

Madagascar

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES' AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS in Madagascar and around the world help farmers in the poorest communities improve their harvests using environmentally-sensitive techniques that preserve the land for future generations. These programs reflect the Catholic social teaching principle Care for God's Creation.

My name is Suzy Razafindrafara and I am a farmer in Madagascar. A few years ago, CRS and its partner Caritas Antsirabe came to our village and told us about a new way to plant rice called the System for Rice Intensification. When I heard it, the idea sounded a little crazy. How could using less water and fewer seeds bring a larger harvest? My neighbors laughed at me for trying it. But when my fields yielded one and a half times more rice than theirs, no one laughed anymore. Instead, people in the village asked me to teach them the new method too.

This new way of planting requires more work. We used to flood our fields to get rid of the weeds, but we learned that this damages the roots of the rice plants. Now we weed by hand, a task that takes four people two whole days to complete. The extra work is worth it. Before CRS came to our village, my family was only able to grow enough rice to feed ourselves for about ten months. Now our rice crop lasts the whole year. We often have extra rice to sell, which helps us pay for our children's school fees. Sometimes we even have enough money to buy little luxuries, like a battery powered television set. Now every farmer in my village is using this new planting method, and we are all enjoying better harvests.



Photo by Sara A. Fajardo/CRS

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS:

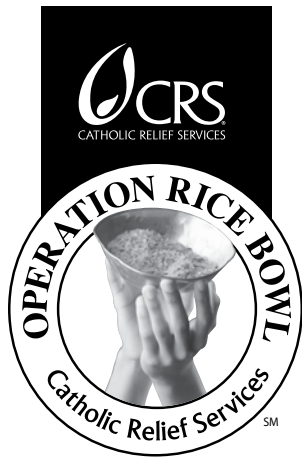
Care for God's Creation

We are called to be good stewards of what has been entrusted to us. Through protecting the environment in which we live, we respect the goodness of nature, a gift God has given.

In Madagascar, CRS uses the System for Rice Intensification to help farmers save water, take care of the land, preserve the nutrients in the soil, and maximize crop yields. These practices promote environmental stewardship, long-term sustainability and respect for the goodness of God's creation.

Facts to Consider

- Farming is the primary economic activity for the majority of people in the world's poorest countries.
- Agriculture employs three-fourths of the Malagasy population.
- The System for Rice Intensification uses a less-is-more approach to rice cultivation:
 - Seeds are transplanted earlier (12-15 days into their growth).
 - Seeds are planted one-by-one rather than in clusters of six.
 - Seeds are planted in 10x10 inch square patterns for easier weeding.
 - Composting and manure are used to replenish nutrients in the soil (vs. synthetic fertilizers).
 - Less water is used – the traditional practice of flooding rice fields rots root systems and deprives rice plants of much needed oxygen.



Madagascar

Grades 1-3

Objectives

- Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle, Care for God's Creation.
- Students will learn about farming in Madagascar and how farming impacts all of our lives.

Materials Needed: world map, four copies of the Activity Sheet (orb.crs.org), markers or crayons, poster board, scissors, tape, bible

Discussion (15 minutes)

1. Locate Madagascar on a map.
2. Explain to students that we are called to care for God's creation as part of our Catholic faith. We can protect the environment by respecting nature and the gifts God has given us.
3. Read Suzy's story to the students. Discuss the story and answer any questions students might have.
4. Ask students how Suzy and her village have cared for God's creation.

Activity (20 minutes)

1. Divide students into 4 groups. Give each group an Activity Sheet, markers, poster board, scissors and tape.
2. Explain to students that after hearing and discussing Suzy's story, they are going to design their own farm that reflects their care for God's creation.
3. After cutting out the images on the Activity Sheet, students should develop a story and a collage that reflects their farm. They can use words and drawings to help tell the story.
4. After 15 minutes, invite each group to post their collage and briefly explain one way their farm reflects the principle of Care for God's Creation.

Closing Prayer/Reflection (10 minutes)

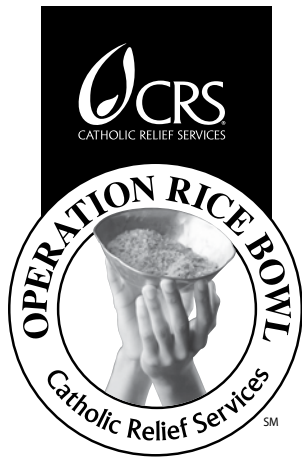
1. Gather students in a circle and ask each student to name his/her favorite part of creation.
2. Read Genesis 1:11-12.
3. Pray: *God of creation, thank you for the gifts of the earth which bring food to our tables. We pray that people who are hungry may have more food on their tables. Amen.*

Links to Other Subjects

- **Science:** Ask students to research what farmers need to grow good harvests. What prevents farmers from having a good harvest?

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

Complete Discussion #2-4.



Vietnam

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES' EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN Vietnam and around the world support and promote quality education for all people. Schools in Vietnam often lack resources to serve students with disabilities. The Inclusion of Vietnamese with Disabilities (IVWD) program trains parents, school leaders and teachers in Vietnam to work with the children and help each child achieve his or her potential. This program reflects the Catholic social teaching principle Dignity of the Human Person.

My name is Quyt and I live in central Vietnam. My daughter Thuan is 10 years old. She has cerebral palsy and can't walk or move easily. When she was young, I was frustrated and often cried. I wanted my daughter to learn, but she wasn't strong enough to go to school. Then Catholic Relief Services invited me to a meeting for parents who have children with disabilities. I learned how to exercise Thuan's muscles and teach her to eat on her own. I wrote the alphabet on the wall near Thuan's bed so she could learn it.

CRS sent a tutor to our house to help with Thuan's education. In the beginning, Thuan could not even hold a pen. Now, she writes math problems, poems, and much more. Thuan's tutor is amazed at how well she is doing. Still, we face challenges each day, so CRS helped us organize a local parents' association. We share advice on caring for our children, celebrate accomplishments, and comfort each other through difficulties. Without CRS, Thuan might not be able to read or write. I am so proud of my daughter—she is very smart.



Photo by Laura Sheahan/CRS

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS:

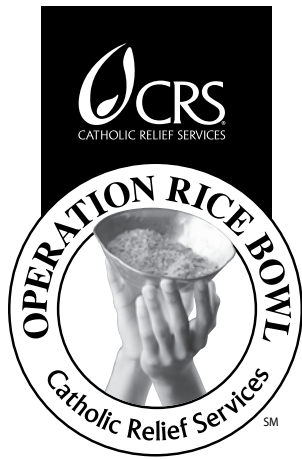
Dignity of the Human Person

All humanity has been made in the image of God. Through our actions we must express that each person is precious and that the lives and welfare of all people are priorities.

In Vietnam, CRS supports the Inclusion of Vietnamese with Disabilities program, which provides access to quality education to children with disabilities who may otherwise not have received education at all. The program recognizes the inherent dignity and uniqueness of each person and demonstrates that quality education must be a priority for all people.

Facts to Consider

- When working with children with disabilities, CRS intensively engages the entire community to provide a web of support.
- Stakeholders include teachers, local officials, community leaders and organizations, schools, social service providers, and the children's parents and peers.
- Teachers receive education and training in identification, early intervention, and inclusive methodologies to help students with disabilities succeed in the classroom.
- CRS works to make sure that advancements in inclusive education are institutionalized in provincial education departments.
- Inclusive education practices are now being used in schools and communities in all provinces of Vietnam.



Vietnam

Grades 1-3

Objectives

- Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle, Dignity of the Human Person.
- Students will reflect on the importance of going to school.

Materials Needed: map, one Activity Sheet (orb.crs.org) per student, pencils, markers or crayons, bible

Discussion (15 minutes)

1. Locate Vietnam on a map.
2. Read Quyt's story and answer any questions students might have.
3. Explain to students that we are all made in the image of God and that our actions should express our care for every person. This is the Catholic social teaching principle, Dignity of the Human Person.
4. Ask students: How did Quyt's actions express a respect for her daughter's dignity? How does Catholic Relief Services respect the dignity of all people?

Activity (25 minutes)

1. Give each student an Activity Sheet.
2. Give students 15 minutes to prepare their responses.
3. Ask each student to share his/her answer to question #4. Write the responses on the board. Compare the students' responses with Thuan's experience.
4. Close the activity by sharing with students how they have a different life and live in a different country than Thuan, but they have many similarities as well.

Closing Prayer/Reflection (5 minutes)

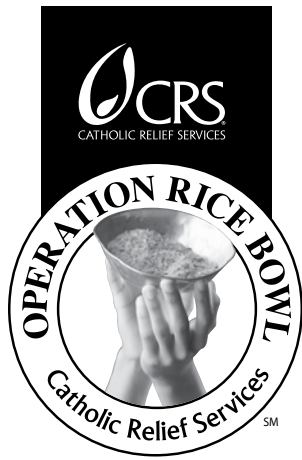
1. Gather students in a circle.
2. Read Psalms 78:4-7.
3. Pray: *Loving God, thank you for the gift of education. We are thankful for the opportunity to attend school and learn new things every day. We ask that You help children all around the world and give them the chance to go to school like us. Amen.*

Links to Other Subjects

- **Social Studies:** Discuss Vietnamese geography, culture, food and religion.

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

Complete Discussion #2-4.



El Salvador

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES' WATER AND SANITATION projects in El Salvador and around the world help bring clean water to families and communities. Clean water means better health, especially for young children. These projects reflect the Catholic social teaching principle Rights and Responsibilities.

My name is Irzan Bladimir, and I'm in the fifth grade at Centro Escolar El Escalón, an elementary school in Honduritas, El Salvador. People have to travel for more than an hour off the main road to get to Honduritas. Water is scarce. There are twelve people living in my house, and we do not have running water. Until last year, our school of 88 students had no bathrooms. We had a toilet outside, but my classmates and I wouldn't use it because the concrete seat was loose and we were afraid we would fall.

Everything changed when CRS helped build a water tank, two bathrooms (one for boys and one for girls), and a sink with five faucets for washing hands at our school. Now our bathroom has water and light, it's spacious, it's better. Our teacher taught us about the importance of washing our hands and not wasting water. Now my classmates and I don't get sick as often. Before, our water tasted like mud. Now it tastes better, it has no flavor.



Photo by Silverlight for CRS

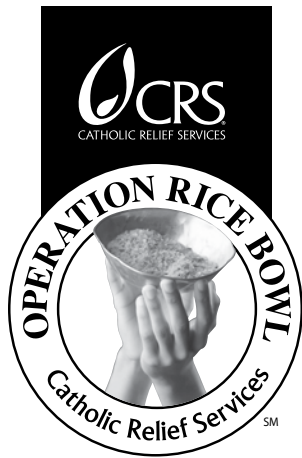
CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS: **Rights and Responsibilities**

We must take responsibility to protect the rights of all people. These rights include the right to life, food, shelter, education, and employment, along with political and cultural rights.

In El Salvador, CRS supports the Mi Cuenca project to bring clean water to families and communities. Clean drinking water leads to better health, and clean water for irrigation leads to healthier and safer foods. Safe food and water are fundamental rights that must be protected for all people.

Facts to Consider

- Effective water management allows communities to sustain or even improve the quantity and quality of their water sources, which means higher crop yields and healthier animals.
- Water scarcity imposes special hardships on women, who must retrieve and carry water for back-breaking distances. CRS projects that bring water to villages and urban areas free women from that burden and permit them to work at other productive or income-generating activities or spend time with their families.
- CRS works to increase access to sustainable safe water in directly targeted schools and communities.
- CRS' project "Mi Cuenca," which means "My Watershed," seeks to improve the ability of rural communities to cope with water-related problems and ensure access to safe water sources.



El Salvador

Grades 1-3

Objectives

- Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle, Rights and Responsibilities.
- Students will learn about the importance of clean water.

Materials Needed: map, one copy of the Activity Sheet (orb.crs.org) per student, pencils, markers or crayons, bowl of clean water, bowl of dirty water, bible

Discussion (15 minutes)

1. Locate El Salvador on a map.
2. Read Irzan Bladimir's story and answer any questions students might have.
3. Tell students that we have a responsibility to help others and make sure they have the basic necessities they need to live. These are called rights. This is the Catholic social teaching principle, Rights and Responsibilities.
4. Ask students: What does every person need in order to live? What happens if someone doesn't have one of these necessities?

Activity (25 minutes)

1. Give a copy of the Activity Sheet to each student. Allow 10 minutes to complete it.
2. Ask students to share their answers to question #2 with the class.
3. Gather students around the bowls of clean and dirty water. Ask them to imagine they could only use the dirty water. Could they do all the things they needed to do using dirty water? How would their lives be different?

Closing Prayer/Reflection (5 minutes)

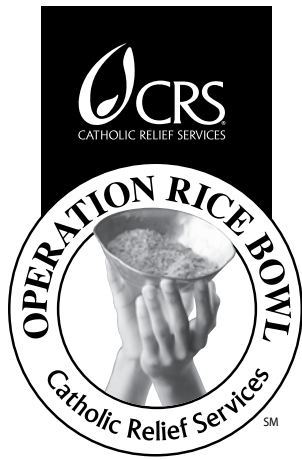
1. Gather students in a circle around the bowl of clean water.
2. Read Isaiah 55:1.
3. Pray: *Gracious God, thank you for the gift of clean water. We are grateful to have water at school and at home. We pray for people around the world who do not have clean water. Help them find the resources to bring water to their homes and schools. Amen.*

Links to Other Subjects

- **Math:** Have each student count the number of glasses of water they drink each day. Calculate how many glasses they drink in a week, month, and a year.

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

Complete Discussion #2-4.



Zambia

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES' MICROFINANCE PROGRAMS in Zambia and around the world help people in the poorest communities earn more money to support their families and set aside savings for the future. Community groups provide loans that help members start small businesses to earn better incomes. These programs reflect the Catholic social teaching principle of the Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers.

My name is Joyce Namate Malunda and my two daughters and I live in Mongu, Zambia. For me, life has always been hard. I have a small farm, but can't grow enough food to feed my family. My house is small and doesn't keep out the wind and rain. I was very happy when CRS came to our village and helped us to start a Savings and Internal Lending Community (SILC).

The members of my SILC group are all people who have known and trusted each other for a long time. We meet every two weeks, and each member brings a small amount of money she has saved to put into our community bank. Members can also request small loans. The group votes on whether or not to give the loan and decides how much time the person should have to pay it back. When members pay back their loans, they also pay a little interest, which increases the amount of money in our community bank. With the loan I received, I was able to open a small grocery shop in the market. I earned enough money to move my family into a better house, and now I can buy good food and pay my daughters' school fees. Hunger and poverty will soon be a story of the past for us.



Photo by Richard Lord for CRS

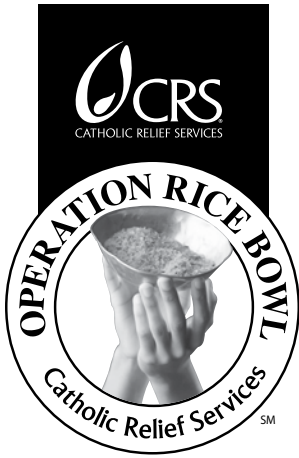
CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS: **Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers**

The ability to work and earn a living is a right of all people. All workers have the right to a fair wage, to organize themselves, and to work in good conditions.

In Zambia, CRS supports Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) that provide people with the credit and savings to start or expand small businesses. SILC promotes the dignity of work by establishing conditions which empower workers to enter into the marketplace and earn a living.

Facts to Consider

- The majority of the population in Mongu, Zambia lives at the subsistence level, with 84% of people in the Western Province living in poverty.
- Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) is a methodology developed by CRS to target the poorest of the poor who lack access to formal financial services and who are often overlooked by major microfinance institutions.
 - 15-30 group members meet 2-4 times per month to save money in a collective fund.
 - The fund gradually grows larger, allowing the group to provide small scale loans.
 - Members can use loans to develop business activities or for consumptive purposes.
 - Members also have access to a "social fund" that provides interest-free loans for social services, such as funerals, school fees, and medical treatments.



Zambia

Grades 1-3

Objectives

- Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle, Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers.
- Students will learn what it takes to start a small business.

Materials Needed: map, one copy of the Activity Sheet (orb.crs.org) per student, pencils, tape, markers, one poster board per student, bible

Discussion (15 minutes)

1. Locate Zambia on a map.
2. Read Joyce Namate Malunda's story and answer any questions students might have.
3. Tell students that we all have the right to work and earn a living. This is the Catholic social teaching principle, Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers.
4. Ask students: Why do people have a right to work? How does earning a fair living change people's lives? How has Joyce's life changed?

Activity (25 minutes)

Part One:

1. Give each student a copy of the Activity Sheet. Explain that the class is going to start a business.
2. Ask the students to imagine they are in Joyce's position. They don't have a lot of money but would like to open a business to support their family. What business should they open? What do they need to open the business? Record the students' answers on the board.

Part Two:

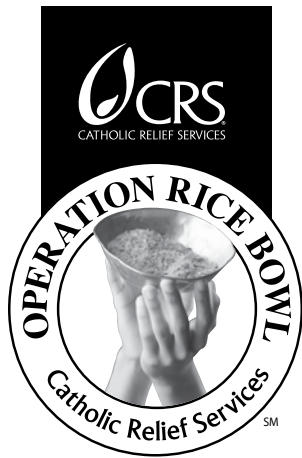
1. Divide students into groups of four. Give each group a poster board and markers.
2. Briefly recap the story about Joyce in Zambia.
3. Ask each group to make a poster that will help Joyce advertise her grocery shop in the market.
4. Display the posters around the room.

Closing Prayer/Reflection (5 minutes)

1. Gather students in a circle. Ask students to reflect on whether it's hard or easy to open a business.
2. Read Deuteronomy 24:14-15.
3. Pray: *Dear God, we know that in our community, in our country and around the world, there are people who do not have jobs. Please help them to find work so that they can provide food, clothing and other things that their families need. Amen.*

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

Complete Discussion #2-4.



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.



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS:

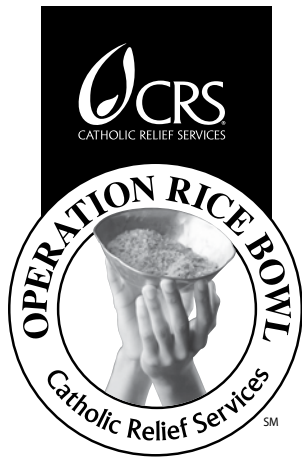
Option for the Poor

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.