

### **CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS: CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION**

Human beings are social by nature—we need each other. We, like the early disciples, are called to come together and grow as a community, whether that community is in our classroom, workplace or family.

#### **MAYRA'S STORY**

Two years ago, Mayra was not a star student. She was very shy in the classroom and struggled with simple math and reading lessons. She often missed homework assignments and, some days, did not go to school.

Her teacher noticed and enrolled Mayra in the school's tutoring program. In the months that followed, Mayra and Fabricio—her tutor and classmate—spent many afternoons practicing reading and writing stories together. They made up games to practice math. And when they were done, they jumped rope and played in their neighborhood. In the process, the two became good friends.

"Fabricio never looked down on me because I had trouble learning," says Mayra. "He always treated me well."

The extra attention was what Mayra really needed. She lives with her grandmother, Lucia, who works hard to take care of Mayra. She picks coffee on a nearby farm and does laundry to earn money to put food on the table. But this means she doesn't always have time to help Mayra with her school work. In fact, like many people her age, Lucia cannot read.

That's why Fabricio's help was so important. Today, Mayra is proud of her reading and math skills. She does her homework and goes to class on time. She is more confident and has a new group of friends.

Mayra wants to be a teacher one day. But first, she will become a tutor so she can help her classmates—just as Fabricio helped her.



Photo by Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS

#### **FACTS TO CONSIDER**

- Nearly 65% of Hondurans—more than 5 million people—live on less than \$2 a day. In response, CRS Honduras is working on projects ranging from agriculture to education.
- The Food for Education project, which helped Mayra, benefits 53,863 children enrolled in 1,047 pre-primary and primary schools. The project improves literacy, attendance, retention and attentiveness.
- By providing regular meals at school, students are more likely to go to school—and have the energy to learn. For many students, this may be the best—and only—meal they receive all day.
- The project supplies basic educational materials, trains teachers to better support students and provides transportation so students can get to school.
- The project is improving the school with better classrooms, restrooms and safer environments. School gardens are being built to teach students about the importance of healthy food.

For downloadable photos, visit [crsricebowl.org/photos](https://crsricebowl.org/photos)

### PURPOSE

To help young people understand the Catholic social teaching principle, or CST, Called to Family, Community and Participation through the story of Mayra and CRS' Food for Education project in Honduras; to encourage young people to promote this principle in their local communities.

### CST PRINCIPLE: CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

Human beings are social by nature—we need each other. Like the early disciples, we are called to come together and grow as a community, whether that community is in our classroom, workplace or family.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Opening and Closing Prayers
  - *Prayer for Life, USCCB*
  - *Meet Me in the Desert*
- Nicely wrapped gift box
- Play money
- *Story of Hope: Honduras*
- Blank copy paper
- Pencils, colored pencils, thin markers

### OPENING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

*Prayer for Life, USCCB*

### GAME (10 MINUTES)

- *Simulation on Change*
- Use as an introduction to the Catholic social teaching principle Call to Family, Participation and Community

### STORY OF HOPE: HONDURAS

(10-15 MINUTES)

- Read Mayra's story as a group.
- Despite Mayra's difficult situation and lack of resources, where can we find hope in her story?
- What is the connection to the CST principle Call to Family, Community and Participation?

### DISCUSSION (20 MINUTES)

- *The Gift Auction Activity*
- Discuss how sharing talents and resources is part of what it means to be in community.
- Ask groups to identify a need in their community and brainstorm ways they may help respond to that need.

### SUMMARY (5 MINUTES)

- As we learned from Mayra's story, when the community came together to share their resources and talents, everyone benefited. When we are willing to share our resources and talents, we benefit, others benefit—and the community as a whole benefits.
- This Lent, let us take time to discern what we can offer to the community and make a commitment to share our gifts.

### CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

*Meet Me in the Desert*

### FAMILY ACTIVITY

- Volunteer to tutor or read to small children or help in your parish religious education program.
- Find a saint who is a patron of education and write a prayer for intercession of him/her on behalf of Mayra, Fabricio and others struggling to learn or teach. Pray the prayer as a family each day this week.

**Embracing Father,**

*You grace each of us with equal  
measure in your love.*

*Let us learn to love our neighbors  
more deeply, so that we can create  
peaceful and just communities.*

*Inspire us to use our creative energies  
to build the structures we need  
to overcome the obstacles of  
intolerance and indifference.*

*May Jesus provide us the example  
needed and send the Spirit to warm  
our hearts for the journey.*

**Amen**

*Being Neighbor: The Catechism and Social Justice Catholic Campaign  
for Human Development, United States Catholic Conference*



Photo by Oscar Lewis/Silverlight for CRS

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Have participants choose a partner and ask them to study their partner's characteristics.
- Invite them to stand back-to-back and then change five things about themselves. Give an example, like taking their watch off their left wrist and putting it on their right wrist.
- When each participant has changed five things, invite them to stand, face each other and identify the five changes they see in their partner.
- Observe how participants do round 1. Ask how many were able to identify the five changes in their partner.
- Ask participants to do a second round, now changing 10 things about themselves.
- Observe how participants do round 2. How many could identify 10 changes? Could they find more changes in the second round than in the first?
- Ask participants if they would like to do a third "championship" round, where they will change 15 things about themselves.

## PROCESSING

- Ask what strategy they could have used to easily change 15, 20 or more things about themselves? If they don't come up with the answer by themselves, demonstrate how they could have exchanged items with the partners of other people. If you observed anyone doing this, point it out. Ask if anyone got ideas by observing other people.
- Ask participants what some significant differences were (besides the number of changes) between round 1 and round 2. Easier? Faster? More excitement? Less subtle changes? More risk-taking?
- Explain that this activity shows us that we can change some things by ourselves—but if we want significant change that involves risk or changing long-standing habits, we need to interact with others. We need others to give us ideas and to support us. We need a community.



Photo by Oscar Laine/Silverlight for CRS



Photo by Michael Stulman/CBS

## MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

- Nicely wrap a box to look like a gift.
- Prepare packets of play money (one for each small group and one for the facilitator). Packets should have uneven amounts of money, but there should be one or two “bills” for each person in the small group.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Hold up the nicely wrapped gift package you prepared before the session. Explain that it is a real gift that they will be able to have after the activity. Tell them it is a gift you know they will enjoy.
- Hold up the sample packet of play money and explain that each group has a packet of money. Invite groups to distribute the money among their members.
- Explain that you will be auctioning the gift box. Each person has their own amount of resources to use in order to bid on the gift.
- Start the bidding at \$1: “Do I hear \$1 ...”
- **Note to leader:** If the bidding stops because the person with the most money has the highest bid, continue pushing for a higher bid, saying something like: “Isn’t there any way we can bid higher for this marvelous gift?” Encourage participants to pool their resources to bid on the package—even better if they have already done this.

## PROCESSING

- How did you feel when I explained the activity and you first looked at the resources you had to work with?
- What was the real gift at the end of this activity?
- How is this like the story of Mayra, Fabricio and the Food for Education project in Honduras? If the gift was community, what was used to achieve it? If the gift was education, what were some of the “resources” used to get that gift? If the gift was trust, how was it earned?



Photo by David Snyder for CRS

***Lord of Lent, Lord of Easter,***

*As you went into the desert so do  
I follow putting aside that which  
distracts me, grabs at me, falsely  
claims me.*

*To search inside to confront myself,  
my best, my worst, my good works  
and my sins.*

*And each time, I find you there to call  
to me again with words of challenge  
and words of mercy.*

*And as I fall to my knees, in prayer, in  
fasting, in sacrifice and penitence  
somehow, you have it in yourself  
to reach out and gently lift me, to  
renew me, to claim me as nothing  
of this world can claim me.*

*Meet me in the desert, Lord.*

*Claim me anew.*

***Amen***