

Catholic Social Teaching Focus

OPTION FOR THE POOR

Jesus tells us to care for those who are most in need in the world. He reminds us of our Christian duty to give a voice to those who go unheard and to help those who are most vulnerable.

ENCOUNTER THE SINGH FAMILY

When the Malaguni River in East India floods, Megha and Raj Singh, their two children and their extended family cannot get to the nearest market—nearly 5 miles away—to buy and sell food. If the waters do not recede quickly, their rice fields fail, and their animals become sick from diseases spread through dirty water. The family faces financial danger.

That's why CRS is helping the Singh family prepare for flooding with new farming tools and techniques. Now Raj plants his fields worry-free using a special type of rice that can survive flooding. He can collect and save his seeds for future use. And he now has the resources he needs to vaccinate his cows, ensuring they, too, survive the floods.

Megha grows vegetables in a kitchen garden, so her family has healthy meals even when she can't visit the market. During past floods, the family had to survive solely on rice. But now, planting veggies in special sacks, she is able to raise the plants above flood lines, ensuring her family has reliable access to nutritious food.

Just as important, Megha has learned new ways of growing food, so that the entire family gets the most nutrition out of every meal. Now, the whole Singh family is healthier, and with these new ways of farming, they can continue to thrive, even during floods.



Photo by Jennifer Hardy/CRS

FACTS TO CONSIDER

Population: 1,236,344,631

Size: 1,269,219 square miles;
1/3 size of the United States

- Nearly 42 percent of India's population, almost 500 million people, live on less than \$1.25 per day while about 48 percent of children under age 5 suffer from stunting—the failure to grow and develop properly as a result of malnutrition.
- Human trafficking remains a major concern throughout the country, while natural and man-made disasters continue to affect India every year.
- CRS programming in India focuses on emergency resilience, relief and recovery; strengthening agriculture livelihoods; improving health systems and services; and preventing human trafficking and supporting trafficking survivors.



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OPTION FOR THE POOR

GRADES 1–3

45 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE

Students will reflect on the importance of caring for others and explore the Catholic social teaching principle of Option for the Poor by encountering the story of the Singh family in India.

MATERIALS

Map, the Singh family's story, copies of India Activity Sheet: Grades 1–3.

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Locate India on the map. How close is India to your home or school?
2. Read or watch the Singh family's story.
3. Reflect:
 - Who did we meet or encounter in the story and what do they do?
 - What challenges did they face?
 - How does the Singh family care for one another and how were they cared for?

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Explain the Catholic social teaching principle Option for the Poor. Share that Jesus tells us to care for those who are most in need in the world. He reminds us of our Christian call to help those who are most vulnerable, like people living without enough food or a home.
2. Pass out the India Activity Sheet: Grades 1–3 and give students time to complete them.
3. Ask students to share with the class their hopes for the Singh family and their promise to live as Jesus did.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

God of love,
 Thank you for the gift of caring families and communities.
 Be with us as we seek to become one human family in you.
 Amen

AT HOME

1. Share the completed India Activity Sheet: Grades 1–3 with your family.
2. Discuss, as a family, the CRS Rice Bowl Lenten calendar's reflection for the day.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE 10 MINUTES

1. Read or watch the Singh family's story.
2. Lead Discussion Step 3.



INDIA | OPTION FOR THE POOR

Today we met the Singh family from India, who take care of one another just like your family does.

Fill in the blanks to the sentences below.

My hope for the Singh family is _____

God, help me to care for others and follow Jesus' example by _____



Draw and color a picture of your family.

MY FAMILY:

Catholic Social Teaching Focus

SACREDNESS AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

We were made in God's image and likeness. Because of this, every human being has a special value and purpose. We need to care for each other so that we can be the people God calls us to be.

ENCOUNTER EVELINA

Evelina, like generations of Zambians before her, used to survive on meals made from corn flour, usually a porridge called “nshima.” “Growing up, I’d eat porridge in the morning, at lunchtime and again in the evening,” she says. After all, it was cheap and easy to make.

Unfortunately, nshima has very little nutritional value—and relying too heavily on it has led to high rates of malnutrition. Many in Zambia have full bellies, but little nourishment. And this is particularly dangerous for children under age 2, who need high levels of vitamins and minerals to grow up healthy and strong. That means mothers who are nursing—as well as their children—need nutritious meals.

So, CRS is teaching women like Evelina how to prepare healthier meals and grow new, vitamin-rich crops like peanuts, pumpkins and sugar cane. In many cases, these crops were already being grown in the village. Now, Evelina and others are adding more nutritious food to their children’s nshima, like ground peanuts or eggs. And, what the women learn, they share with their community—especially expectant mothers.

“We sing and dance during the cooking lessons because we are happy to learn how to cook different types of food,” says Evelina. Evelina is healthier, and so is her son, Steven. “I know I am taking good care of him, because he’s full of energy, he’s strong and never sick,” she says, with a smile.



FACTS TO CONSIDER

Population: 14,638,505

Size: 290,587 square miles;
slightly larger than Texas

- Zambia is a peaceful country with vast agricultural lands. However, Zambia continues to suffer from the devastating impacts of an AIDS epidemic, chronic food insecurity and widespread poverty.
- More than 74 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Many rural families rely on subsistence farming, with limited access to credit or savings. During the “hungry season,” when food is scarce, many families eat only one meal a day.



For downloadable photos,
visit crsricebowl.org/photos.



SACREDNESS AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

GRADES 1—3

45 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE

Students will explore the meaning of the Catholic social teaching principle Sacredness and Dignity of the Human Person and how they can uphold the dignity of others by encountering the story of Evelina in Zambia.

MATERIALS

Map, Evelina's story, Zambia
Activity Sheet: Grades 1—3.

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Locate Zambia on the map. How close is Zambia to your home or school?
2. Read or watch Evelina's story.
3. Reflect:
 - Who did we meet or encounter in the story and what do they do?
 - How does Evelina care for her son Steven and other members of her family?
 - How do you like others to treat you?

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Explain the principle Sacredness and Dignity of the Human Person. Share that each person is made in God's image and likeness. That means that every human being has a special value and purpose. We need to care for each other so that we can be the people God calls us to be.
2. Pass out the Zambia Activity Sheet: Grades 1—3 and ask students to complete the worksheet, which asks them think to about and illustrate a time when they were a good friend or cared for someone else.
3. After everyone has had time to complete the activity sheet, have members share their stories and drawings as a group.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

God of all life,

We pray to always remember that each person is made in your image. May we treat our brothers and sisters and all of God's creation with honor and respect.

Amen

AT HOME

1. Share the Zambia Activity Sheet Grades: 1—3 with your family.
2. Discuss, as a family, the CRS Rice Bowl Lenten calendar's reflection for the day.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE 10 MINUTES

1. Read or watch Evelina's story.
2. Lead Discussion Step 3.



ZAMBIA | SACREDNESS AND DIGNITY
OF THE HUMAN PERSON

We are all made in God's image and likeness. Think about a time that you were a good friend or cared for someone else. This is you seeing God in another person and upholding their dignity.

WHO did you care for? _____

WHAT did you do to care for them? _____

HOW is this like what Jesus would do? _____



Draw and color a picture to show how you care for others.

A large, empty rectangular box with a light gray background, intended for students to draw and color their response to the prompt.

Catholic Social Teaching Focus

DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

Jesus spent years working as a carpenter. Work is important as it helps people express their talents and potential. People must be paid a fair wage for the work they do, so they can provide for themselves and their families.

ENCOUNTER FERNANDO

Fernando dreams of becoming a businessman. He also dreams of a better future for his family, and this motivates him to sell cookbooks on San Salvador's buses. It's dangerous work for \$10 a day—gangs frequently stop and harass drivers and passengers—but he keeps going, determined to achieve his dreams.

It was his dreams that led him to YouthBuild, a 6-month, CRS-sponsored program that trains young people in business. There, he found a positive community to help him pursue his passion, despite the challenges of life in El Salvador. "When I tell my classmates that I want to do something, they tell me to try it and to not hold back."

Training with YouthBuild wasn't easy on Fernando or his family. Without his wife to support him and care for their two young daughters, the early mornings and long days might have been impossible. "YouthBuild is a family because families help you realize your dreams," Fernando says. It's a fact he knows well.

Fernando is putting his newfound skills to work. After graduating from YouthBuild in 2016, he took part in a series of entrepreneur workshops organized by CRS and is currently working on a new business plan. He is also a part of the YouthBuild network of graduates, youth leaders who mentor other young people and look for new opportunities for employment and growth.

"We have a saying," says Fernando. "Once a YouthBuilder, always a YouthBuilder."

**YouthBuild is a member of the YouthBuild International network.*



Photo by Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS

FACTS TO CONSIDER

Population: 6,125,512

Size: 8,124 square miles; slightly smaller than Massachusetts

- El Salvador is the smallest and most densely populated country in Central America. With a population of just more than 6 million, it is also considered the most industrialized country in Central America. However, its people continue to face serious challenges.
- An estimated one in five El Salvadorans have emigrated. The income inequality between rural and urban areas is severe and low economic growth and high levels of violence and insecurity continue to affect Salvadoran society in profound ways.
- Environmental degradation and global climate change make the country highly susceptible to natural disasters. The country is the second most deforested in the Western Hemisphere.



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DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

GRADES 1—3

45 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE

Students will explore the Catholic social teaching principle Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers by encountering the story of Fernando in El Salvador.

MATERIALS

Map, Fernando's story, El Salvador
Activity Sheet: Grades 1—3.

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Locate El Salvador on the map.
How close is El Salvador to your home or school?
2. Read or watch Fernando's story.
3. Reflect:
 - Who did we meet or encounter in the story and what do they do?
 - What does every person need in order to live a full life?
 - Why is work important for people?

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Explain the Catholic social teaching principle Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers. Share that Jesus spent years working as a carpenter. Work is important as it helps people express their talents and potential. People must be paid a fair wage for the work they do, so they can provide for themselves and their families.
2. Pass out the El Salvador Activity Sheet: Grades 1—3 and give students time to complete them.
3. If time permits, have students share their activity sheets with a partner.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Jesus the carpenter,

We pray that each person discovers their passion and true calling.

May all people have the opportunity to pursue their dreams through safe, well-paying work.

Amen

AT HOME

1. Share the El Salvador Activity Sheet: Grades 1—3 at home with your family.
2. Talk about the importance of work in the lives of your parents and discuss the CRS Rice Bowl Lenten calendar's reflection for the day at dinner.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE 10 MINUTES

1. Read or watch Fernando's story.
2. Lead Discussion Step 3.

EL SALVADOR | DIGNITY OF WORK AND
THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS



Work is a very important aspect of life because it helps us to meet our daily needs. Each person should have the right to work in a safe place and earn what they need for themselves and their families.



Draw Fernando's dream of having his own business.

A large, empty rectangular space intended for drawing. The background is light gray with faint, stylized paper textures and shadows, suggesting a workspace or a piece of paper.

Fill in the blank and draw a picture of yourself doing your dream job.

My dream job is _____.

A large, empty rectangular space intended for drawing. The background is light gray with faint, stylized paper textures and shadows, suggesting a workspace or a piece of paper.

Catholic Social Teaching Focus

CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

Humans 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.

ENCOUNTER MARIA

Maria de la Luz remembers what it was like growing up in Ejido Hidalgo, Mexico. “We said we were rich because we had a lot of corn, beans and animals.” But now, with few jobs and even less rain, young people—including Maria’s children—are leaving the community in search of a better life.

To help families like Maria’s, CRS launched a greenhouse project empowering women with meaningful work and community. Women visit their community greenhouses to grow cactuses to sell—but they also go for so much more. “At the greenhouses, we laugh, we talk, we spend time together. Sometimes we leave our homes angry or sad. But then we start working with the plants, and we forget. Talking, laughing—we forget our problems for a while,” says Maria.

As the cactuses grow, so too do the economic opportunities. “We didn’t believe we were going to get that far. It’s a lot of joy, a lot of excitement to see so many plants flowering.”

The flourishing cactuses aren’t the only things that give Maria pride. Even though they live far away, she still remains close to her family. “I give thanks to God that he gave me all my children and grandchildren,” she says. “They give me strength and courage to work hard. My children call and say, ‘Don’t give up, Mom. Have faith in God.’”



Photo by Karen Kosmausk for CRS

FACTS TO CONSIDER

Population: 120,286,655

Size: 761,600 square miles; about 3 times the size of Texas

- Although Mexico has one of the largest economies in Latin America, half of its population lives in poverty. Ongoing economic and social concerns—in addition to drug trafficking, violence and organized crime—are causing an increasing number of people to be forcefully displaced from their homes and businesses.
- The CRS Mexico program addresses several issues of importance: migration, peacebuilding and human rights, and inequitable access to rural development opportunities.



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CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

GRADES 1—3

45 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE

Students will think about how they can support all members of their community by reflecting on the Catholic social teaching principle Call to Family, Community and Participation and encountering the story of Maria in Mexico.

MATERIALS

Map, Maria's story, Mexico
Activity Sheet: Grades 1—3.

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Locate Mexico on the map. How close is Mexico to your home or school?
2. Read or watch Maria's story.
3. Reflect:
 - Who did we meet or encounter in the story and what do they do?
 - Why is Maria's community important?

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Explain the principle Call to Family, Community and Participation. Share that humans 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.
2. Pass out the Mexico Activity Sheet: Grades 1—3 and ask students to complete the worksheet, which has students think about how they can care for people in their various communities.
2. After everyone has had time to complete the activity sheet, have students share their stories and prayers in partners.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

God of love and community,

We thank you for the many people we have in our lives that make up our community.

May we always care for all members of our one human family.

Amen

AT HOME

1. Share the Mexico Activity Sheet: Grades 1—3 at home with your parents and family.
2. Discuss the CRS Rice Bowl Lenten calendar's reflection for the day at dinner.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE 10 MINUTES

1. Read or watch Maria's story.
2. Lead Discussion Step 3.

MEXICO | CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY
AND PARTICIPATION



Write your ideas about how you can help those in need. Then, write a prayer.



I can help those in need in my community ...

at home by: _____

at school by: _____

around the world by: _____

My prayer for my neighbor in need is:

_____ Amen



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 hills and a sun. The sun is in the top left corner, with three dotted rays extending downwards. The landscape is divided into three sections by wavy lines, labeled 'HOME', 'SCHOOL', and 'AROUND THE WORLD' from top to bottom. The sun is partially obscured by a grey shape in the top left corner.