

Faith & Politics



Scottish
Parliament
Election 2026
Special Edition

A Senior Phase resource for S5/6 looking at Faith and how this can, and should affect our responsibility and opportunity to contribute positively to society.

Introduction

On the 7th May 2026, people across Scotland will vote in the Scottish Parliament election. This election decides who will form the next Scottish Government, who becomes First Minister, and which representatives will make decisions on behalf of the people of Scotland for the next five years. SCIAF, as the official aid and development charity of the Catholic Church in Scotland, is non-party-political and works with decision-makers from all parties to advocate for justice, peace and the dignity of the human person.

We are guided by our Christian faith and inspired by love and compassion to stand in solidarity with the people we serve, our wounded earth, and the Catholic community in Scotland. We know that by working together, a better world is possible.

This resource does not tell pupils how to vote or promote any political party. Instead, it helps young people explore how Scripture and Church Teaching guide our responsibility to participate in public life by voting. A key message is that we don't look on voting only as a responsibility but look on it also as an opportunity.

During these discussions pupils might express strong or differing views. To keep discussion focused on values, moral principles and faith, rather than party politics you might want to use the Acknowledge – Explain – Reassure – Redirect framework e.g.

ACKNOWLEDGE:

Recognise the pupil's contribution without affirming or rejecting it. E.g. "Thank you for sharing that view."

EXPLAIN:

Clarify the purpose of the discussion. E.g. "In this lesson, we're not deciding who is right or wrong politically."

REASSURE:

Remind pupils that different views are expected and allowed. Disagreement is acceptable – but respect is essential! E.g. "It's okay to disagree – what matters is how we listen and respond."

REDIRECT:

Bring the conversation back to values, Scripture or Catholic Social Teaching. E.g. "How might our faith help us think about this issue?" or "Which CST principle could guide our thinking here?"

This resource is designed to be flexible and can be adapted to suit the needs of individual classes over 2 or 4 lessons.

If you have questions about this resource, or would like help to arrange a school hustings event or help with writing to your local candidates you can contact our team below.

Advocacy and Campaign Officer, Anne Callaghan acallaghan@sciaf.org.uk

Development Education Officer, Elaine McGinlay emcginlay@sciaf.org.uk



THIS IS
our faith

RERC

THIS IS OUR FAITH PLANNING EXEMPLARS

S5/6

Core Themes:
Our civil responsibility and how a Catholic conscience influences our opportunity to respond

Suggested Timescale:

Dates:

Teacher:

Class:

TIOF SENIOR PHASE CURRICULUM:

Image of God

S5/S6 I can describe how the Christian vision of the dignity of the human person, made in the image and likeness of God, is grounded in humanity being relational, rational, creative and having free will.

In particular:

I have explored the ways in which the Catholic Christian vision of the dignity of the human person has implications for how we respond to moral and human rights issues including: moral choices and the creation of a just society

Reign of God

S5/6 I have reflected on Church Teaching and I can describe how this has affected my understanding of my value as person, my awareness of the needs of others and my willingness to contribute to the services of the Common Good

I have considered the importance of an informed conscience. I can describe how an informed conscience affects my response and the response of others to moral issues

In particular:

I have considered how an informed conscience affects my own and others' responses to moral challenges: My positive contribution to society

KEY VERSES OF SCRIPTURE:

1 Timothy 2:1-2

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

Titus 3:1-2

Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarrelling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people

Acts 5:29

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men"

Matthew 22:17-21

Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

LEARNING INTENTIONS:

I am learning:

1. That Scripture and Church Teaching has much to teach me about my role in civil society.
2. That my vote and my actions are an opportunity as well as a responsibility to make a positive contribution to society.
3. That my positive contribution to society can make a difference not only locally but also globally.
4. About SCIAF's role and responsibility (as part of the Bishop's Conference) to advocate for our sisters and brothers around the world living in poverty.

SUCCESS CRITERIA:

1. I can point to various pieces of Scripture and Church Teaching that encourage me to participate in and influence civil society.
2. I have taken the opportunity to participate in a campaign action and use my voice and influence as a citizen of Scotland to make a positive contribution in the world I live.
3. I have prayed for those in leadership who make important decisions that affect everyone but especially people who are most vulnerable.

ACTIVITIES

Distribute the Scotland country profile pdf for pupils to read.

Use the video and pdf 'Scripture and Church Teaching' to read and hear about what Scripture and Church Teaching has to say about how we should conduct ourselves in relation to our responsibility and opportunity to positively contribute to civil society.

Ask pupils to consider the following questions as they read and listen to the quotes.

1. What does it mean?
2. What does the quote mean in action? Give some examples of what following the piece of Scripture/Church Teaching looks like in practice?
3. Can/should religion and politics go together?

Ask the pupils to write a position paper on where they stand on 'Should ones political standing be influenced by their faith (Scripture and Church Teaching)?'

You may find the following helpful from the Catholic Parliamentary Office [**The Relationship Between Church and Politics**](#) – Catholic Parliamentary Office (rcpolitics.org)

Please clarify with the pupils that it's not about all Christians or Catholics voting for one particular party but more about their faith affecting what they care about and what they see as important.

Christians have always been involved in politics and decision making at local, national and international levels. While they never have to verbally remind people, they are a Christian, their actions, and what is important to them is shaped by their faith and the decisions they make cannot be helped but be influenced by their faith, it is the person they are.

Direct the pupils to [**Christians in Parliament**](#) website to watch the video 'Why should Christians be involved in politics?'

Ask the pupils to read the pdf 'Christians in Politics' and create space to discuss their thoughts. If time permits, it would be a good piece of work for pupils to research Christian/Catholic/people of Faith in politics. They don't need to be an MSP/MP, it can be someone who has campaigned for a change in legislation for example.

If you have time, you may want to revisit the position paper that the pupils produced just to see if any of their thoughts had changed throughout the process of research.

TAKING ACTION

The important thing throughout all this research and learning is that this affects the young people. The aim of this resource is to highlight the responsibility and the opportunity that they have in voting and in taking action to influence their local politician and to make their voice heard and to advocate for those not heard. Ask the pupils to read the PDF 'Taking Action' and discuss what they will do to take action individually and collectively as a class.

DIAMOND NINE ACTIVITY

Watch CST in 3 mins video which looks at 3 principles – Dignity, Option for the Poor and the Common Good. We're going to use these principles to reflect on issues that affect life in Scotland.

Reminder: There are no “right answers”. The aim is reflection, not agreement

Use the Election 2026 PPT to introduce some of the devolved matters including:

- Education
- Environment/ Climate
- Housing and homelessness
- Health and social care
- Justice and policing
- Culture, Sport and the arts
- Poverty & inequality (some aspects)
- Tourism
- Transport (some aspects)

Either on their own, or in groups of 3-4, ask the pupils to arrange these 9 issues into a diamond shape where Top = most important at this election and Bottom = least urgent *right now*.

Ask them to talk through their reasoning with the group, or as a round robin presentation.

Asking: *How does education help society as a whole, not just individuals? Who benefits – and who is harmed – if the environment is not protected? How does access to housing/health/social care affect dignity and security? How do culture, tourism, and the arts benefit communities and help people feel valued/include?*

Choose one or two of the example Papal quotes to read aloud and ask pupils how this might influence their top and bottom choices. Asking: *Does this quote affirm our choices? Does it challenge them? Who benefits and who may be overlooked in your diamond? Do your top and bottom issues show concern for the poor/human dignity/the common good? Would you change your diamond after reflecting on our faith?*

PRAYER

Challenge the pupils to put 1 Timothy 2:1-2 into action and to compose and share a prayer for those in leadership, those that are making difficult decisions that impact lots of people.

You can find an example below.

Dear God, We thank you that you have given us this beautiful world to live in.
We are mindful that we often don't look after your creation and those in it.
We pray for all politicians and those in positions of power,
that they make the right decisions concerning the most vulnerable.
Help those that follow your ways, to stand up for their faith
and to make judgements that align with your will.
Give our leaders wisdom and compassion to do good work
and bring about equality.
Amen.

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family. 196 Clyde Street, Glasgow, G1 4JY. Tel: 0141 354 5555.
Scottish Charity No: SC012302. Company No: SC197327.