

What people ask us

(Questions and answers about Caritas for children in Years 3-6)

What is Caritas?

Caritas is a special group of people that New Zealand's Catholic Bishops have asked to help poor and needy people around the world. Caritas helps people in an emergency, such as earthquakes, floods or war. It also keeps helping people long after the emergency is over – it can take a long time to get back to normal after a disaster. People working for Caritas try to make a difference so that families and communities have what they need to live.

What does the word 'Caritas' mean?

It is a word from the Latin word meaning 'love into action'. The name tells people that Caritas workers try to grow peace and justice in the world.

What Gospel story comes closest to what Caritas is all about?

In the Gospel story of Luke, the Good Samaritan didn't just help the injured man by taking him to a place to get well again. The Samaritan also made sure that the injured man's future well-being was looked after by giving the innkeeper enough money to pay for whatever was needed to make him well again.

In the Old Testament, Moses didn't ask the Egyptian Pharaoh for bread and clothing for the Israelite slaves – he asked for their freedom. He begged the powerful master to 'Let my people go!' Moses was seeking justice in a strong but peaceful way.

Does Caritas just work with Catholics?

No, Caritas provides help to anyone in need. In our development and justice work, we also work with anyone who is looking for peaceful ways to live with all creation and overcome poverty.

What types of action or projects does Caritas undertake?

- **Emergencies** – Caritas works with people affected by disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, tsunami, famine and war. We help provide food, water, tents, blankets, counselling.
- **Development** – Caritas works on every continent in the world helping to make things better for the poorest people. We support programmes such as farming, and health programmes, food and jobs. We try to help people to help themselves rather than give handouts.
- **Advocacy** – speaking out for those who cannot speak out for change to make the world a more just place. We are a Bishops' agency to promote gospel values of faith - tika, hope - pono and love – aroha.

How can young people help Caritas do its important work?

Three things will help: pray for the poor and people in need here and overseas; live lives of fairness and justice, honesty and compassion yourselves; donate money so that Caritas can work as peaceful agents of change in the world.