

Catholic Social Teaching Focus

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

God created every plant, every mountaintop, every animal—everything. And God said that these things are good. We find God in these good things, and so we must take care of creation, for ourselves and for our entire human family.

ENCOUNTER DITA

Dita, her husband and their seven children depend on the money they earn selling crops from their small farm in Ethiopia. But frequent droughts often mean that families like Dita's, who depend on home-grown crops, go hungry. And amidst the current, historic drought in Ethiopia, more than 10 million people are struggling with hunger.

But thanks to a CRS program that helps families prepare for crises like droughts, Dita was able to build a new house and open a small store. Instead of relying solely on what she can grow on her farm, she is able to sell items like pasta, shampoo and bananas. She earns a steady \$400 a month.

"Before, I had to get eggs from my neighbors. Now I have 15 hens," she says. Saving and borrowing money not only allowed her to buy hens, but also a metal roof for her new house, a rarity for families in this part of Ethiopia.

"Now we have no problems with food," she says. Unlike families across Ethiopia who struggle to find enough to eat, Dita says her children eat three times a day, thanks to her newfound business knowledge.

And what's more, all her children are attending school. "When I was a child, there were no educational opportunities," she says. Then, with a shy but proud smile, she adds, "That's a big difference."



Photo by Pieterik Wiggins for CRS

FACTS TO CONSIDER

Population: 96,633,458

Size: 426,373 square miles; slightly less than twice the size of Texas

- For more than 50 years, CRS has taken the lead in responding to natural and man-made disasters affecting Ethiopia's most vulnerable communities.
- El Nino has contributed to the crisis of Ethiopia's drought. Millions of lives are threatened by hunger, as many areas have not seen rain for 2 years.
- CRS' disaster mitigation and recovery projects in drought- and flood-prone areas have rebuilt individual and community assets in the form of agriculture, livestock, health, and water and sanitation assistance.



For downloadable photos, visit csrricebowl.org/photos.



CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

GRADES 1–3

45 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle Care for God's Creation and how we must all be good stewards of the gifts God has given us.

MATERIALS

Map, Dita's story, Ethiopia
Activity Sheet: Grades 1–3.

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Locate Ethiopia on the map. How close is Ethiopia to your home or school?
2. Read Dita's story.
3. Reflect:
 - Who did we meet or encounter in the story and what do they do?
 - What challenges are Dita and others in Ethiopia facing?

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Explain the Catholic social teaching principle Care for God's Creation. Share that God created every plant, every mountaintop, every animal—everything. And God said that these things are good. We find God in these good things, and so we must take care of creation, for ourselves and for our entire human family.
2. Discuss:
 - How do we feel when we make a gift for others?
 - How would we want others to treat the things we have made?
 - The Earth and all of creation are gifts that God made for us. How can we respect and appreciate these gifts?

3. Pass out the Ethiopia Activity Sheet: Grades 1–3 and allow students time to fill in the drawing, noting that their homework will be to color it in.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Loving Creator of all things,

Thank you for the gift of our beautiful home.

May we always live in a way that respects all living things.

Amen

AT HOME

1. Color the Ethiopia Activity Sheet: Grades 1–3 and share it with your parents and family.
2. Discuss the CRS Rice Bowl Lenten calendar's reflection for the day as a family at dinner.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE 10 MINUTES

1. Read Dita's story.
2. Lead Discussion Step 3.

ETHIOPIA | CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION



We are all called to be good stewards, which means to care for all that God has created.

On the three dotted rays from the sun, write things that God created.

What can you do to take care of God's gift of creation at school, at home and around the world?

Write your answers in the hills.

A large illustration of a landscape with rolling hills. In the top left corner, a sun is partially visible, with three dotted rays extending downwards. The hills are divided into three sections by curved lines. The top section is labeled "HOME", the middle section is labeled "SCHOOL", and the bottom section is labeled "AROUND THE WORLD". The sun's rays are positioned to land on these three sections.

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

GRADES 4–6

45 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about caring for all of God's creation and reflect upon their part in caring for those affected most by the mistreatment of our common home.

MATERIALS

Map, Dita's story, whiteboard or poster paper, Ethiopia Activity Sheet: Grades 4–6.

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Locate Ethiopia on the map. How close is Ethiopia to your home or school?
2. Read Dita's story.
3. Reflect:
 - What stood out to you in the story?
 - How is the drought affecting families in Ethiopia?
 - Why is it important for all of creation to be protected?

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Write "Care for God's Creation" on the board and explain this Catholic social teaching principle to students. Share that God created every plant, every mountaintop, every animal—everything. And God said that these things are good. We find God in these good things, and so we must take care of creation, for ourselves and for our entire human family.
2. Under the title Care for God's Creation, write one column with the heading Ethiopia and one titled United States.
3. Under the column titled Ethiopia, ask students to list ways that the principle Care for God's Creation appeared in the story.
4. Under the column titled United

States, ask students to list ways that the principle Care for God's Creation appears in their own lives, at school and at home.

5. Invite students to point out differences, similarities and anything else that stands out to them. Invite students to commit to one or more of the activities listed under United States.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Loving Creator of all things,

You have given us a beautiful home and have asked us to care for it. Help us to remember that we are the Earth's caretakers. May we always be respectful and loving to all of your creation.

We ask this in your name.

Amen

AT HOME

1. Complete the Ethiopia Activity Sheet: Grades 4–6.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE 10 MINUTES

1. Read Dita's story.
2. Lead Discussion Step 3.

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

GRADES 7–8

45 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn that all of God's creation is connected, and discuss ideas for how we can care for all of God's creation.

MATERIALS

Map, Facts to Consider: Ethiopia, Dita's story, Ethiopia Activity Sheet: Grades 7–8.

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Locate Ethiopia on the map.
2. Ask a couple of students to read the facts about Ethiopia aloud to the class.
2. Read Dita's story.
3. Reflect:
 - How are we called to actively participate in caring for our Earth and all of creation?
 - What is easy and what is challenging about caring for God's creation?

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Explain to the class that often, it is those who are most vulnerable in our communities who are impacted most by our mistreatment of the Earth.
2. Pass out the Ethiopia Activity Sheet: Grades 7–8 and have students complete the worksheet.
3. If time permits, share responses in small groups.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Creator of all life,

We give thanks for the gift that is your creation.

Walk with us as we care for all aspects of your creation, a gift with which you have entrusted us.

Amen

AT HOME

1. Read the daily reflection on the CRS Rice Bowl app or at [csricebowl.org/daily-reflections](https://www.csricebowl.org/daily-reflections) and write a short paragraph about your thoughts and reaction to it.

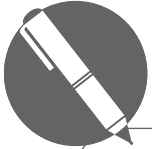
IF YOU ONLY HAVE 10 MINUTES

1. Read Dita's story.
2. Lead Discussion Step 3.

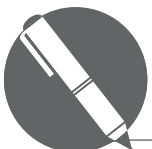


ETHIOPIA | CARE FOR GOD’S CREATION

We are called to be stewards of God’s creation, to care for and uphold all of creation with respect. However, we often fall short of using resources wisely and caring for the Earth.



What are ways that our brothers and sisters around the world suffer due to our failure to care for creation? Think about Dita’s story and hardships faced by many in Ethiopia.



What are ways that you see the most vulnerable in your local community impacted by our failure to care for creation?
