

India

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES' MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH programs in India and around the world train health workers to care for families with young children. The health workers encourage expectant mothers to eat extra food and take vitamin supplements, and they measure the growth and weight of babies after they are born. This program reflects the Catholic social teaching principle Option for the Poor.

My name is Bitti Devi and I have five children, three girls and two boys. I live in a small village in India with my husband, children, and mother-in-law. We have a water buffalo that gives milk. A few times each week my husband sells the milk in the market for 30 rupees (about 75 cents). With this money we must feed all of our children. It is not enough. A bag of rice that might last us a week costs 100 rupees. We can't afford to buy beans, and even though our buffalo gives milk, we can't drink it ourselves—what else would my husband sell in the market?

My youngest daughter is named Kajal. She is one and a half, but she can't walk and is very small for her age. There is a health worker in our village named Shanti who was trained by CRS to help mothers and their babies. Shanti weighed Kajal and told us that she needs more food. Shanti now gives us double rations of a nutritious powdered food from the government every week, and she showed us how to prepare it. I hope my daughter will get bigger and stronger soon.



Photo by Laura Sheahan/CRS

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS:

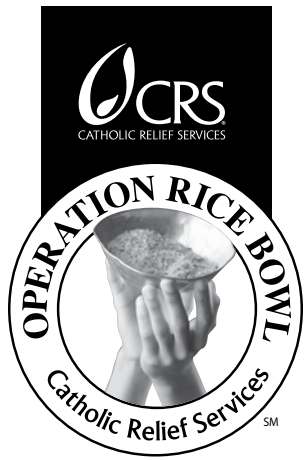
Option for the Poor

As a community of faith, we have the obligation to reach out to those most in need. The Gospel specifically calls us to take action on behalf of the most vulnerable members of society.

In India, CRS' health programs target mothers and their children, who are often the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. CRS trains and works with health workers to advise women on ways to stay healthy and keep their children well-nourished.

Facts to Consider

- Catholic Relief Services believes that all people should be empowered to make their own decisions and solve their own problems, a belief that derives from the CRS Guiding Principle, Subsidiarity.
- CRS helps communities and individuals to "own their own health."
- A community that "owns its health" is aware of its own ability to bring about sustainable health outcomes. It is committed to modeling behaviors and attitudes that promote healing, reduce vulnerabilities, and maintain wellness. And it works in an inclusive manner with existing structures and leaders to advance health outcomes.
- CRS and its partners work closely with the government of India to train health workers and help communities and clinics improve their basic health systems.



India

Grades 1-3

Objectives

- Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle, Option for the Poor.
- Students will learn how they can assist poor families around the world.

Materials Needed: map, one copy of the Activity Sheet per student, pencils, bible

Discussion (15 minutes)

1. Locate India on a map.
2. Read Bitti Devi's story and answer any questions students might have.
3. Explain to students that we have a responsibility to help people who are poor and hungry. This is the Catholic social teaching principle, Option for the Poor.
4. How does Catholic Relief Services live out the principle of Option for the Poor? How can the students help people in need in their own community and in communities around the world?

Activity (20 minutes)

1. Give each student a copy of the Activity Sheet.
2. Students will write a list of three things they can do to help the poor around the world and in their own communities.
3. When their lists are complete, students will write and decorate a short prayer for the poor.
4. Encourage students to take their prayers home to share with their families.

Closing Prayer/Reflection (10 minutes)

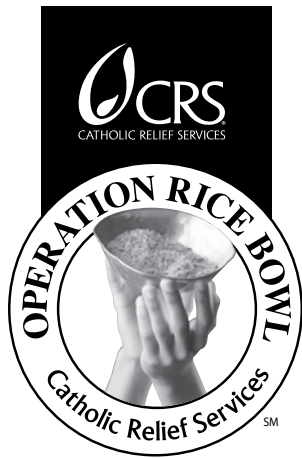
1. Gather students in a circle and ask each student to say one way they can help the poor.
2. Read Matthew 25:35-40.
3. Pray: *Loving God, You care for the hungry, the lonely and the poor. Guide us as we assist those in our community and around the world in need, and help us to share our many gifts. Amen.*

Links to Other Subjects

- **Religion:** Ask students to research what the Bible says about helping the poor.

**If you only
have 10 minutes...**

Complete Discussion #2-4.



India

Grades 4-6

Objectives

- Students will understand the Catholic social teaching principle, Option for the Poor.
- Students will gain a basic understanding of how Catholic Relief Services provides programs to educate and assist the poorest and most vulnerable members of society.

Materials Needed: one copy of India story per student, one Activity Sheet (orb.crs.org) per group, pens or pencils, poster board, markers, bible

Discussion (15 minutes)

1. Read the story of Bitti Devi.
2. Discuss the Catholic social teaching principle, Option for the Poor and discuss how the principle is reflected in the story through the work of Catholic Relief Services.
3. Stress how Shanti took the time to teach Bitti how to prepare the food for her daughter, which helped Bitti take better care of her daughter herself.

Activity (25 minutes)

1. Divide the class into small groups. Provide each group with an Activity Sheet to complete as a group.
2. Ask each group to come up with one thing they could teach someone else to do – (prepare a meal, clean a bathroom, solve a math problem, fix something, etc.) This should be something that at least one person in the group knows how to do.
3. Have the groups make an instructional poster on the steps it takes to complete the task they have chosen to teach.
4. Ask the groups to present their posters to the entire class.
5. Discuss how doing a task for someone else is helpful, but ultimately, teaching someone how to do something for him or herself is even more helpful. Discuss the importance of empowering another person.

Closing Prayer/Reflection (5 minutes)

1. Read Matthew 25:35-46.
2. Pray the following: *Loving God, You reveal Yourself to us every day in the faces of those we meet. Help us to remember that each time we choose to help someone in need, we show our love for You. Amen.*

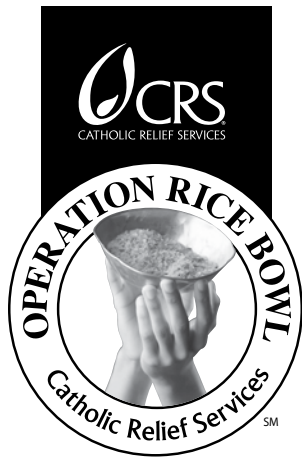
Links to Other Subjects

- **Science:** Ask students to research the preferred caloric intake for a one and a half year old (like Kajal), and then research how much powdered food it would take to meet this need.
- **Math:** Using the prices of milk and rice provided in the story, ask students to calculate the monthly cost of rice vs. the selling price of milk. Help students plan a budget for Bitti based on the family's income and expenses.

**If you only
have 10 minutes...**

Complete Discussion #1-2.

Pray the Closing Prayer.



India

Grades 7-8

Objectives

- Students will learn about food shortages in India and how shortages affect the health of the population.
- Students will become familiar with the Catholic social teaching principle, Option for the Poor.

Materials Needed: map, one copy of India story per student, computer, internet access, poster board, markers

Discussion (10 minutes)

1. Locate India on an online map or other available source.
2. Have students read the story of Bitti Devi and show the India video (orb.crs.org).
3. Discuss some of the major concerns for the people of India. Why do you think CRS has chosen to feature India this year for Operation Rice Bowl?

Activity (30 minutes)

1. Divide students into groups of four and give each group poster board and markers.
2. Using the internet for researching, ask each group to design a poster of India. Include information about the country, the people, the landscape, the economy, the religions, pictures, etc.
3. Have each group share their work with the class.

Closing Prayer/Reflection (5 minutes)

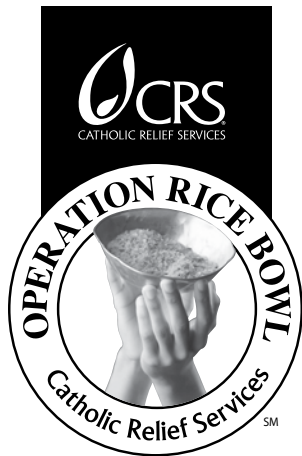
1. Read the Lenten Prayer (located on the Rice Bowl) together as a class.
2. Ask the class what is the message of this prayer.

Links to Other Subjects

- **Math:** Poll your friends and find out what they eat in a day. Make a bar graph using the labels: Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Milk, Meat and Beans. What would a bar graph for someone in India look like? How can we make some changes?

**If you only
have 10 minutes...**

Complete Discussion #2-3.



India

Grades 9-12

Objectives

- Students will understand how the church's Catholic social teaching, Option for the Poor, is reflected in CRS' programs that empower volunteers in poor communities to help their neighbors develop the skills they need for healthy growth and development.

Materials Needed: one copy of India story with "Facts to Consider" per student, bible, one *Rice Bowl/Lenten Calendar* per student,

Discussion (10 minutes)

1. How many of you have participated in a service activity to help people in need here in our community? (Ask for some examples, and ask follow-up questions: How did you get involved? Describe your interaction with the people you were serving.)
2. Explain: Our Catholic faith teaches that we are specifically called to take action on behalf of the poorest and most vulnerable members of our society. We must consider how the poor are affected by the decisions we make and the structures that we create in our own communities and in communities around the world.
3. Throughout the past weeks we have looked at several ways that CRS carries out the work of the Church throughout the world in making an option for the poor. But what does this phrase mean to you? How can you "opt for the poor" in the decisions you make? What about the decisions you make on which goods to buy, for example?

Activity (25 minutes)

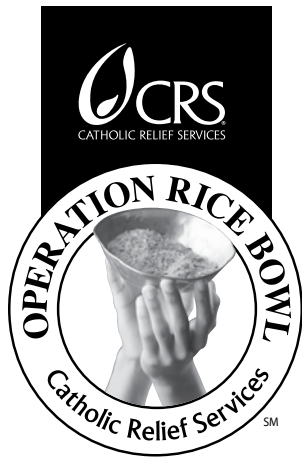
1. Explain: Today we're going to look at an approach that CRS uses to help families in poverty make better use of their resources and protect the health of their members. We'll hear a story and watch a video about how it is implemented in India.
2. Read the story from India. Watch the CRS video on India (orb.crs.org).
3. Discuss:
 - CRS often distributes food directly to people who are facing famine or are in food emergencies. But the program we just heard about is not really about handing out bags of food. What is different about it?
 - Who provides the service to the communities? What are some of the terms they go by? How are they regarded?
 - How are they living out the call to make an option for the poor?
 - How are other principles of Catholic social teaching upheld through this project? What are some examples of these principles?

If you only have 10 minutes...

Complete Activity #2.

Complete the Closing Prayer/
Reflection.

Continued on next page...



India

Grades 9-12 ...continued

Closing Prayer/Reflection (10 minutes)

Reader 1 Matthew 14:14-21

Leader God of abundant generosity, how many times do we come to You with prayers for others – that they may be healed, comforted, fed and sheltered. You join us in this work, by blessing us with gifts, empowering us to respond as we can, filling us with healing love, and comforting us in times of doubt. Make us loving as You are loving, help us to see the needs around us, let us respond with understanding, and teach us to uphold all human dignity.

The response is: Move our hearts, Oh Lord.
When we meet anyone in need...
When we encounter suffering...
When we witness hope and joy...
When we know our gifts will make a difference ...
When we are not sure we have enough to share ...
When we are thinking mostly about ourselves ...
When we come face to face with You...
And make us Your hands and feet in this world. Amen.

Conclude by reciting the Lenten Prayer (located on the Rice Bowl) together as a class.

Links to other subjects:

- **Music:** Invite students to make a play list of contemporary music that reflects the call to make an “option for the poor.”
- **Geography/Social Studies:** Visit <http://www.crs.org/countries/india>. Read the web material on CRS’ work in India. What are the various needs to which the church responds in India? How long has CRS been working there? What are a few programs that respond to the needs? (This assignment can also be done for extra credit as a way of preparing for this class).
- **English:** Write an essay or poem about your reaction to the call to make an “option for the poor.” What does this imply? How does it challenge you?