

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:

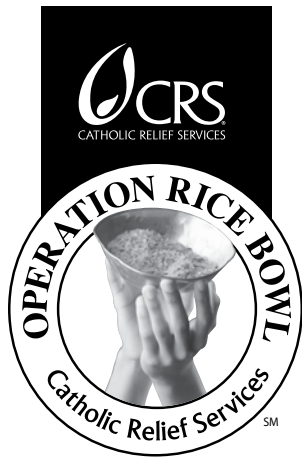
Care for God's Creation

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 7-8

Objectives

- Students will learn the value of good farming practices, including the benefits to the environment and society.
- Students will become familiar with the Catholic social teaching principle, Care for God's Creation.

Materials Needed: world map, one copy of Madagascar story per student, sticky notes, flipchart paper, markers

Discussion (10 minutes)

1. Ask students to locate Madagascar using an online map or other available source.
2. Ask students to read the story of Suzy Razafindrafara and show the Madagascar video (orb.crs.org).
3. Discuss some of the biggest concerns for the people of Madagascar.

Activity (30 minutes)

1. Work alone or in pairs.
2. Using the sticky notes and flipchart paper, compose an idea map of Madagascar. Provide background information on Madagascar, or have students research the country online so they can include information about the country, the people, the landscape, the economy, the religions, pictures, etc.
3. Have groups share their work with the class.

Closing Prayer/Reflection (5 minutes)

1. Post this prayer on the board for all to see or hand out copies to each student.

If you GIVE me fish, you have fed me for a day. If you TEACH me to fish, then you have fed me until the river is contaminated or the shoreline seized for development. But if you teach me to ORGANIZE, then whatever the challenge, I can join with my peers and we will fashion our own solution.

2. How is this prayer pertinent to the situation in Madagascar? How does this relate to the Catholic social teaching principle Care for God's Creation?

Links to Other Subjects

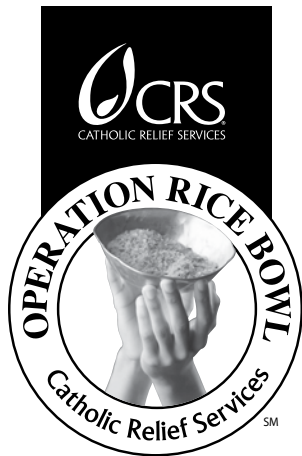
- **Math:** Compare the size of Madagascar with your own state or with the United States. How does it compare in population? Landmass? Etc.
- **Social Studies:** Learn about the geography, economy, environment, and culture of Madagascar.

If you only have 10 minutes...

Complete Discussion #2.

Discuss the improved farming method in Madagascar and why it is such a valuable system.

Complete the Closing Prayer/Reflection.



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:

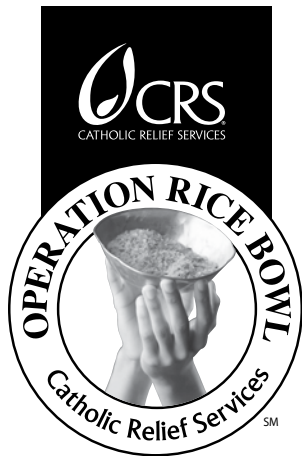
Dignity of the Human Person

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 7-8

Objectives

- Students will understand the Catholic social teaching principle, Dignity of the Human Person.
- Students will learn about some of the challenges facing families in Vietnam.

Materials Needed: world map, one copy of Vietnam story per student, internet access, poster paper, markers, scissors, glue or tape

Discussion (15 minutes)

1. Ask students to locate Vietnam using an online map or other available source.
2. Ask students to read the story of Thuan and Quyt and show the Vietnam slideshow (orb.crs.org).
3. Discuss some of the biggest concerns for Quyt and her family.

Activity (25 minutes)

1. Divide class into groups of four.
2. Create a poster advertising the value of and need for education in Vietnam. Use the internet to find pictures, captions, etc. Print and post information on the poster paper. Consider the benefits of education and why should education be made available to all people.
3. Share/hang posters in the classroom. View and discuss the students' work.

Closing Prayer/Reflection (5 minutes)

1. Post this prayer on the board for all to see or make copies for each student.

To have hope

Is to believe that history continues open

To the dream of God and to human creativity.

To have hope

Is to continue affirming

That it is possible to dream a different world,

Without hunger, without injustice,

Without discrimination.

To have hope

Is to be a courier of God

And courier of men and women of good will.

(Excerpt from *Prayer without Borders*, Catholic Relief Services, 2004)

Links to Other Subjects

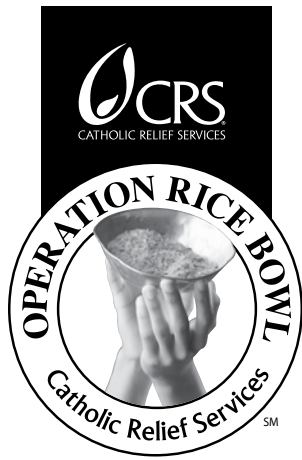
- **Religion:** Find examples from the Bible that support the CST principle, Dignity of the Human Person. In what ways are we supporting this principle today?
- **Social Studies:** Learn about the geography, economy, environment, and culture of Vietnam.

If you only have 10 minutes...

Complete Discussion #2-3.

Discuss the need for education and why it is important.

Create an ACROSTIC poem using the word VIETNAM to describe issues/concerns facing the country.



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

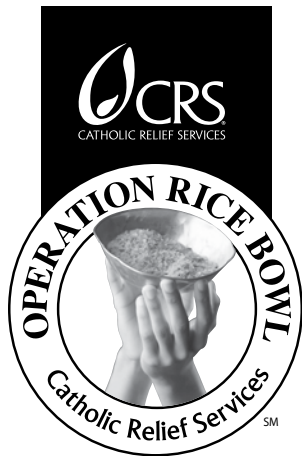
CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS: **Rights and Responsibilities**

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 7-8

Objectives

- Students will understand the Catholic social teaching principle, Rights and Responsibilities.
- Students will learn the value of clean water and healthy habits in El Salvador.

Materials Needed: map, one copy of El Salvador story per student, flipchart, construction paper, pens or markers

Discussion (15 minutes)

1. Have students locate El Salvador using an online map or other available source.
2. Have students read the story of Irzan Bladimir and show the El Salvador video (orb.crs.org).
3. Discuss some of the major concerns for the people of El Salvador. Why do you think CRS has chosen El Salvador this year as an ORB featured country? What Catholic social teaching principle is being addressed?

Activity (25 minutes)

1. Write the poem format provided below on flipchart paper so the whole class can see it. Students will use the format to write a poem that describes the situation in El Salvador and their need for clean water.

Option: Use pictures from the internet and information gathered from orb.crs.org to decorate the poems.

- **Line 1:** Hope
- **Line 2:** If hope were a color, it would be [e.g., blue].
- **Line 3:** As [e.g., shimmering] as a [e.g., bright, clean lake].
- **Line 4:** If hope were a taste, it would be just like _____.
- **Line 5:** If hope were a feeling, it would be _____.
- **Line 6:** As _____ as a _____.
- **Line 7:** If hope were a smell, it would be _____.
- **Line 8:** As _____ as a _____.
- **Line 9:** If hope were a sound, it would be _____.
- **Line 10:** As _____ as a _____.

2. Ask each student to share his or her poem with the class.
3. Display all of the poems around the classroom for students to view.

Closing Prayer/Reflection (5 minutes)

1. Make a class prayer chain for El Salvador. Give each student a strip of colored construction paper. Ask them to write a short, simple prayer for the people of El Salvador. Combine the strips of paper into one long chain and display the chain in the classroom.

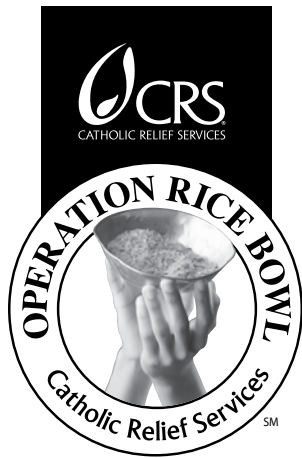
Links to Other Subjects

- **Social Studies:** Explore the geography, economy, environment, and culture of El Salvador.

If you only have 10 minutes...

Complete Discussion #2.

Complete the Closing Prayer/
Reflection.



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

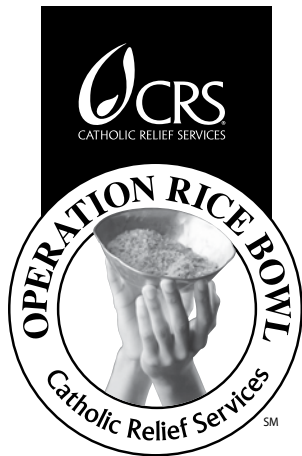
CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS: **Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers**

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 7-8

Objectives

- Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle, Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers.
- Students will learn about microfinance programs and what these programs can do in poor communities.

Materials Needed: map, one copy of Zambia story with “Facts to Consider” per student, computer, internet access, projector

Discussion (10 minutes)

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

Activity (30 minutes)

1. Divide class into small groups.
2. Using the “Facts to Consider,” as well as articles, pictures, and books, students will have 30 minutes to develop a PowerPoint presentation that explains microfinance and how CRS is supporting it in Zambia. Students may research online and provide pictures and links to video clips or informative websites. Include reasons why we should support this concept (e.g., referencing Catholic social teaching).
3. Email your work to the teacher.
4. Have each group share their work with the class using a projector.

Closing Prayer/Reflection (5 minutes)

1. Pray the following prayer: *Lord Jesus, in images of farming and rural life, you announced your gospel to the poor. We pray for rural men and women, especially for those who work hard in the fields. [...] Bless the daily efforts of farmers and farm workers. Let all recognize the dignity of their labor.* (From *Prayer without Borders*, Catholic Relief Services, 2004)

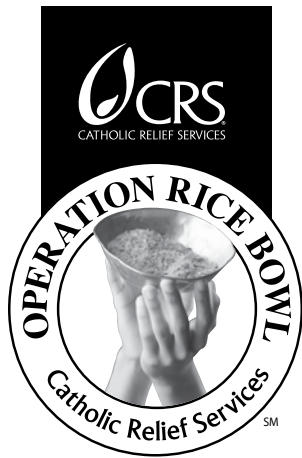
Links to Other Subjects

- **Math:** Compare the size of Zambia with your own state or the United States. How does it compare in population? Landmass? Etc.
- **Social Studies:** Learn about the geography, economy, environment, and culture of Zambia.

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

Complete Discussion #2.

Pray the Closing Prayer/Reflection.



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:

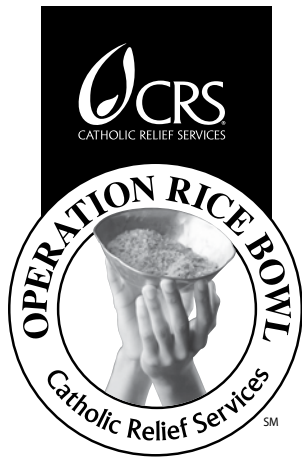
Option for the Poor

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 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.