomed. Then he experienced a change in attitude, began to have dreams. And he delved into the person of Jesus Christ, who marked him so much that it made a profound change in his life.</p> <p>Patron saint of Italy (along with St. Catherine of Siena)</p> <p>Grew up wealthy but renounced his family’s wealth. He and fellow friars experienced poverty. Great sympathy for the poor.</p> <p>He guided St. Clare in founding a religious order for women, now called the Poor Clares.</p> <p>Connected with those who practiced other religions; preached to the Muslim caliph in Egypt.</p> <p>Patron saint of ecology because of his love for nature, animals, and the environment.</p>

# *Laudato Si'* and the Environment

## Enduring Understandings

- Humans depend on Earth's resources.
- Natural systems are interdependent.
- The actions of all humans impact the health of the environment.
- Climate change affects all human communities.
- A healthy, equitable, and sustainable future for human communities on Earth is possible.

## Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of an encyclical?
- What actions are called for in *Laudato Si'*?
- How do science and ethics relate to each other?
- Are humans responsible for environmental stewardship?
- What is meant by “throwaway culture”?
- How does throwaway culture impact the environment?
- What relationship should humans have with the environment?
- What is the role of government in environmental stewardship?
- What is the role of industry in environmental stewardship?
- How are the environmental and social crises mentioned in *Laudato Si'* related?
- Who is responsible for environmental justice in human communities?
- What are the origins of our environmental values?
- How can environmental education help improve awareness and change behaviors?

## Notes to the Teacher

In his first encyclical, Pope Francis called for respect for the environment by reminding his hearers that the earth is both a sister and a loving mother to us, but one on which we have too often inflicted harm. He calls for “a sustainable and integral development” that takes into account pollution and climate change, the availability of potable water, the loss of species, and global inequality. In this lesson, students learn what an encyclical is and why it is important. They will read the encyclical *Laudato Si'* as a jigsaw activity to analyze the approach Francis has taken to solving these problems.

The activities in this lesson have been designed for use as individual modules or as tiered instruction with each new lesson component building upon the last. A review of the activities prior to delivery is important to best determine the class time needed for each one and appropriately plan for materials acquisition. While the suggested lesson duration is between two and five one-hour periods, the activities can easily be modified based on time available or the place where the lesson can best be integrated in the course curriculum. In addition to examining the purpose of an encyclical, the components of this lesson collectively explore the characteristics unique to *Laudato Si'* regarding the relationship between human communities and shifting ecosystems on Earth.

This lesson assumes students have some background on the fundamentals of climate change, the global water crisis, biodiversity loss, and environmental justice. The following video resources may be helpful if review material is necessary.

Climate Change: <https://youtu.be/dcBXmj1nMTQ>

Global Water Crisis: <https://youtu.be/lrst59O9Q1Q>

Biodiversity Loss: <https://youtu.be/YzXGT8majwc>

Environmental Justice: [https://youtu.be/dREtXUij6\\_c](https://youtu.be/dREtXUij6_c)



Please note that all suggested video links in this lesson can be displayed on a projector or shared with students for use on individual devices, depending on the classroom technology available.

Note that devices with internet access are needed for both portions of this lesson, as the copy of *Laudato Si'* available for use is digital. The official Vatican text can be accessed using the following link: [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html).

Part 1 of this lesson investigates the purpose of an encyclical while exploring the unique elements of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* that underscore the complex relationship between human communities and shifting ecosystems on Earth. Full sets of copies of **Handout 1: *Laudato Si'*, On Care for Our Common Home: An Introduction** and **Handout 2: The Heart of the Matter** are recommended for each class.

**Handout 1: *Laudato Si'*** can be completed as a homework assignment prior to this portion of the lesson or used as an introductory, in-class activity depending on the time available. In addition, **Handout 2: The Heart of the Matter** can also be assigned as homework to be completed ahead of time and used as a preliminary activity for Part 2 of this lesson.

In Part 2 of this lesson, students consider *Laudato Si'* as a global message of hope and a call to action. They will reflect on the importance and origin of values related to the environment and explore the deep connection between these values and their personal identity. Full sets of copies of **Handout 3: To Agree or Disagree (That is the Question!)** and **Handout 4: Illustrating an Identity** are recommended for each class. If time is limited, the questions from **Handout 3: To Agree or Disagree (That is the Question!)** can be read aloud or written on the board as an alternative format

for the ensuing discussion. Please note the duration of the activity for **Handout 4: Illustrating an Identity** can vary as a function of class and/or curriculum time available and can be completed over several in-class periods or offered as a longer-term homework assignment.

Before starting Part 2 of the lesson, make copies of the images on **Teacher Resource 1** to clarify what students will be doing in the final part of the lesson as they create the illustrations of their environmental identity. If you prefer, you can project these images instead, but be sure the lettering is legible.

*For more information on the movie, news and where you can watch it or get a copy for yourself, please go to: [www.francescofilm.com](http://www.francescofilm.com)*



## Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson

### History/Social Studies

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1**

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3**

Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4**

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5**

Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8**

Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

### Science and Technical Subjects

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.1**

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, attending to the precise details of explanations or descriptions.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.2**

Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; trace the text's explanation or depiction of a complex process, phenomenon, or concept; provide an accurate summary of the text.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.8**

Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claim or a recommendation for solving a scientific or technical problem.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.9**

Compare and contrast findings presented in a text to those from other sources (including their own experiments), noting when the findings support or contradict previous explanations or accounts.

### Writing

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1**

Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.5**

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.6**

Use technology, including the internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.7**

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.8**

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

#### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.9**

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

## Duration of Lesson

Two to five one-hour periods

## Assessments

Completion of the *Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home: An Introduction* discussion questions  
 Completion of the *The Heart of the Matter* group research activity and completed index cards  
 Completion of the *To Agree or Disagree? (That is the Question!)* group activity and discussion  
 Completion of the *Illustrating an Identity* visual analysis activity  
 Group discussion  
 Student presentations

## Materials Needed

Writing utensils  
 Blank 8 ½" x 11" paper  
 Computer access to the official Vatican text of *Laudato Si'* at [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)  
 Whiteboard  
 Whiteboard markers  
 Index cards, preferably 5" x 8"  
 Colored pencils or markers  
 Tape  
 Full class copies of:  
**Handout 1: *Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home: An Introduction***  
**Handout 2: *The Heart of the Matter***  
**Handout 3: *To Agree or Disagree? (That is the Question!)***  
**Handout 4: *Illustrating an Identity***

## Procedure

Part 1: What is an Encyclical? (1–2 one-hour periods)

1. Tell students that they are going to read part of an encyclical, or letter, written by Pope Francis. Distribute copies of **Handout 1: *Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home: An Introduction***. Then provide access to the official Vatican text of *Laudato Si'* on computers or the students' own devices. It can be found at [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html).

[NOTE: The reading and **Handout 1** can be completed as a homework assignment if you wish to save class time.]

2. Divide the class into groups of two or three students and give them time to share their answers to the handout. Then host a full-class discussion about the assignment, inviting members from each group to share and using the questions from the handout as a framework for your conversation.

Suggested answers:

- 1) Every person on Earth. (If the answer is initially unclear to students, they can reference the following statement from Section 3: "Now, faced as we are with global environmental deterioration, I wish to address every person living on this planet.")
- 2) Answers may vary, but should relate to addressing the environmental crisis on Earth.
- 3) The "common home" referenced here is our planet, Earth. In this case, Earth is compared to our "sibling" to reflect the responsibility, compassion, support, sense of worth, respect, and community



that can be fostered between siblings. Alternatively, viewing Earth as a “parent” potentially denotes the influence it can have on the development and identities of its human communities. The relationship between a parent and child can help inform the character, values, and behavior of the child over time.

- 4) While answers here may vary, “indifference” generally refers to a lack of concern or a sense that a matter is unimportant. This statement echoes the deep connection between humans and the environment—the dimensional relationship between all living things on Earth, interconnectedness of life on this planet, etc.
- 5) Answers may vary.
- 6) Answers may vary.
- 7) Answers may vary.
- 8) Answers may vary.

Explain that *Laudato Si'* is Pope Francis' most recent encyclical. Explain that the term “encyclical” comes from the Greek word for “circle” and refers to a letter from the pope addressed to all the lay faithful and to people of good will. Use the following questions to host a discussion about the concept of encyclicals through the lens of *Laudato Si'*.

- a. Consider the portion of *Laudato Si'* you have read so far. Using what you have learned, how would you describe the purpose of an encyclical? (While answers may vary, encyclicals often provide analysis of relevant issues.)
  - b. Why is the concept of “circular” important to an encyclical? (“Circular” refers to the wide distribution or circulation of the letter throughout the intended audience.)
  - c. After reading the first part of *Laudato Si'*, would you say that an encyclical is an effective tool for reaching a broad audience about an important topic? (Answers may vary.)
  - d. If you wanted to reach a very broad audience about an important topic, would you use an encyclical? What other methods might work as an alternative? (Answers may vary, but may include public service announcements, social media posts, print media, documentary film, press releases, artwork, educational campaigns, etc.)
  - e. In Section 3, Pope Francis writes that, in this encyclical, he “would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home.” With this statement in mind, in what way might this encyclical be different from those published by other popes? (While answers may vary, the intended audience of Francis' writing in this case seems to extend far beyond the reach of the Catholic Church—an aspect of the message comparatively unique to this particular encyclical.)
  - f. What is Pope Francis asking of his audience in *Laudato Si'*? (Answers may vary, but should relate to addressing the environmental crisis on Earth.)
3. Ask the students to think about the specific environmental concerns of Pope Francis that are documented in the film *Francesco* or that they may already have read about in the Introduction to *Laudato Si'*. Invite several students to share, generating a list of the key themes on the board. (Examples could include, but are not limited to, the following: pollution and climate change; access to clean water; loss of biodiversity; decline in quality of human life; throw-away culture; global inequality; poor political oversight of Earth's resources.)

4. Explain to the students that they will be closely examining some of the environmental concerns Pope Francis feels are shared by a global society in the next part of the lesson. Invite several students to help read aloud sections 17–19 of *Laudato Si'*. Call attention to the last sentence in section 19: “Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering.” Ask the students the following questions, calling on several to share their thoughts with the class.
  - a. What does it mean to be “painfully aware” of something? How is that different from simply being aware?
  - b. What does it mean to turn what is happening in the world into our own “personal suffering”? How might someone go about this?
5. Explain to the students that they will be investigating some of the prominent environmental and social themes detailed in *Laudato Si'* more closely. Divide the class into groups of two or three students.
6. Distribute copies of **Handout 2: The Heart of the Matter** and four blank index cards to each group. Review the instructions with the class and assign the following critical environmental issue topics to groups so that each topic is assigned at least once.
  - Pollution and Climate Change (Sections 20–26)
  - The Issue of Water (Sections 27–31)
  - Loss of Biodiversity (Sections 32–42)
  - Decline in the Quality of Human Life and the Breakdown of Society (Sections 43–47)
  - Global Inequality (Sections 48–52)
  - Weak Responses (Sections 53–59)
7. Allow in-class time for students to complete their work on **Handout 2: The Heart of the Matter**. (Note that this activity can also be assigned as homework for individuals to complete ahead of Part 2 of this lesson.)
8. When students have completed the handout, distribute the index cards. Tell students to write each of their passages in a large, creative font on the blank index cards provided (one passage per index card; four total). If time permits, they can decorate their index cards by adding color and creative borders.
9. Invite each group to share the title and a brief summary of the article they chose for the first part of the activity, allowing for discussion as time permits.
10. Invite each group to share at least one passage they chose to highlight from their assigned sections, as well as one passage they discovered in researching the same topic elsewhere in *Laudato Si'*. Students should display the index cards they completed and read their chosen passages aloud. The following questions can be used to help guide student sharing.
  - a. What environmental or social issue was detailed in your assigned section?
  - b. How do the passages you chose relate to this topic?
  - c. Why were the passages you chose meaningful to you?
  - d. How does it make you feel to know that [INSERT STUDENT TOPIC HERE] is a critical global crisis?
11. Completed index card passages can be displayed in a location of choice in the classroom, such as a wall, bulletin board, or window. You may also wish to have the student groups make posters with them and include headlines, relevant images, etc.



Part 2: Developing an Environmental Identity (1–3 one-hour periods)

1. Distribute a copy of **Handout 3: To Agree or Disagree (That is the Question!)** to each student and review the instructions. Explain that each statement on the handout relates to a theme of *Laudato Si'*. Give students time to work independently on the questions provided.
2. Host a discussion with the class, inviting students to share where they landed on the “agreement” continuum for each statement, and what their respective reasoning was for each one. [NOTE: A kinesthetic alternative to using the handout for this activity would be to write the words “AGREE” and “DISAGREE” on sheets of paper and position them on different sides of the room. In this version of the activity, the statements from **Handout 3** would be read aloud to the students. Students would then use the physical area between the “AGREE” and “DISAGREE” signs as a spatial “agreement” continuum, moving to the spot in the room they feel best characterizes their thoughts for each statement.]
3. Once the statements from **Handout 3** have been explored, host a brief discussion with the class using the following questions to help guide the conversation.
  - a. Think about the aspects of your identity that led you to respond to each of the prompts in the manner you did. What experiences or information helped shape your responses to each statement? Do you have strong opinions about this? Why or why not?
  - b. What does it take for a person to have strong feelings or opinions about important issues such as the environment?
  - c. What inspires people to get involved in creating change when it comes to issues they feel are important?
  - d. How can you inspire someone to care deeply enough about important issues that it becomes part of their personal character?
4. Ask students to consider the intentions of Pope Francis in writing *Laudato Si'*. Ask the students if a deep concern for the environment is part of their own identity—their own environmental identity. Invite several students to share, recording the responses on the board.
5. Read the following passage from *Laudato Si'* aloud to the class, reminding the students that revisiting memories can often be helpful in shaping our identities and things that have personal meaning to us.

*Anyone who has grown up in the hills or used to sit by the spring to drink, or played outdoors in the neighbourhood square; going back to these places is a chance to recover something of their true selves. (Section 84)*
6. Divide students into pairs. Invite the students to share a memory with their partner of a favorite time in nature from earlier in their lives. After the students have shared with each other for several minutes, explain that they will explore the beliefs they hold about the environment by thinking about places and experiences that may have been instrumental in shaping these values.
7. Distribute a copy of **Handout 4: Illustrating an Identity**, blank paper, and markers or colored pencils to each student. Explain that they will be creating a visual expression of their environmental identity. Review the instructions for the activity on the handout and allow time for questions. Be sure to underscore the definitions of and unique differences between the experiences, actions, and values the students will be detailing as part of their work. Use the sample illustrations provided on **Teacher Resource 1** to clarify your points and reinforce student understanding of the assignment.

8. Give students the remainder of class to work on their illustrations. This activity can be completed over several in-class periods or assigned as homework, depending on the time available.
9. When students have completed their trees, invite them to share their finished work with each other and the class. Completed trees can be displayed in the classroom as ongoing reminders to students of their constantly evolving environmental identities.

### **Extension Activities**

#### **Sustainable Economic Design**

Invite students who worked together on the activity for **Handout 2: The Heart of the Matter** to design a business plan, product, or service to help mitigate the impact of the environmental or social issue they researched.

#### **Mock Community Forum**

Assign different roles to groups of students and conduct a mock community forum. Each group should address the following question through its own lens: What is our role in helping care for the environment? Roles might include government officials, community residents, tourists, teachers, local business owners, or scientists.

#### **Community Awareness**

To continue thinking about their impact on the environment, students could work in small groups to create awareness campaigns about some of the environmental concerns detailed in *Laudato Si'*. This activity could serve as an additional assessment for Part 1 or 2 of this lesson.



## Additional Resources

### Climate Change

Web Version of *Laudato Si'*

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

How to Talk to Kids About Climate Change

<https://www.npr.org/2019/10/22/772266241/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-climate-change>

EPA Climate Change

<https://www.epa.gov/climate-change>

### Global Water Crisis

UN Water Scarcity

<https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/scarcity/>

WWF Water Scarcity

<https://www.unicef.org/stories/water-and-climate-change-10-things-you-should-know>

### Biodiversity Loss

Biodiversity: Why the Nature Crisis Matters, in Five Graphics

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-54357899>

Biodiversity Loss in Numbers, the 2020 WWF Report

[https://earth.org/data\\_visualization/biodiversity-loss-in-numbers-the-2020-wwf-report/](https://earth.org/data_visualization/biodiversity-loss-in-numbers-the-2020-wwf-report/)

What is the Biodiversity Crisis?

<https://earthjustice.org/features/biodiversity-crisis#:~:text=There's%20still%20time%20to%20stop,the%20end%20of%20this%20century>

### Environmental Justice

History of Environmental Justice

<https://www.sierraclub.org/environmental-justice/history-environmental-justice>

Environmental Racism: What it is and How You Can Fight it

<https://www.climateRealityProject.org/blog/environmental-racism-what-it-and-how-you-can-fight-it>

10 Examples of Environmental Racism and How it Works

<https://www.yesmagazine.org/environment/2021/04/22/environmental-racism-examples>

Hope and Skepticism as Biden Promises to Address Environmental Racism

<https://www.npr.org/2021/01/29/956012329/hope-and-skepticism-as-biden-promises-to-address-environmental-racism>



Handout 2

## *Laudato Si'*, On Care for Our Common Home: An Introduction

**Directions:** Please read the introduction to Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'* (Sections 1–16) at [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html). Then, answer the questions below to the best of your ability.

1. Who is the audience for Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*? How do you know?
2. After reading this portion of *Laudato Si'*, what do you think Pope Francis is asking his audience to do?
3. In Section 1, Pope Francis compares our “common home” to a sibling and parent. What is the “common home” to which Pope Francis refers? Why do you think Pope Francis chose to compare this common home to a sibling and parent?
4. Above Section 3 are the words, “Nothing in this world is indifferent to us.” What do you think this means?
5. According to Pope Francis, how should we approach the relationship we have with the environment?
6. What did you learn after reading this portion of *Laudato Si'* that you did not know before?
7. Which passage from this portion of *Laudato Si'* feels most important to you? Why?
8. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = the least, 10 = the most), how high a priority do you think Pope Francis thinks we should give to caring for the environment?

**Handout 2**

# Heart of the Matter

Before you begin, please highlight or circle the portion of *Laudato Si'* by Pope Francis assigned to your group in the table below.

Reading Assignments by Section/Topic	Corresponding Paragraphs in <i>Laudato Si'</i>
Pollution and Climate Change	20-26
The Issue of Water	27-31
Loss of Biodiversity	32-42
Decline in the Quality of Human Life and the Breakdown of Society	43-47
Global Inequality	48-52
Weak Responses	53-59

1. Begin by reading and taking notes on your assigned section using the following link: [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html).
2. Research your assigned topic on the internet. Choose one recent article from a reputable source that highlights the critical environmental issue detailed in your section. Please provide the title and source of your article, as well as a brief summary in the space below.

**Article title and source:**

**Article summary: (use additional paper if necessary)**

3. Choose two passages from this section of the encyclical that you feel are most meaningful. Write each of the passages in the spaces for Passages 1–2 provided below. Please explain why you feel these passages are meaningful and list the paragraph number in *Laudato Si'* where they can be found.

**Meaningful passages from your assigned section of the encyclical**

**Passage 1:**

**Passage 2:**

4. Choose two more passages about the same topic you researched above from any portion of *Laudato Si'* beginning at Section 60. Please explain why you feel these passages are meaningful and list the paragraph number in *Laudato Si'* where they can be found.

**Meaningful passages from other sections of the encyclical**

**Passage 3:**

**Passage 4:**

**Handout 3 To Agree or Disagree? (That is the Question!)**

**Directions:** Please read each of the following statements and decide whether you agree or disagree with each statement or fall somewhere between. Mark the location along the “agreement” continuum provided for each prompt that best represents your thoughts. Be ready to share your reasons with the class.

- A. Destruction of the environment is an extremely serious problem.  
DISAGREE-----AGREE
  
- B. Damage to the environment is the result of irresponsible human behavior.  
DISAGREE-----AGREE
  
- C. It is the responsibility of all individual humans to care for the environment.  
DISAGREE-----AGREE
  
- D. Business and industry should take into account all environmental impacts associated with planning and policy.  
DISAGREE-----AGREE
  
- E. Caring for the environment is a moral responsibility.  
DISAGREE-----AGREE
  
- F. It is the responsibility of the government to care for the environment.  
DISAGREE-----AGREE
  
- G. Care for the environment should be required and/or enforced by law.  
DISAGREE-----AGREE
  
- H. Protection of the earth and of communities facing challenges due to poverty should be closely related.  
DISAGREE-----AGREE
  
- I. Humans are intrinsically good.  
DISAGREE-----AGREE

Handout 4

## Illustrating an Identity

Have you ever experienced a connection to nature? Why do you care about the environment? At what point in your life did a concern for the environment become important to you? You may always have appreciated the experiences you have had in nature, but you may also have been affected by news of environmental harm or injustice. *Consider this: When and how do values that people hold for the environment begin?*

By exploring the origins of our viewpoints and attitudes about the environment, we continue to learn while becoming inspired to help create positive change. This aspect of who we are is considered our “environmental identity.” For this assignment, you will create a visual expression of your environmental identity in the form of a tree.

**Directions:**

1. On the paper provided, design a tree that represents your environmental identity. Your tree should be original, in color, and unique. You can use real tree species as inspiration or create your own.
2. Your tree should include roots, branches with leaves, and a trunk.
3. For each part of your tree, add words and phrases that relate to elements of your environmental identity as detailed below.

**Roots:** This part of your tree will represent your environmental experiences. An experience is an event or an occurrence such as travel, a school project, or a community program that brought you in contact with the environment.

**Branches/Leaves:** This part of your tree will represent environmental actions you have taken. Actions are things you have completed or accomplished, like participating in a community service project or starting an environmental program at your school.

**Trunk:** This part of your tree will reflect the core values you hold surrounding the environment. A value is a principle or standard of behavior—a judgment of what you think is most important in your life. Consider aspects of environmental health that you find most essential.







# “It Is Not Just About Migrants”: The Appeal for a More Compassionate World

## Enduring Understandings

- A number of factors, including environmental degradation, political maneuvering, and open warfare, have caused people to flee from their homelands in search of a safer place to live.
- These migrants and refugees continue to experience great danger and difficulty in transit and upon arrival as they attempt to resettle in a new land.
- We are better prepared to assist refugees and migrants if we practice compassion and humility and make meaningful attempts to understand why these refugees are fleeing.
- Students can impact the world around them in both large and small ways as they connect to organizations that assist these displaced peoples.

## Essential Questions

- What caused these refugees and migrants to move from their homelands? Where did they resettle? Why did they end up there?
- How does being a refugee or migrant impact someone’s life?
- In what ways can students assist refugees or migrants in their own area or around the world?

## Notes to the Teacher

In this lesson, student groups research the reasons behind refugee crises in the world today and prepare presentations on the status of those refugees. As optional extensions they may interview someone who has immigrated to or sought refuge in their country, and/or complete a community service project that identifies and aids a local or global NGO that works with refugees.

*Francesco* director and producer Evgeny Afineevsky said, “I do feel that all my movies have been storytelling calls for action...It can be advocacy, it can be activism, and at the same time, it can be an action.” This lesson provides the steps needed for students to become well informed about refugee crises around the world today and to investigate ways they can follow in the footsteps of Pope Francis as they seek to understand and improve the lives of refugees and migrants in areas highlighted by the film *Francesco*. The cornerstones of this lesson are group presentations on the four major areas featured in this film as the origin points of refugees: Myanmar/the Rohingya people, Syria, the Central African Republic, and Central America. The lesson includes two optional extensions that may be used together or separately. They offer the opportunity to build compassion and understanding for refugees and migrants through oral histories and a community service project. Through all three parts of this lesson, students have the chance to experience advocacy, activism, and action.

If you have students in your school who are refugees, it would be best to talk with those students and their families about this lesson prior to beginning the work. Be sensitive to their personal experiences and find out in advance whether or not the students are comfortable talking about their personal journey in class.

The following statistics may be useful to you as you introduce the concept of refugees in your classroom in order to help students understand the prevalence of this situation, even if they do not have any personal experience with it. These statistics were found here: <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/statistics/>.

- 38–43% of people who were forcibly displaced at the end of 2019 were children under age 18. These children are five times as likely as their peers to be out of school.



- Syria accounts for the largest number of refugees in the world, with 6.6 million people displaced by mid-2020.
- By mid-2020, the UN Refugee Agency estimated that the number of people who had been forcibly displaced globally was 79.5 million—or approximately 1% of the world population, or the full population of Germany.

Part 1 of this lesson is foundational to Parts 2 and 3. If you are looking for opportunities for students to work independently, Part 2 should be included. The groups that are created in Part 1 can be used in Part 3, or you may wish to jigsaw the groups for Part 3.

The time required for Part 2: The optional oral history interview will vary greatly depending on your local community and whether you or your students are arranging the interviews. This part of the lesson could easily be an extension activity that would be due several weeks after the initial lesson is presented.

The time required for Part 3: The optional community service extension will vary widely based on the project selected. Teachers may wish to provide specific options that will best fit the time allowed, or to allow students more agency in determining the direction and scope of the project if more time is available.

*For more information on the movie, news and where you can watch it or get a copy for yourself, please go to: [www.francescofilm.com](http://www.francescofilm.com)*

#### Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1**

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4**

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8**

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1**

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.



### Duration of lesson

This is a three-part lesson. The first part is made up of the research and presentation component and requires three to four hours of class time. If only three hours are available, work may need to be assigned as homework.

The Part 2 activity will require outreach within your school or local community to find refugees or immigrants who are willing to be part of an oral history project. Depending on whether you have existing local refugee assistance organizations, and the local language proficiency of those refugees or immigrants, you may need to set aside time as the instructor to locate willing participants or to provide students with time to make those contacts themselves.

The Part 3 activity includes the planning and implementation of a service project, which will add additional time to the lesson depending on the extent and goals of the project. If there are time limitations, explain those at the beginning of the activity.

### Assessments

Class discussions  
Handouts  
Group presentations  
Optional oral history interview  
Optional community service project

### Materials needed

Access to library or devices with internet connection for research

**Handout 1: Refugees and Migrants: Where and Why?**

**Handout 2: Refugee/Immigrant Profile**

**Handout 3: Supporting Action for Refugees and Migrants**

### Procedure

#### Part 1: Refugees on the Move

1. Before viewing the movie *Francesco*, ask students to identify the locations they see refugees and migrants coming from as they watch the film, as well as some reasons these people were on the move. If they have already seen the film, you may wish to show the clip from 9:43 to 24:55 to help them record this information.
2. With the class, brainstorm a list of current refugee crises and the reasons for them; make a list on the board. Are there other reasons that were implied, but not directly referenced in the film? Add these to the list.

The brainstormed list should include at least the following areas:

- Syria
- Myanmar/Rohingya
- Central African Republic
- Central America

It should also include the following reasons:

- Religious persecution
- Political persecution
- Race/ethnic identity
- Ongoing warfare/violence
- Genocide
- Natural disasters, including droughts and floods
- Climate change
- Poverty
- Food insecurity

3. Tell students that they will be working on a group research project on one of these areas and that they will be making an 8- to 10-minute presentation to the class when it is complete.

4. Distribute a copy of **Handout 1: Refugees and Migrants: Where and Why?** to each student. Ask students to explain the differences between the terms “refugee” and “migrant.” (According to the UNHCR, the UN Refugee agency, refugees are “persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution.” Migrants choose to move “mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons.” You may wish to share information from the website at [www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-view-point-refugee-migrant-right.html](http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-view-point-refugee-migrant-right.html).)
  5. Explain that **Handout 1** is a chart designed for students to use as they research. Review the handout with students to be sure they understand their assignment.
  6. Divide students into teams and assign one of these refugee or migrant groups to each team: Rohingya (Myanmar), Syria, Central African Republic, Central America. Then allow time for students to do research using the library, computers, or their own devices, and to share the information they uncover with other members of the group. Stress that it is important for all students to participate fully in both the research phase and the presentation.
  7. Allow additional time for student groups to prepare their presentations and then to present their findings to the group. While each group is presenting, have the other students in class take notes on the refugee crises that they did not research themselves.
  8. Once all groups have presented, ask students to consider if there were any recurring themes in the presentations. For example, students should be able to recognize that refugees are of all ages, that their transit is often very dangerous, and that they arrive without many personal possessions.
  9. Explain to students that there are organizations that have been created to assist with these common issues. The organizations have many different goals, and their paths align with one or more of the common themes they identified together in their discussion. (If you choose to include the optional community service extension, go to the directions for Part 3 now.)
- Part 2: How does being a refugee or migrant impact one’s life? (Optional Oral History activity)
1. Prior to class, you will need to explore whether there are local refugees or other immigrants who are willing to talk to students about their journey. This can be an intensely personal request and some people will not be comfortable with it. If you are moving ahead with this assignment, it is essential to talk with students about being sensitive to the speaker(s) and understanding that they may not get answers to every question; they need to give their interviewees an opportunity to opt out of answering or take a break at any time. You may also wish to give students the option of finding an interviewee on their own.
  2. Explain to students that they will need to make an appointment to talk with their interviewee. It would be good to provide a basic list of questions to the interviewees in advance so that they understand the scope of questions and know that they can choose to skip questions if needed.
  3. Talk with students about active listening skills and the importance of giving their full attention to their interviewee. Provide copies of **Handout 2: Refugee/ Immigrant Profile** and explain that they should use it for notes and to guide their conversation. They may also wish to record the conversation (with the interviewee’s permission). If you wish to ensure that this conversation



is recorded permanently, you may wish to investigate the use of Story Corps' website (<https://storycorps.org/>) for this assignment. It allows conversations to be captured for the American Folklife Center and the Library of Congress.

4. Ask the students to provide a summary of the conversation as well as a transcription or recording of it. You may wish to create a classroom archive if you have chosen not to use the Story Corps platform.
5. Once all participating students have completed this exercise, discuss with the whole class what they were most surprised to learn, what common themes emerged, and what impact the conversation had on their understanding of the plight of refugees and migrants.

### Part 3: Helping refugees or migrants in your own area or around the world (Optional Community Service Activity)

1. Using an internet-connected device, ask students to search for organizations that provide relief to refugees and migrants. Give students ten minutes to find several organizations and make note of the names of the organizations, the groups they work with, and the issues they focus on. Then create a master list on the board. If you choose to skip this step, you may use the list below to get started. Be sure to add any local agencies that work with refugee resettlement, as well.
  - The UN Refugee Agency
  - International Rescue Committee
  - Refugees International
  - HIAS
  - Refugee Council USA
  - Preemptive Love
  - Amnesty International
  - Alight
  - Save the Children
  - Catholic Charities USA

2. Ask students to choose an organization that interests them and to research avenues that are available for them to help each organization. If students need additional time, the work in steps 1 and 2 can be completed as homework, or another class day may be devoted to research and presentation preparation.
3. Divide students into their presentation groups from Part 1 or jigsaw them into new groups. Ask each group to think about the themes and discussions from the previous classes.
4. Direct each group to complete **Handout 3**. Unless your goal is to create a long-term program, encourage them to consider specific ways in which they can provide help to refugees in a single project or volunteer action. What resources will they need? Do they have the access to those resources? Students should consider if the resources that they have access to are sufficient to complete a service project.
5. Have each group present its idea to the class. Discuss whether the plan can be executed with the time and resources that are available. Develop consensus around one plan where there is an identified need, available resources, a partner organization, and student enthusiasm.

At this point, you may wish to continue planning work in class or move it to an outside time. Students should arrange to present their Service Project Plan to the school's student government association or the school administration in order to get approval for their project, if it is required. Once a project is approved, allow students to lead the effort. Teachers are encouraged to be a guide on the side, advising but not coordinating so that students maintain ownership of the project.

Once the project has been completed, you may wish to ask students to respond to the following prompt: How can students effectively take action to alleviate the difficulties faced by refugees and migrants?

**Handout 1**

# Refugees and Migrants: Where and Why?

**Directions:** Complete this chart to ensure that you cover the topics required for your presentation. Use additional paper if necessary.

Name of people or region you are researching \_\_\_\_\_

Name and geographic location of homeland	
Location of a map you can share with the class	
Reasons for migrating or seeking refuge	
Where have these refugees or migrants gone to seek safety? How did they get there?	
What is daily life like for these refugees or migrants?	
Given this information, would you consider these people to be refugees or migrants or both? Why?	
What are the impacts of this migration on local communities, regions, countries, and the world?	
What long-term problems will be created if there are no solutions for the issues that drove the migration?	



**Handout 1**

# Refugees and Migrants: Where and Why?

Once you have completed your research, work with your group to prepare a PowerPoint or other visual display which includes:

- A map of the location
- Images of the homeland and of the areas where refuge has been sought
- Images that show the journey from one destination to the other
- Images that will help bring the refugee/migrant experience to life.

**Handout 2**

# Refugee/Immigrant Profile

Use the space provided to take notes during your oral history interview.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Interview questions:**

Where are you originally from?

Where do you live now?

Why did you leave/were you displaced?

Who made the decision to leave?

Who left with you?

Did any family members stay behind?

Where did you go?

How did you get there?

What preparations did you make before you left?

What do you remember about the journey?

When you arrived at your initial destination, what did you find?

How is life in the new location different from that in your homeland?

What facilities were available to you upon arrival? (bed, food, self-care facilities/items, clothing and shoes, education, social workers, employment/employment assistance, etc.)

How long did you stay in that location? Were you offered resettlement elsewhere or did you rely on temporary housing for an extended amount of time?

Have you begun to feel hopeful for the future rather than fear or trepidation? If so, when did this feeling begin?

If you could change one thing about this journey, what would it be?

Tell me a story about something unexpected that happened at any point on your journey.

Is your life now different from the one you imagined when you left your home?

Imagine future generations of your family listening to this interview years from now. Is there any wisdom you want to pass on to them? What would you want them to know?



**Handout 3**

# Supporting Action for Refugees and Immigrants

It's now time to create a service project of your own that will bring support and relief to refugees and migrants. As you learned in *Francesco*, it is essential to bring assistance and attention to the refugees and migrants of the world. Based on the region/people your group is focused on, what organizations that you have learned about may provide effective partnerships for bringing attention or relief to these people? Discuss the options and choose one organization that you would most like to work with. When you have finished, be prepared to share your proposal with the class.

What resources are needed by this organization to fulfill their mission?

How can you help provide access to these resources? Be creative as you consider the answer to this question. Remember that Pope Francis sent a clear message about compassion just by washing the feet of refugees.

Do you need to seek permission or a local partnership before you begin? If yes, who will do this?

How will you know that you have successfully completed the project?

What steps will need to be taken to complete the project? Include specific tasks. (You may need to continue on a separate sheet.)

# Genocide—Past, Present, and Future

## Enduring Understandings

- Genocide is a crime intended to destroy—in whole or in part—a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.
- Recent acts of genocide are ongoing and difficult to resolve.
- Pope Francis quietly tries to find solutions to the problem of genocide by building bridges, not walls.

## Essential Questions

- What actions of the past can be considered genocide according to international law?
- Are recent acts of violence classified as genocide under international law?
- What impact has Pope Francis had on raising international awareness about genocide?

## Notes to the Teacher

Jorge Mario Bergoglio had always admired St. Francis of Assisi, a humble man of the Middle Ages, and when elected as pope by the College of Cardinals in 2013, he took the name of Francis as his own. Like St. Francis, Pope Francis has deep respect for the poor, the environment, and all that is God’s creation.

The film *Francesco* examines Pope Francis’ intense dedication to all these areas and more. The documentary examines some of the greatest crises facing not only the Roman Catholic Church but the wider world as well. Interviews with Pope Francis and stunning film footage make these issues very real to the viewer.

One of the most critical areas explored in the film is genocide, from the Armenian atrocity of the early 20th century and the Shoah (Holocaust) in Europe under Nazism to today’s persecution of the Rohingya (pronounced ro-HIN-ja) in Myanmar that has created a humanitarian crisis. Through these issues, Pope Francis quietly tries to find solutions and, as he says, build bridges, not walls.

This lesson includes activities in which students learn about the history of genocide going back several centuries, a history that Pope Francis has made it his mission to address. In the first activity, students will examine key sections from the “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,” an international agreement that defines the criteria for determining genocide. They will then compare this with nine cases of possible genocide in history and determine if they fall under the criteria defined in the “Convention” document. This activity will help students understand the basic concepts and context of genocide: What is it? Why is it done? What is the result and impact?

In Part 2, students will also examine video news reports of more recent alleged genocides and discuss key issues surrounding these events. Students will also develop news updates on these issues. [NOTE: Some of the videos may be disturbing to some students. You are encouraged to preview the videos to be sure they are appropriate for your classes. Be especially cautious if you have some students in your classes who might be particularly sensitive because of their own history.]

In the third activity, students will view two clips from the film *Francesco*, one that explores the Armenian genocide of 1905, and one that examines the more recent persecution of the Rohingya at the hands of the Myanmar military. The video segments reveal Pope Francis' public recognition of these events as genocides and the impact he has on the people involved. Students will review the segments through discussion questions. You have the option of placing students in small groups or having them complete the activity independently.

Here are some additional online resources on genocide that you may find helpful for background information or additional research:

- US Holocaust Memorial Museum: What is Genocide? <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/learn-about-genocide-and-other-mass-atrocities/what-is-genocide>
- Genocide watch <https://www.genocidewatch.com/countries-at-risk>
- Our World in Data: "Genocides in the 20th century" <https://ourworldindata.org/genocides>
- UN Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility Project <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

*For more information on the movie, news and where you can watch it or get a copy for yourself, please go to: [www.francescofilm.com](http://www.francescofilm.com)*

#### Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1**

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3**

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7**

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.



### Duration of lesson

Two to three class periods, plus time to research and discussions.

### Assessments

Class discussion

Research answers (written or oral) on individual incidents of genocide (**Handout 1**)

Report on ethnic violence today (**Handout 2**)

Written answers to post-viewing questions (**Handout 3**)

### Materials needed

Copies of **Handouts 1–3**

Computer access for research

World map (on wall or projected)

### Procedure

#### Part 1: What is Genocide?

1. Whether you showed the film previously to students or not, start with these warm-up questions: What do you know about genocide? Why does it happen? What are some examples? Explain to students that this is a difficult lesson for both teacher and students. Encourage them to tell you if they are really struggling and be prepared to give them an alternate assignment.
2. Divide students into nine small groups. Distribute copies of **Handout 1: What is Genocide?** to each group. Explain to students that each group will be examining one of the following historical acts of genocide.
  - The Transatlantic Slave Trade—1450s to 1860s
  - Genocide of Native Americans—1830s to 1890s
  - Armenian Genocide—1915 to 1918.
  - The Ukrainian Genocide/The Great Famine—1932 to 1933
  - The Rape of Nanking—1937
  - The Holocaust—1938 to 1945

- Killing Fields in Cambodia—1975 to 1979
- Bosnia—1992 to 1995
- Rwanda and Darfur—1994

3. Have each group select one of the historical events or assign one to each group.
4. Ask students to complete steps 1–3 on the handout, using computers or other devices.
5. Have students review Articles I, II, and III of the “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crimeofgenocide.aspx>. Review these articles with them to be sure they understand, offering clarification if necessary.
6. Ask students to analyze their event, using the articles in the “Convention.” Then have them complete steps 4 and 5 on the handout, either in discussion or in writing.

#### Part 2: Genocide Today

1. Tell students that in this activity they will be examining news reports of recent acts of violence that could be considered genocide.
2. With the full class, use a world map to locate the countries involved in the news report titles.
3. Divide the class into five groups. Distribute copies of **Handout 2** to each group and either ask students to select one of the recent events or assign one to each group.
4. Have students follow the viewing instructions on their handouts and provide time for them to complete the assignment.

5. Have each group report their findings to the class.
6. Conclude this part of the lesson by asking students if they think that genocide is more or less common today than it was in the past. Ask them to give reasons for their answers.

### Part 3: Pope Francis Speaks of Genocide

1. Explain to students that they are going to learn of Pope Francis' efforts to address genocide in both Armenia and Myanmar, as depicted in the film *Francesco*.
2. Distribute copies of **Handout 3: Pope Francis Takes on Genocide in Armenia and Myanmar**.
3. Work through the pre-viewing questions with students, either with the full class or with small groups.
4. Read aloud #2 on the handout and explain to students that you expect them to take notes on these topics. Offer to show the clip several times if they think it is necessary.
5. Show the following clip: The Armenian Genocide (1:15:06–1:20:01)
  - INTRO: (Photo of bombed out city) "In 1915, the Turkish government couldn't accept the Armenian community in Turkey..."
  - EXIT: (Pope Francis speaking) "...Your sufferings are our own: not to forget them is not only a right, it is a duty."
6. Give students time to respond to the post-viewing questions on the handout. You can have students answer the post-viewing questions in small groups or in full class, or they may complete the questions as a written assignment. When they have had enough time, ask them to share their answers.

### Possible answers for Handout Question 3:

- In what ways do the Turkish acts of violence in 1915 seem like acts of genocide as defined by the United Nations' "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide"? In what ways do they not seem like genocide?

*Possible answers: Ways the Turkish actions seemed like genocide: The Turkish government targeted specific members of the group and caused serious bodily harm to its members. The Turks deliberately forced Armenians out of the towns and placed them in the desert with the intent to destroy the group. Ways the actions don't seem like genocide: The Turks claim that they were only defending themselves.*

- Why do you think the current Turkish government refuses to recognize the tragedy of the Armenians? What might happen if Turkey did recognize this as a genocide? What might happen if it doesn't?

*Possible answers: The Turkish government might think the actions of the past were justified and see it not as a tragedy but as a matter of self-defense. If Turkey did recognize the actions as genocide, it might have to pay reparations to the surviving Armenians. If it doesn't recognize the actions as genocide, it might be in danger of repeating them against Armenians or some other ethnic group.*

- Do you think the pope's trip to Armenia and his declaring the 1915 tragedy a genocide was an act of bravery? Why or why not?

*Answers will vary. In either case, students should support their answers by describing his actions and explaining whether they are brave or not.*



- From the film segment, review the pope’s statement on the 1915 Armenian devastation below. What do these words mean to you?

*Answers will vary.*

7. Read aloud #4 on the handout and remind students that you expect them to take notes on these topics. Offer again to show the clip several times if they think it is necessary.
8. Show the following clip: Myanmar’s crimes against the Rohingya (1:24:27–1:34:06)
  - INTRO: (Graphics of newspaper headlines. Rohingya refugee speaking) “They killed my mother, they killed my father...”
  - EXIT: “...For that, we pray a lot for Pope Francis.” Give students time to respond to the post-viewing questions on the handout. Then have them share their answers.

Possible answers for Handout Question 5:

- How does seeing and listening to the testimonials of the Rohingya describing their plight have more impact than just reading a description of their persecution?

*Answers will vary depending on individual student’s reaction, but should include that hearing people’s voices and seeing their faces allows one to understand their emotions better than simple factual statements.*

- Describe the tense political atmosphere that Pope Francis experienced when he met with Myanmar’s prime minister and the Buddhist officials. How was this similar to the Turkish government’s position on recognizing Armenian genocide?

*Answers should point out that the Myanmar’s*

*prime minister and the government wouldn’t even let Pope Francis utter the word “Rohingya.” This made it difficult to talk about their condition. Just as the Turkish government did not recognize the Armenian genocide, the Myanmar government is in complete denial of their treatment of the Rohingya people.*

- Describe what happened when Pope Francis met with 15 Rohingya refugees. Why did he “get a little angry” at some officials? What was his message to them?

*Possible answers: When the pope spoke to the 15 Rohingya refugees, he apologized to them for not being able to speak their name when he was in Myanmar. Then they started to give testimony about their horrible experiences in Myanmar and their escape into Bangladesh. They cried and Pope Francis began to cry. When the embarrassed officials tried to escort the refugees away, the pope got angry and demanded that they be treated with respect.*

- Describe the impact of Pope Francis’ visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh.

*Answers will vary but should cite examples from the film clip that support their answers.*

9. Ask students: Can you suggest anything else that Pope Francis might do to stop genocides from occurring or to help their victims?

## Handout 1

# What is Genocide?

The word “genocide” was first coined in 1944 by Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin as he sought to describe Nazi policies of systematic murder during the Holocaust. He formed the word genocide by combining “geno” (Greek for race or tribe) with “cide” (Latin for killing).

In 1948, the United Nations approved an international agreement known as the “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.” This convention established genocide as an international crime, and all convention participants who signed the document agreed to prevent it and punish those who commit genocide. It can be found at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crimeofgenocide.aspx>.

After your group has chosen or been assigned a historical genocide to investigate, go to the Genocide Education Project’s listing of Modern Era Genocides. (<https://genocideeducation.org/resources/modern-era-genocides/>). Review the details of the events you are investigating. Discuss with your group members what happened in the incident and take notes on your discussion.

Now go to the website “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.” (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crimeofgenocide.aspx>). Read Articles I, II, and III.

Review the list of acts of genocide in Articles II, Sections a–e. Which of these acts would apply to the actions taken during the genocide you are examining? Which would not?

Review Article III on punishable acts. Do you believe the actions taken by the perpetrators against the victims in your historical example are acts of genocide and should be punished? Provide evidence from the genocide articles that supports your conclusion.

### Historical Acts of Genocide

- The Transatlantic Slave Trade—1450s to 1860s
- Genocide of Native Americans—1830s to 1890s
- Armenian Genocide—1915 to 1918
- The Ukrainian Genocide/The Great Famine—1932 to 1933
- The Rape of Nanking—1937
- The Holocaust—1938 to 1945
- Killing Fields in Cambodia—1975 to 1979
- Bosnia—1992 to 1995
- Rwanda and Darfur—1994

Handout 2

## Ethnic Violence in Today's World

In this activity, you will be examining news reports of recent acts of violence that could be considered genocide.

1. Find each country featured in the news reports below on a world map.
2. Go to your assigned news report below. Read the briefing description and watch the video. Take notes on the circumstances that led to the conflict, the acts of violence committed, and the view of whether this act was genocide.
3. After viewing the news report, answer the following questions:
  - What were the background circumstances that led to the conflict in this event?
  - What was the spark that ignited these acts of violence?
  - Refer to the actions that qualify as genocide from Part 1 of this lesson. Are any of these actions present in these events? Explain.
  - Do you feel this event qualifies as a genocide? Explain why or why not, using evidence from the news report and the information from **Handout 1**.
4. Do some internet research on the current status of the situation covered in your news report. Write an update that answers the following questions:
  - Describe the current situation as it is today. Have things improved or gotten worse for the persecuted people? Explain.
  - Has the international community done anything to address the situation? If it has, describe the action and the impact. If not, why not?
  - What more do you think needs to be done? If your country is not already involved, should it step in? If so, how? If not, why not?
5. Compile all your answers into a report and be prepared to share your findings with the class.

### News Reports:

- The Rohingya in Myanmar (2017) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04axDDRvY\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04axDDRvY_o)

#### Brief Description:

The Rohingya are a Muslim minority group living in Myanmar, which is predominantly Buddhist. They have faced institutionalized discrimination and persecution for decades. In 2017, the Myanmar government launched a military campaign forcing 700,000 Rohingya to flee to neighboring Bangladesh.

- The Nuer in South Sudan (2014) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g074zYIr410>

#### Brief Description:

South Sudan is the world's youngest nation. The region has been in conflict since 1955, when rebel groups in the south began fighting the northern government for independence. In 2011, South Sudan declared independence from Sudan. Ethnic differences fueled animosity between the majority African Christians in the north and the minority Arab Muslims, the Nuer. Concentration of political power in the north led to exclusion of the southern Sudanese from the democratic process.



**Handout 2**

# Ethnic Violence in Today's World

- Christians and Yazidis in Iraq and Syria (2014–2019) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8o9dDGfFew>

**Brief Description:**

In June 2014, the Islamic State (ISIS or ISIL to the West, and Daesh to Arabic speakers) established a caliphate (a government under Muslim rule) in regions of Syria and Iraq. Christians were given the choice to convert and pay taxes, leave the area, or be killed. The Yazidis are an ethnoreligious group who practice elements of Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism. Living in the Sinhar region of northwestern Iraq, the Yazidis were left unprotected when Kurdish forces withdrew from the region. ISIS forces invaded. Over 200,000 Yazidis tried to flee but were quickly besieged by ISIS. Stranded in the heat, hundreds of Yazidis died from dehydration, malnutrition, and suicide.

- Christians and Muslims in the Central African Republic (2016) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvxFbcA8MEQ>

**Brief Description:**

What began as a political struggle in 2003 between two leaders, one Christian and the other Muslim, has expanded into a major conflict after Muslim militia groups ousted the Christian president. Soon after a ceasefire in 2011, Christian militia targeted and killed Muslim civilians while Muslim rebel groups attacked Christian civilians. UN and French troops were sent in, but the violence continued amid the humanitarian fallout.

- Darfuris in Sudan (2008–2021) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8\\_o6mzsX0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8_o6mzsX0)

**Brief Description:**

Separate from the conflict in South Sudan, there was another conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan. Located in West Sudan, Darfur is populated primarily by farmers. In 2003, rebels from this region launched an insurrection to protest poor treatment by the Sudanese government that supported the Arab population, composed primarily of herders. In response, the Sudanese government equipped and supported Arab militias, known as the Janjaweed, to fight against the Darfur rebels. The Janjaweed have attacked the Darfur civilian settlement, killing men and women, and kidnapping children.

**Handout 3**

# Pope Francis Takes on Genocide in Armenia and Myanmar

In this activity, you will learn of Pope Francis' efforts to address genocide in both Armenia and Myanmar, as depicted in the film *Francesco*.

1. Discuss the following pre-viewing questions before watching both film segments.
  - Define the term genocide in your own words.
  - Why do genocides occur?
  - Why might it be difficult to determine whether one group's violence against another is an act of genocide?
2. In the film *Francesco*, view the segment on the Armenian genocide (1:15:06–1:20:01). Watch the video segment carefully and read the subtitles. As you watch, take notes on the following points:
  - The history of the Armenian genocide.
  - The current Turkish position on the Armenian issue that occurred over 105 years ago.
  - Pope Francis' visit to Armenia and what he did there.
  - The importance of the pope calling the Armenian atrocity a genocide.

If necessary, ask your teacher to show the clip more than once.

3. Answer the follow post-viewing questions on the Armenian genocide:
  - In what ways do the Turkish acts of violence in 1915 seem like acts of genocide as defined by the United Nations' "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide"? In what ways do they not seem like genocide?
  - Why do you think the current Turkish government refuses to recognize the tragedy of the Armenians? What might happen if Turkey did recognize this as a genocide? What might happen if it doesn't?
  - Do you think the pope's trip to Armenia and his declaring the 1915 tragedy a genocide was an act of bravery? Why or why not?
  - From the film segment, review the pope's statement on the 1915 Armenian devastation below. What do these words mean to you?

*The immense and senseless extermination remains in our memory and burns in the heart. Your sufferings are our own: not to forget them is not only a right, it is a duty.*

## Handout 3

## Pope Francis Takes on Genocide in Armenia and Myanmar

4. In the film *Francesco*, view the segment on Myanmar's crimes against the Rohingya (1:24:27–1:34:06). Watch the video segment carefully and read the subtitles. Take notes on the following:
  - The testimonials of Rohingya who lived through the atrocities of the Myanmar military.
  - The tense political atmosphere when the pope travels to Myanmar to speak with Prime Minister San Suu Kyi and meet with Buddhist officials. Pay close attention to what happens at each meeting.
  - The pope's travels to Bangladesh to meet with the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed. She explains her reasons for taking in so many Rohingya even though Bangladesh is a very poor country.
  - Pope Francis' meeting with 15 Rohingya refugees, hearing their stories and privately weeping for them. He speaks of the need to respect these people.
  - The impact of Pope Francis' visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh.
  
5. Answer the follow post-viewing questions on the Rohingya:
  - How does seeing and listening to the testimonials of the Rohingya describing their plight have more impact than just reading a description of their persecution?
  
  - Describe the tense political atmosphere that Pope Francis experienced when he met with Myanmar's prime minister and the Buddhist officials. How was this similar to the Turkish government's position on recognizing Armenian genocide?
  
  - What are the difficulties Bangladesh's prime minister and her country face in taking in Rohingya refugees? Why does Bangladesh continue to take in these refugees?
  
  - Describe what happens when Pope Francis meets with 15 Rohingya refugees. Why did he "get a little angry" at some officials? What was his message to them?
  
  - Describe the impact of Pope Francis' visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh.

# The Children of Abraham

## Enduring Understandings

- Abraham is considered a patriarch or founder in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. That is why these three religions are called “Abrahamic.”
- Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all originated in the Middle East, and they have much in common.
- Pope Francis has worked with leaders of Judaism and Islam to promote peace.

## Essential Questions

- Who was Abraham?
- What are the similarities between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam?
- What are the differences between these major Abrahamic religions?
- What are the key ideas in the “Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together”?
- What did Pope Francis demonstrate on his visit to Jerusalem?

## Notes to the Teacher

In the movie *Francesco*, we see Pope Francis reaching out to the Islamic world in a number of different situations, including a visit to Iraq, where he met with Muslim leaders. In Abu Dhabi in 2019, he signed a joint statement with Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, that outlined how different faiths can live peaceably in the same world and areas. It was called “The Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together.” He has also reached out to the world of Judaism, visiting important locations in Jerusalem, like the Wailing Wall and Yad Vashem, and maintaining friendships with rabbis, some of whom appear in the film. In this lesson, students learn about the common ancestry of the three great monotheistic religions, how they diverged from one another, and Pope Francis’ efforts to see commonalities today in spite of divisive geopolitical issues.

In the film, Pope Francis refuses to treat all Muslims as terrorists. When he visits a mosque in the Central African Republic, he takes his shoes off and treats Islamic traditions with respect. He states with humility, “One cannot write off a religion because of their fundamentalists... We all come from Abraham. Jewish, Muslim—we must reach out as much as possible. Islam is hurting from terrorist groups, diehard groups, terrorists...but we Christians also have fundamentalists” (46:16–49:34).

Before teaching Part 1 of this lesson, you should read an article published by the British Library in which University of Oxford professor Anna Sapir Abulafia explores how the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religions revere Abraham as the founder of their faith, in different ways, and how he shows up in their sacred texts. The article includes beautifully illustrated manuscripts from the museum and can be found at <https://www.bl.uk/sacred-texts/articles/the-abrahamic-religions#>.

If you are not sure of your knowledge about Abraham, a simple biography can be found at <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham>.

In Part 1 of the lesson, students read an internet article from PBS about the three great Abrahamic religions. For most classes, it is best to read this aloud together with your students, proceeding slowly and answering questions as you read, but it can be assigned for homework if time is limited. Then students construct a Venn diagram in small groups, looking for similarities and differences in the three faiths. They share their diagram information and then discuss how their knowledge base about these three world religions has changed because of this exercise.

Part 2 is concerned with a passage from the “Document on Human Fraternity.” The movie *Francesco* briefly shows Pope Francis in the United Arab Emirates on February 4, 2019. He spoke at a newly developed “Abrahamic Family House,” the purpose of which is to promote peaceful dialogue among the religions; it was started by representatives of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. While he was there, he and

Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb signed the “The Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together.” The whole document can be found here: [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/pa-pa-francesco\\_20190204\\_documento-fratellanza-umana.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/pa-pa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html)

Part 3 begins with a film clip showing the visit by Pope Francis to Jerusalem in 2014 (49:38–55:13). The two men joining Pope Francis are friends from Buenos Aires with whom the pope frequently collaborated when he was Archbishop, then Cardinal: Rabbi Abraham Skorka, former rector of the Latin American Rabbinical Seminary in Buenos Aires; and Sheikh Omar Abboud, a former secretary-general of the Islamic Center of Argentina. These friends had long ago developed a bond of brotherhood and supported each other. His purpose in the trip was not only to visit sacred sites but to encourage communication among members of the three faiths.

In this lesson, students will watch the clip that shows the pope flying over the wall that separates the Israeli and Palestinian territories, and stopping in front of the wall that divides the cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem—that is, the territory corresponding to the Palestinian Authority and the territory corresponding to Israel. That wall is covered by graffiti on the Palestinian side. Students will also see Pope Francis visiting the Wailing Wall, a holy place in Judaism. Students will discuss quotes from a Jewish rabbi and an Islamic leader who are good friends of Pope Francis from Buenos Aires. Finally, they will write an essay responding to a quote about Pope Francis made by Sheikh Abboud.

If you have any concerns about how to teach about a religious topic in a public school, this booklet from the First Amendment Center, “A Teacher’s Guide to Religion in the Public Schools,” will be of great help: <https://www.religiousfreedomcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/teachersguide.pdf>.

*For more information on the movie, news and where you can watch it or get a copy for yourself, please go to: [www.francescofilm.com](http://www.francescofilm.com)*

### Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1**

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2**

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1**

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2**

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.3**

Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2**

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.4**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)



### Duration of lesson

4–5 class periods, plus time to view full film if necessary

### Assessments

Completion of Venn diagram about the Abrahamic faiths on **Handout 1**

Journal entries

Class discussion of ideas to support the “Document on Human Fraternity”

Essay

### Materials needed

Computer access or printed copies of the first five pages of the website at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/global-connections/mideast/themes/religion/index.html>.

**Handout 1: The Children of Abraham: A Venn Diagram**

**Teacher Resource 1: The Children of Abraham: A Venn Diagram** (Possible Answers)

**Handout 2: The Document on Human Fraternity**

**Handout 3: Essay Prompt and Pre-Writing**

### Procedure

#### Part 1: Children of Abraham

1. Ask students to write in their journals for 5–10 minutes about what they know about Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.
2. Hold a discussion in class about what they have written:
  - What are the first words that come to mind about each one?
  - How do the faiths differ?
  - What do they have in common?
  - What impressions do you get about these faiths from current events or the media?
3. If students have not yet seen *Francesco*, you may wish to show them the full film at this time. If they have already viewed the film, explain that you are going to show them a clip about Pope Francis visiting a city in the Central African Republic where there has been fighting between Christians and Muslims. Point out the location of the Central African Republic on a map and then show the clip at 43:44–49:34.
4. Tell students to access the website “Religion: Three Religions, One God” at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/mideast/themes/religion/index.html>. Have students read through each section of the website and take notes about each group in their journals. Alternately, have students read the information on the website aloud, and give them time at the end of each section to jot down new information gleaned from their reading.
5. Fill in their understanding with information about Abraham from your own knowledge and the reading suggested in Notes to the Teacher, above. Point out that this is why the three religions are called “Abrahamic.”

6. If necessary, review the concept of a Venn diagram. Then distribute copies of **Handout 1: The Children of Abraham: A Venn Diagram**. Divide students into groups of three or four and have them fill in the Venn diagram of the Abrahamic religions on the handout using the information they have gleaned from the article and their prior knowledge. A sample Venn diagram answer sheet may be found on **Teacher Resource 1**. Note that students may have additional answers beyond the ones provided on the answer sheet.
7. Bring the class together to discuss possible answers for the Venn diagram. You may wish to draw a large Venn diagram on the board and then fill in the answers suggested by students.
8. Conclude the lesson by discussing the following questions:
  - What were your views of Christianity, Judaism, and/or Islam before watching the film or reading the article?
  - What has been added to your view that may be new for you? What ideas have been changed?
  - How is it possible that three religions with a common origin can have such bitter conflict and even persecution of each other?
  - How could their common nature help in the pursuit of mutual respect and dialogue?
2. Distribute copies of **Handout 2: The Document on Human Fraternity**. Have students read through the document as suggested, circling words that they don't understand and highlighting what they think are key words and phrases. When they have finished the two questions, pause to review any unfamiliar vocabulary words. Then review answers to the two questions.
 

*Possible answers:*

  1. *To foster more dialogue among leaders of goodwill who want to help humanity.*
  2. *Poverty, war, extremism, refugees, homelessness, self-destruction, etc.*
3. Arrange students in groups of three to five. Have each student group choose one or two of the major problems mentioned. (Poverty, war, extremism, refugees, homelessness, self-destruction, etc.) Next, ask them to brainstorm some concrete actions that people could take to improve these situations. (Examples from the film: Pope Francis went to Greece to see refugees from Syria and brought three families to the Vatican with him. He went to Bangladesh to visit Rohingya refugees. In both cases, the refugees were amazed that he came to visit them and treated them as full human beings. His outreach brought concrete action that improved their lives.)

Part 2: Common Humanity: Document on Human Fraternity

1. Write the word "Fraternity" on the board and ask students to define it. If they suggest university fraternities, push them to explain why these student groups identify with that word. Share the etymology: "Fraternity" comes from the Latin word *frater*, which means "brother."
4. Bring the class together again and ask one or two representatives from each small group to present the problem they chose and the possible solutions, and to share a brief summary of how the group came up with those ideas.
5. Conclude the lesson by discussing whether the proposed ideas really could help people live together in peace.





### Part 3: Building Bridges by Building Relationships

1. Write the words “wall” and “bridge” on the board and ask students what the purpose of each one is. (A wall usually exists to keep people out, but can sometimes be used to keep people contained within. A bridge exists to join two land masses and consequently provides access to other groups of people.) Ask students to think of famous walls in history. (Berlin Wall, Great Wall of China, Hadrian’s Wall, the wall at the southern border of the United States). Ask them to name several local bridges they have used and what their world would be like without them.
2. Show the clip at 49:38–55:13.
3. Read aloud the following quote from the clip by Sheikh Omar Abboud:

We in Argentina have no problem with interreligious coexistence because we had an Archbishop who built a preventative construct, a preventative dialogue. Living in peace needs creative gestures. When it seems they are least needed is when they are most needed. Francis is a proactive relationship builder, using creative gestures. The photo of us in Jerusalem was not new but a recreation of many meetings we had in Buenos Aires.

Then read the quote from Rabbi Daniel Goldman:

People ask me how began our relationship. He pulled my leg regarding football. He took the time to joke with me. For this kind of making bridges, Bergoglio is an expert, a genius.

(If students are confused about the reference to “Bergoglio,” remind them that Pope Francis was born as Jorge Mario Bergoglio; he assumed the name Francis when he became pope.)

4. Ask students what they think Pope Francis is trying to accomplish by building such relationships. Do you think he will be successful?
5. Distribute **Handout 3: Essay Prompt and Pre-Writing**. Ask students to think back on what they have learned in this lesson and to brainstorm what they would like to say in this essay using the questions on the handout and any others they would like to add. Then follow your usual procedure for drafting, revising, and proof-reading essays.



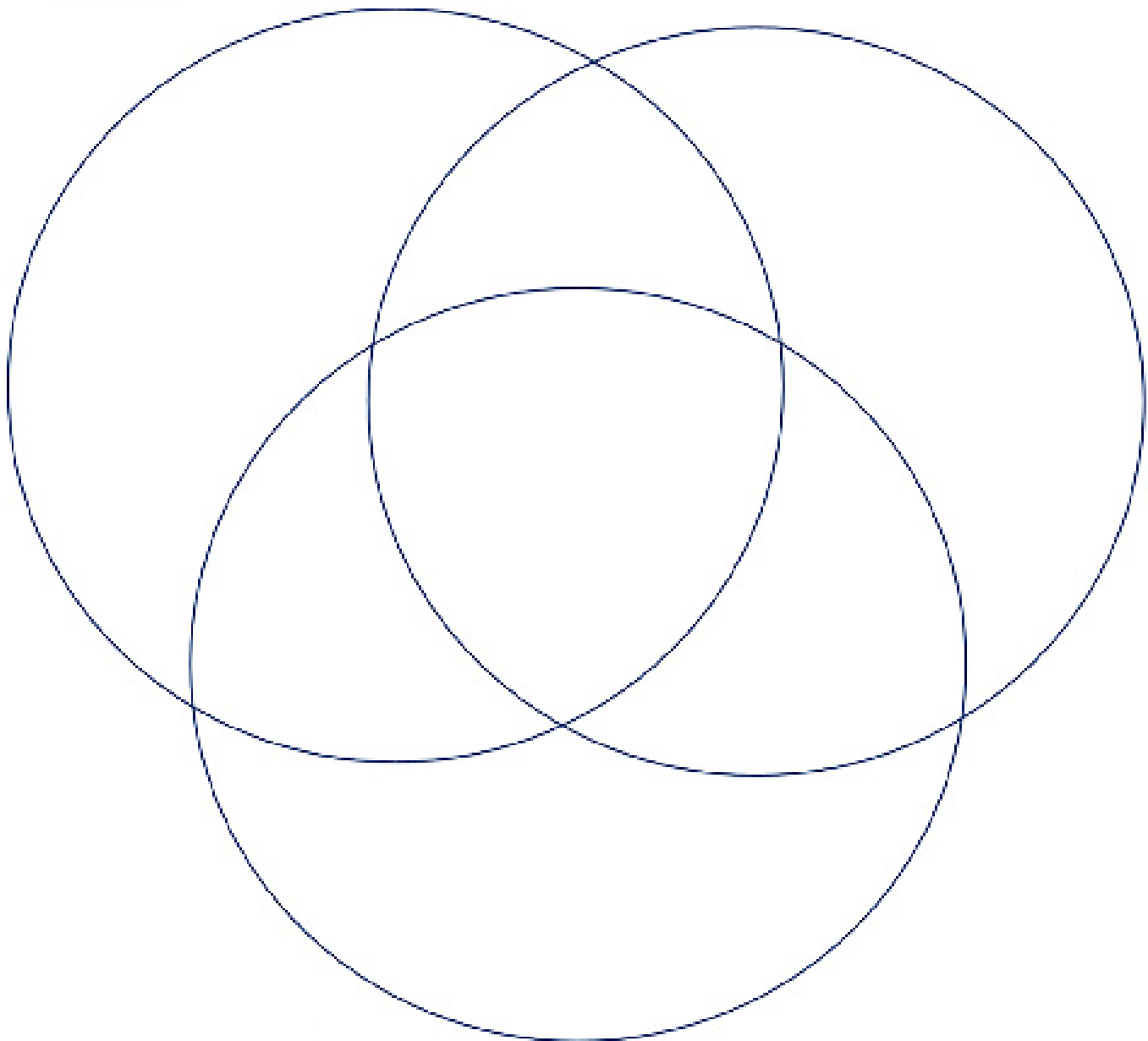
**Handout 1**

# The Children of Abraham: A Venn Diagram

Directions: In the diagram below, write brief notes about information that you have learned about the similarities and differences between the three major Abrahamic traditions. Fill in the things that are distinct to one religion in the outer parts of the circles.

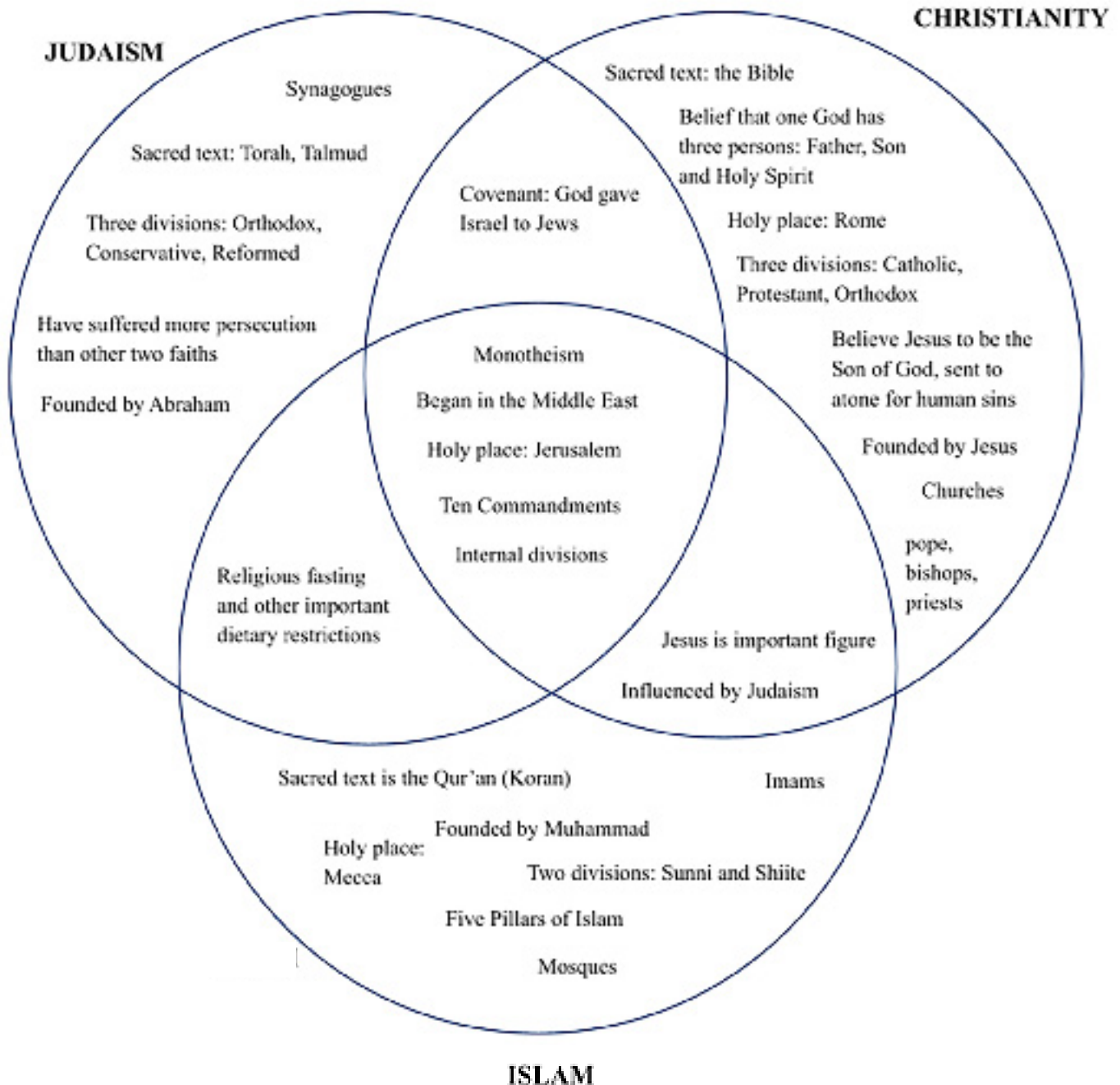
**JUDAISM**

**CHRISTIANITY**



**ISLAM**

**Teacher Resource 1**    **The Children of Abraham:  
A Venn Diagram (Possible Answers)**



## Handout 2 **The Document on Human Fraternity**

Directions: Read the passage below carefully. It comes from the “Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together” signed in 2019 by Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. As you read, circle any words you don’t understand. Then re-read it and highlight or underline what you think are the most important words or phrases in the document. When you have completed that, answer the questions at the end of the passage.

In the name of the poor, the destitute, the marginalized and those most in need whom God has commanded us to help as a duty required of all persons, especially the wealthy and of means;

In the name of orphans, widows, refugees and those exiled from their homes and their countries; in the name of all victims of wars, persecution and injustice; in the name of the weak, those who live in fear, prisoners of war and those tortured in any part of the world, without distinction;

In the name of peoples who have lost their security, peace, and the possibility of living together, becoming victims of destruction, calamity and war;....

This Declaration, setting out from a profound consideration of our contemporary reality, valuing its successes and in solidarity with its suffering, disasters and calamities, believes firmly that among the most important causes of the crises of the modern world are a desensitized human conscience, a distancing from religious values and a prevailing individualism accompanied by materialistic philosophies that deify the human person and introduce worldly and material values in place of supreme and transcendental principles.

While recognizing the positive steps taken by our modern civilization in the fields of science, technology, medicine, industry and welfare, especially in developed countries, we wish to emphasize that, associated with such historic advancements, great and valued as they are, there exists both a moral deterioration that influences international action and a weakening of spiritual values and responsibility. All this contributes to a general feeling of frustration, isolation and desperation leading many to fall either into a vortex of atheistic, agnostic or religious extremism, or into blind and fanatic extremism, which ultimately encourage forms of dependency and individual or collective self-destruction.

1. Why do you think this document was written?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What does the writer of this document see as the fundamental problems of the world today?

## Issues Within the Church

### Enduring Understandings

- As a Jesuit, Pope Francis seems attentive to the needs of all people, including the poor and oppressed.
- A pastoral pope is one who is thought to be closely connected to the people, much like a shepherd who guides and protects a flock.
- People have pasts that shape their present, but their pasts do not necessarily define their future.

### Essential Questions

- What does the term “pastoral issue” mean?
- What are some of the most significant pastoral issues faced by Pope Francis?
- How has the statement “There is no saint without a past, nor a sinner without a future” shaped Pope Francis’ response to pastoral issues within the Church?

### Notes to the Teacher

The film *Francesco* covers an array of issues faced by Pope Francis when he was chosen by the conclave to be the next pope. This lesson will help students understand the significance of these pastoral issues within the Church, as well as how Pope Francis views his role in guiding the Church in its understanding of these issues.

First, a note about terminology. “Pastoral” means “relating to shepherds or herdsmen, devoted to raising sheep or cattle.” In the context of the Catholic Church, the term “pastoral” is deeply connected to the idea of a priest as a shepherd who guides and protects his flock through his role as a teacher, spiritual guide, and protector of the faith.

At the start of each section of this lesson, students will view about 20 minutes of clips, with brief pauses between them, and develop a set of questions about what they have seen.

After viewing the clips, students will discuss what they learned about pastoral issues from the clips and list any questions they still have. Then they will respond to a handout that helps to clarify Pope Francis’ positions on three issues: the role of women in the Catholic Church, the position of LGBTQ people in the Church, and the clerical abuse scandals. By analyzing this statement, students will begin to develop an understanding of why Pope Francis has responded to these issues in the manner portrayed by the film.

After responding to the handout and discussing their ideas, students will research newspaper articles that highlight Pope Francis’ decisions regarding women in the church, the role of LGBTQ people in the church, and the response to the clerical abuse scandal.

New information is often available about these issues. A few additional resources for you and possibly your students at the time of publication are:

On the role of women in the Church:

Increased leadership roles for women in the Church  
[https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2021/02/12/sister-nathalie-becquart-pope-francis-catholic-women-leadership-240012?gclid=CjwKCAjwtpGGBhBJEiwAyRZX2v4VZ-jeTGwP3Bu8I-Kyt4JGIFVEFMDj4s-cL898oNgAUEqD4lSBYSxoCbccQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2021/02/12/sister-nathalie-becquart-pope-francis-catholic-women-leadership-240012?gclid=CjwKCAjwtpGGBhBJEiwAyRZX2v4VZ-jeTGwP3Bu8I-Kyt4JGIFVEFMDj4s-cL898oNgAUEqD4lSBYSxoCbccQAvD_BwE)

Empowering women in the Roman Catholic Church  
<https://www.npr.org/2021/02/08/965261708/pope-francis-latest-moves-to-empower-women-in-roman-catholic-church>

On civil unions:

A timeline of Pope Francis' statements on civil unions  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-vatican-lgbt-unions/pope-francis-lgbt-views-as-vatican-opposes-same-sex-blessings-idUSKBN2B82MN>

The Vatican prohibits blessing same-sex unions  
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-vaticans-giant-step-backward-on-same-sex-unions>

German priests defy Vatican ban on blessing same-sex unions  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/gay-blessings-germany-vatican/2021/05/10/e452cea2-af6a-11eb-82c1-896aca955bb9\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/gay-blessings-germany-vatican/2021/05/10/e452cea2-af6a-11eb-82c1-896aca955bb9_story.html)

On the clerical abuse scandals:

Article on both sexual abuse and the role of women in the Church  
<https://www.npr.org/2021/06/01/1002114243/the-pope-is-toughening-church-laws-on-sex-abuse-fraud-and-the-ordination-of-women>

Changes in Church law to target sexual abusers  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/01/world/europe/vatican-priests-sexual-abuse.html>

Finally, if you have any concerns about how to teach about a religious topic in a public school, this booklet from the First Amendment Center, "A Teacher's Guide to Religion in the Public Schools," will be of great help: <https://www.religiousfreedomcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/teachersguide.pdf>

*For more information on the movie, news and where you can watch it or get a copy for yourself, please go to: [www.francescofilm.com](http://www.francescofilm.com)*



### Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1**

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2**

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7**

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4**

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9**

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2**

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### Duration of Lesson

2–3 class periods

### Assessments

Class discussion

Responses to **Handout 1: No Saint Without a Past**

### Materials needed

Copy of *Francesco* film and projector

Copies of **Handout 1: No Saint Without a Past**

One copy of a news article about a significant issue within the Church

A copy of Psalm 23 (optional)

### Procedure

1. Write the word “Pastoral” on the board and ask the students to think about the root word “pastor.” Ask the class to come up with their own definition of what “pastoral issues” might be. Using the Notes to the Teacher section, guide the students to understanding the term “pastoral.” (Optional: You may wish to read or hand out copies of Psalm 23 to help explain how shepherds are an important symbol in Christianity.)
2. Tell students that today’s lesson will focus on five clips from the film *Francesco* that deal with three specific pastoral issues within the Catholic Church. Ask them to keep a list in their notebooks of all the questions they have as they view the clips. Then play the following clips, pausing for a minute or two after each clip to give students time to write their questions down.

1:00:00–1:04:20

(Pope Francis acknowledges the importance of the role of women in the Church and the global community)

1:04:20–1:06:50

(Pope Francis responds to a letter from a gay man with concerns about bringing his family to church)

1:09:40–1:14:00

(Pope Francis responds to sexual assault victims)

1:34:07–1:42:30

(Pope Francis confronts the sexual abuse scandals)

1:42:31–1:43:40

(Juan Carlos' take on Pope Francis' response)

3. After the clips are finished, ask students to explain what they have learned about Pope Francis' approach to helping people in his Church.
4. Distribute **Handout 1: No Saint Without a Past**. Ask students to read it quietly by themselves or in small groups and to respond to the questions. Allow sufficient time for this activity.
5. Lead a discussion about the questions and the responses students made on the worksheet. You may wish to start with some of these questions to help facilitate the beginning of the discussion:
  - What surprised you when you read this quote?
  - What does it mean to be a saint?
  - What does it mean to be a sinner?
  - What do you think Pope Francis' legacy will be?
6. Remind students about the press coverage of Pope Francis' decisions that were highlighted in the film. For homework (or at the start of the next class period), have students bring in an article they find online about one of the three pastoral issues highlighted by this lesson: the role of women in the church, accepting people who identify as LGBTQ, or the clerical abuse scandal. During the next class session, divide the students into small groups of at least three people, being sure to get an article about each pastoral issue in every group. Have the students summarize or read their articles to each other and consider the perspective of the article.
 

Ask the students to discuss the following about each article:

  - Is the author in favor of the pope's actions or decisions or opposed to them? How do you know?
  - Why might this particular news source feel this way about the pope's actions or decisions?
  - How do you feel about the pope's actions or decisions?

**Handout 1**

## **No Saint Without a Past**

In the film *Francesco*, Pope Francis recalls hearing the following statement: “There is no saint without a past, nor a sinner without a future.” In small groups or individually, answer the following questions about this statement.

1. Restate the meaning of this statement in your own words. (Write a sentence or two about what this statement means to you. Feel free to use the word “I” as you figure out what you think about this.)
  
2. Think about Juan Carlos’ situation as portrayed in the film. How do you think he might feel about a pope who believes the statement above?
  
3. How do you think this phrase helps guide Pope Francis’ decisions and approach to:
  - a. the role of women in the Catholic Church
  
  - b. the place of LGBTQ people in the Catholic Church
  
  - c. the clerical abuse scandals
  
4. If you were an advisor to Pope Francis, what guidance would you offer him as he deals with each of these issues?



*For more information on the movie, news and where you can watch it or get a copy for yourself, please go to:*

[www.francescofilm.com](http://www.francescofilm.com)

Educating for Global Understanding | [www.journeysinfilm.org](http://www.journeysinfilm.org)



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