

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Every person is precious because all life is sacred. Each person deserves to be treated with respect and care. People are more important than things, and our choices, communities and institutions should protect the life and dignity of every person. We are called to defend life, care for one another and work for peace.

Week 1 Story: Seeing With New Eyes This Lent

Lent invites us to see the world with new eyes. As we walk with Christ, we begin to recognize him in the faces of our sisters and brothers around the world. When we see Christ in others, we are called to respond with love.

CRS Rice Bowl helps us put our faith into action through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. This Lent, we will meet families in Ethiopia, Honduras and Lebanon who are working hard to care for their children and build a better future. Like us, they want their families to be safe, healthy and full of hope.

Through their stories, we will see how clean water, education and ways to earn a living can help families move from meeting daily needs toward new possibilities. Catholic social teaching reminds us that gifts of the earth are meant for everyone. Through CRS Rice Bowl, we share what we have and grow in compassion and solidarity with our global family.

We prepare our hearts for Easter through prayer, sacrifice and generosity.

Facts to Consider

- Through prayer, we consider the challenges faced by the world's most vulnerable people and how God is calling us to respond.
- By fasting, we let go of our desire for material things, making room to understand the needs of others more deeply and allowing the Holy Spirit to work within us.
- When we give alms, we do it thoughtfully and with compassion toward our sisters and brothers.

Week 1 Lesson Plan: Life and Dignity of the Human Person

45 minutes

Objective

Students will explore the Catholic social teaching principle of Life and Dignity of the Human Person. They will learn that every family deserves safety, health, hope and the opportunity to thrive.

Materials

- Week 1 story and video, available at crsricebowl.org/week-1.
- A map of the world.
- Week 1 Activity Sheet: Grades 7-8.
- Pencils or pens.
- Optional: chart paper or sticky notes.



For downloadable photos, visit crsricebowl.org/photos and watch the video at crsricebowl.org/week-1.



Discussion (15 Minutes)

- Locate Ethiopia, Honduras and Lebanon on the map.
- Read the story from Week 1. Use the video to supplement the story.
- Reflect:
 - What is the difference between want and need?
 - What does it mean to pray? To fast? To give?
 - Why is our participation in CRS Rice Bowl important?

Activity (25 minutes)

1. Explain the Catholic social teaching principle of life and dignity of the human person: Every person is sacred and deserves safety, health, hope and the opportunity to thrive.
2. Write three words where students can see them: See, Judge, Act.
3. Explain that this is a way Catholics reflect on the world: To “see” means to notice what is happening in everyday life, to “judge” means to think about it in light of faith and Catholic social teaching, and to “act” means to decide how to respond with love.
4. Divide students into small groups and provide each group with the Week 1 Activity Sheet: Grades 7-8.
5. Students complete the See, Judge, Act sections by thinking about the needs, challenges and hopes they notice in the everyday lives of their global family—nearby and around the world. Then they share one insight or action idea with the class. Close by asking students to choose one action they can practice during Lent.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Pray the CRS Rice Bowl prayer together as a class:

God of mercy,

*Open our eyes to people who hunger for food
and stability.*

*Bless our prayers, fasting and almsgiving, and teach us to live with grateful hearts and generous
hands.*

Help us to share what we have, so our gifts uplift people today and create a loving world tomorrow.

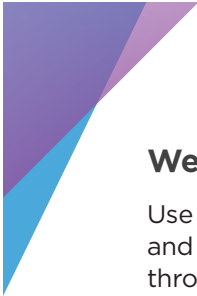
Amen

At Home

1. Share your See, Judge, Act response with your family.
2. Choose one Lenten action to practice together this week.
3. As a family, read and discuss the daily reflection in your CRS Rice Bowl Lenten calendar.

If You Only Have 10 Minutes

1. Read the Week 1 story.
2. Lead discussion reflection questions.



Week 1 Activity Sheet/Guide: Grades 7-8

Use the Catholic reflection model See, Judge, Act to think more deeply about the needs, challenges and hopes you notice in the everyday lives of your global family and how Lent calls us to respond through prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

See What needs, challenges or hopes do I notice in my global family—in my own community and around the world? My response:	Judge What does my faith teach me about human dignity? My response:	Almsgiving How can I respond through prayer, fasting and almsgiving? My response:
My Lenten Response This Lent, I will:		

WEEK 2: ETHIOPIA

Rights and Responsibilities

Every person has dignity and deserves what they need to live a healthy and safe life. We all have rights, like the right to life, and we also have responsibilities to care for one another, our families and our communities. Water, food, education and a chance to build a future are all tied to basic human rights.

Week 2 Story: A Story of Hope from Ethiopia

Fatuma Mussa and her family knew the path to the river well. For many years, Fatuma walked for hours with a donkey to bring water to her family in Yeka Aman, Ethiopia. The trip was difficult and took time from almost everything else.

Then, a new water project, supported by CRS and the local community, changed their lives. Today, clean water is available only a few minutes from home. With water nearby, Fatuma's family can wash more often, save money and grow tomatoes, onions, carrots and bananas.

The change has also helped Fatuma's daughter, Ayantu. In the past, she spent hours helping collect water. Now, she has more time to study and work toward her dream of graduating from college and becoming a science teacher or engineer.

For Fatuma, clean water means her children can grow up healthy and strong. For Ayantu, it means hope for a brighter future.

Facts to Consider

- In many countries in Africa and Asia, women and girls often walk more than 30 minutes each day to collect water.
- Ethiopia is one of the world's oldest countries.
- Many of the wildlife, like the Ethiopian wolf and gelada monkey, cannot be found anywhere else on earth.

Week 2 Lesson Plan: Rights and Responsibilities

45 minutes

Objective

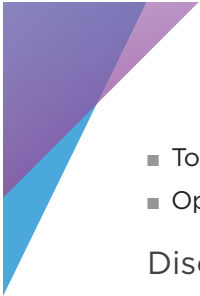
Through the story of Fatuma Mussa and her 15-year-old daughter Ayantu, students will explore the Catholic social teaching principle of Rights and Responsibilities and learn how we should not turn away from the poor but instead ensure all have access to basic human rights like water and food.

Materials

- Week 2 story and video, available at crsricebowl.org/week-2.
- A map of the world.
- Week 2 Activity Guide: Grades 7-8.
- Several small cups or small containers.
- Water.
- One bucket or large bowl per team.



For downloadable photos, visit crsricebowl.org/photos and watch the video at crsricebowl.org/week-2.

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- Towels for spills.
 - Optional: cones or tape to mark the start and finish lines.

Discussion (15 minutes)

- Locate Ethiopia on the map.
- Read the story from Week 2. Use the video to supplement the story.
- Reflect:
 - Why is water important for families?
 - What is something you are thankful for after hearing Fatuma and Ayantu's story? How would you feel if you didn't have that thing?
 - How does having water nearby help Ayantu attend school and study?

Activity (25 minutes)

1. Explain the principle of Rights and Responsibilities, emphasizing how we should not turn away from the poor but instead ensure all have access to basic human rights like water and food.
2. Set up and lead the Bucket Relay activity using the Week 2 Activity Sheet.
3. After students complete the relay, invite them to reflect on why clean water nearby matters for families like Fatuma and Ayantu's.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Loving God,

Thank you for clean water.

Please bless Fatuma, Ayantu and all families who need water.

Help us remember that every person is special and loved by you.

Teach us to care for others and share your love.

Amen

At Home

1. Share what you learned today with your family.
2. As a family, read and discuss the daily reflection in your CRS Rice Bowl Lenten Calendar.

If You Only Have 10 Minutes

1. Read the Week 2 story. Use the video to supplement the story.
2. Lead discussion reflection questions.

Week 2 Activity Sheet/Guide: Grades 7-8

Rights and Responsibilities

Bucket Relay

In Fatuma and Ayantu's story, collecting water took time and energy that could have been used for school, work and family life. Now that clean water is closer to home, their family has more opportunities. This activity helps students think about how access to clean water affects health, education, dignity and a family's future.

Set Up

Choose a space near a water source or use gallon jugs of water. Fill a large container with water at the starting line so teams can refill their cups as needed. Place an empty bucket or large bowl for each team at the other end of the room, hallway or outdoor space. Divide students into small teams and give each team one small cup or container.

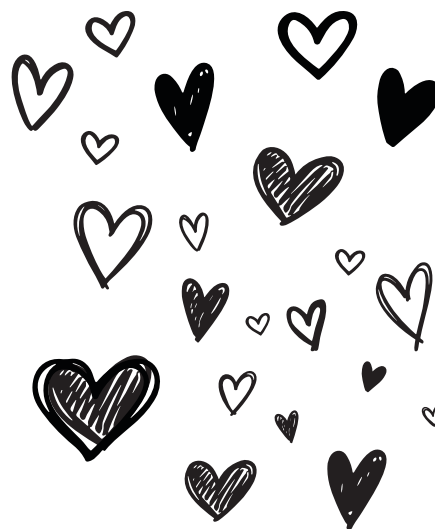
Directions

1. One student at a time carries the cup of water to the bucket.
2. The student pours the water into the bucket and returns to the team.
3. The next student repeats the same steps.
4. Continue for 5-10 minutes, or until each student has had a turn.
5. At the end, look at how much water each team collected and talk about what students noticed.

Reflection

After the relay, invite students to discuss together:

- How many trips did your group make in 5-10 minutes?
- What did the activity show about the time and effort needed to collect water?
- If a student spent this time collecting water every day, what might they miss out on?
- How does access to clean water connect to education, health, dignity and opportunity?
- How does Fatuma and Ayantu's story show why communities need support, not just individual effort?



WEEK 3: HONDURAS

Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

Work should help people and families live with dignity. Work is more than earning money—it is a way people use their gifts and help care for God's creation. Every worker deserves fair pay, safe work and the chance to build a better future for their family.

Week 3 Story: A Story of Hope from Honduras

Before the sun rises in Intibucá, Honduras, Willian Cabrera and Digna Méndez are awake and ready to start the day. While they prepare to pick strawberries from their field, their daughter, Vivian, drinks her milk.

Life was not always easy for their family. In the early years of their marriage, Willian and Digna grew tomatoes, lettuce and onions, but their crops did not do well and they barely made enough money to get by. Determined to build a better future, they began growing strawberries and joined training classes in their community. There, they learned how to manage their small business, spend their money wisely and plan for the future.

Their hard work paid off. After a successful harvest, they were able to build a house for their family.

Today, they dream of an even brighter future. Willian hopes Vivian will one day go to college and have opportunities he never had.

Facts to Consider

- Honduras is located in the Dry Corridor, an area that experiences extreme weather patterns like long periods of drought. This greatly impacts farmers. Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua are also part of the corridor.
- Spanish is the official language of Honduras, but there are many regional and Indigenous languages in the country.
- Strawberries are rich in vitamin C, which is important for having healthy skin and tissue. It also helps to fight off infections and helps your body absorb iron.

Week 3 Lesson Plan: Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

45 minutes

Objective

Students will learn the principle of Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers, and that work helps people use their gifts, care for their families and build a better future. Through Willian and Digna's story, they will see how hard work, training and support helped one family grow their business and create new opportunities for their daughter, Vivian.

Materials

- Week 3 story and video, available at **crsricebowl.org/week-3**.
- A map of the world.
- Six station signs for the Harvest to Hope Movement Path Activity: Struggling Crops, Learning New Skills, Growing Strawberries, Using Extra Fruit Wisely, Building a Home and Dreaming of College for Vivian.



For downloadable photos, visit **crsricebowl.org/photos** and watch the video at **crsricebowl.org/week-3**.

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- Tape and spaces to post the station signs around the room.
 - Sticky notes or half-sheets of paper for student responses.

Discussion (15 minutes)

- Locate Honduras on the map.
- Read the story from Week 3. Use the video to supplement the story.
- Reflect:
 - How did growing strawberries help their family?
 - What dream do Willian and Digna have for Vivian? What do you think your parents/caregivers dream for you?
 - What is one gift or skill God gave you that you can use to help others?

Activity (25 minutes)

1. Explain the principle of Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers, emphasizing that work helps people use their gifts, care for their families and build a better future.
2. Conduct the Harvest to Hope Movement Path Activity.
 - Post six station signs around the room: Struggling Crops, Learning New Skills, Growing Strawberries, Using Extra Fruit Wisely, Building a Home and Dreaming of College for Vivian.
 - Divide students into small groups and have each group begin at a different station.
 - At each station, students discuss: What challenge, strength or hope do we see in this part of the story?
 - Students write one word or short phrase per group on a sticky note or half-sheet of paper and leave it at the station.
 - After a few minutes, groups rotate to the next station until they have visited each one.
 - Gather students together and walk through the stations in order, reading a few responses aloud.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

God of hope,

Thank you for the gifts of work, learning and family.

We pray for Willian, Digna, Vivian and all families working hard to build a better future.

Help us respect the dignity of every worker and use our own gifts to serve others.

Teach us to stand in solidarity with our global family and to work for a world where every person has the chance to thrive.

Amen

At Home

1. Share what you learned today with your family.
2. As a family, read and discuss the daily reflection in your CRS Rice Bowl Lenten calendar.

If You Only Have 10 Minutes

1. Read the Week 3 story. Use the video to supplement the story.
2. Lead discussion reflection questions.

WEEK 4: LEBANON

Call to Family, Community and Participation

God created each person with dignity and made us to live together in families and communities. The choices we make in our communities, laws and policies affect how people are treated and whether they can thrive. Families should be supported and strengthened. We are all called to take part in society and work together for the good of everyone, especially people who are poor or vulnerable.

Week 4 Story: A Story of Hope from Lebanon

Autumn is olive harvest season in Kfar Shouba, Lebanon. For Zeina Ahmad and her family, the harvest is about more than gathering food. It is a tradition that brings relatives and neighbors together and helps families prepare food for the year ahead. “Everyone gathers,” Zeina says. “We prepare lunch, and we eat together.” Life has become difficult in recent years. Many families had to leave their homes, jobs became harder to find and some houses were damaged or destroyed. Through CRS and faith-based partners, families received boxes of food, heaters, blankets, mental health support and cleaning supplies to help meet urgent needs and prepare for winter. Still, Zeina cares for her children, prepares meals and makes *mouneh*—olive oil, grape leaves and pickled vegetables saved for cold months. Neighbors also help each other harvest olives. For Zeina, food, family, community and this support help people keep going and hold on to hope.

Facts to Consider

- Part of the Middle East, Lebanon shares borders with Syria to the north and east, Israel to the south and the Mediterranean Sea to the west.
- In the Gospels, Jesus traveled to and ministered in the region of modern-day Lebanon, specifically the cities of Tyre and Sidon.
- The national animal of Lebanon is the striped hyaena.

Week 4 Lesson Plan: Call to Family, Community and Participation

45 minutes (class portion of activity)

Teacher Note: This activity includes a class food drive. Before beginning, identify a local food bank, parish pantry or community organization that can receive the donated items and make arrangements for delivery or pickup. Be sure to communicate donation guidelines and deadlines with families in advance.

Objective

Through the story of Zeina Brahim and her family, students will explore the Catholic social teaching principle of Call to Family, Community and Participation. God created us to be part of a family and community. When we help others, we build stronger communities where everyone can thrive.

Materials

- Week 4 story and video, available at crsricebowl.org/week-4.
- A map of the world.
- A take-home note or family instruction sheet about the food drive.



For downloadable photos, visit crsricebowl.org/photos and watch the video at crsricebowl.org/week-4.

- A classroom collection box or basket for food drive donations.
- Food items donated by students and families for the food drive.
- Two signs labeled "Near" and "Far."
- A CRS Rice Bowl.
- Information about a local food bank, parish pantry or community organization that will receive the donated food.

Discussion (15 minutes)

- Locate Lebanon on the map.
- Read the story from Week 4. Use the video to supplement the story.
- Reflect:
 - What foods help a family stay healthy?
 - What foods can last a long time?
 - Why might a family need extra help getting food?
 - How did food help Zeina's family during difficult times?

Activity (25 minutes)

1. Explain the principle of Call to Family, Community and Participation, emphasizing that God created every person with dignity and made us to live together in families and communities. The choices we make in our communities, laws and policies affect how people are treated and whether they can thrive.
2. Display an empty box or basket.
3. Say: "Our classroom will hold a food drive for a local food bank. This food drive helps families in our own community who may not always have enough food. But there are also families around the world, like Zeina's family in Lebanon, who need support during emergencies."
4. Invite students to bring in donations for the class food drive throughout the week.
5. As students bring in items each day, invite them to explain how the item could help a family. Encourage students to think about what families need to stay healthy and nourished.
6. At the end of the week, gather around the filled box or basket. Ask: "How did our class work together to help families in our community?" Allow several students to share their responses.
7. Place a sign reading "**Near**" above the box or basket of donated items. Place another sign in the room labeled "**Far.**"
8. Hold up a Rice Bowl and explain: "We can share in two ways. The food we collect helps families nearby. The money we place in our Rice Bowl helps CRS support families around the world with food, emergency assistance and other resources when they face difficult times."
9. Ask: "Why is it important to care for both families near us and families far away?" Emphasize that we belong to one human family and that our actions can help people in our local community and around the world.
10. Invite students to reflect on what they learned throughout the week about how their actions can help families and strengthen communities.



Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Loving God,

Thank you for the food that nourishes us and the people who care for us.

Help us remember families in our community and around the world who may not have enough to eat.

Bless the food we collect and the gifts we place in our Rice Bowl.

May they bring hope, comfort and care to families in need.

Amen

At Home

1. Share with your family how your class is helping families both near and far through the food drive and CRS Rice Bowl.
2. Discuss ways your family participates in helping your community. Consider donating a nonperishable food item to the class food drive.
3. Read and discuss the daily reflection in your CRS Rice Bowl Lenten calendar.

If You Only Have 10 Minutes

1. Read the Week 4 story. Use the video to supplement the story.
2. Lead discussion reflection questions.

WEEK 5: THE JOURNEY OF A RICE BOWL GIFT

Solidarity

Solidarity means we are one human family. We care for one another, no matter where we live or how different we may be. We are called to love our neighbors, work for peace and help make the world more fair for everyone.

Week 5 Story: The Journey of a Rice Bowl Gift

A Rice Bowl gift may begin in a small way. Maybe it is a few coins saved from a simple sacrifice. Maybe it is a dollar placed in the box with a prayer. But in God's hands, small gifts can grow into something powerful.

Your gift can help families around the world build safer, healthier lives. It can help bring clean water closer to home, support farmers as they grow food, and open doors for children to learn and dream of a brighter future. It reminds you that your sisters and brothers in need are not far away. They are part of your one human family.

This Lent, every prayer, sacrifice and gift matters. Together, these acts become signs of God's love at work. As you prepare for Easter, may your Rice Bowl remind you that even the smallest act of love can help build a future filled with hope.

Facts to Consider

- Rice Bowl gifts support families in many different ways, including access to clean water, nutritious food, farming support, education, healthcare and opportunities to earn a living.
- Small gifts add up. When many people pray, fast and give during Lent, their sacrifices become part of a larger effort to serve our sisters and brothers in need.
- Solidarity reminds us that people who live far away are still part of our one human family. CRS Rice Bowl helps us remember that our choices can make a difference for neighbors near and far.

Week 5 Lesson Plan: Solidarity

45 minutes

Objective

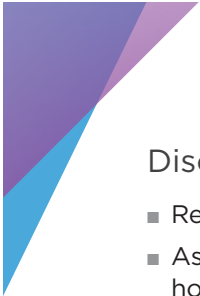
Students will learn that solidarity means we are one human family. Through the journey of a Rice Bowl gift, they will see how prayer, sacrifice and giving can help our sisters and brothers near and far.

Materials

- Week 5 story and video, available at crsricebowl.org/week-5.
- A map of the world.
- A ball of yarn.
- Optional: list of needs from the year's CRS Rice Bowl stories.



For downloadable photos, visit crsricebowl.org/photos and watch the video at crsricebowl.org/week-5.



Discussion (15 minutes)

- Read the story from Week 5. Use the video to supplement the story.
- Ask students to name some needs every person shares, such as clean water, enough food, a safe home, education, health care, family, friendship and opportunities to earn a living.
- Reflect:
 - Why do the needs of people in other countries matter to us?
 - How does a CRS Rice Bowl gift help us care for our global family?

Activity (25 minutes)

1. Have students sit in a circle with a ball of yarn.
2. Invite one student to hold the end of the yarn and answer: “What is something every person needs to live a healthy, hopeful life?”
3. After answering, the student tosses the yarn to someone else while holding onto their piece.
4. The next student answers: “How could someone help meet that need?”
5. Continue around the circle, alternating between naming a need and naming a way someone could help meet that need, until everyone is connected by the yarn.
6. Ask students to look at the web they created and notice how each person is connected to the others.

Reflection

- What do you notice about our web?
- What would happen if one part of the web broke?
- Why do the needs of people in other countries matter to us?
- How does a CRS Rice Bowl gift help strengthen the web?

Emphasize: Solidarity means more than feeling sorry for someone. It means recognizing that we belong to one human family. When one part of the family struggles, we care and respond because we are connected.

Optional Extension

After the web is complete, call out needs from the year’s CRS Rice Bowl stories, such as access to clean water, better harvests, education for children, healthy food and job opportunities. For each need, gently tug the yarn and have students notice how the whole web moves. Explain: “Even when challenges happen far away, they affect real people who are part of our human family. Through prayer, sacrifice and giving, we can help strengthen the web.”

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Loving God,

Thank you for making us one human family.

Help us notice the needs of our sisters and brothers around the world and respond with generous hearts.

Teach us to pray, sacrifice and give so that every person can live with dignity and hope.

Amen



At Home

1. Share what you learned about solidarity with your family.
2. Talk about one small sacrifice your family can make together before Easter.
3. As a family, read and discuss the daily reflection in your CRS Rice Bowl Lenten calendar.

If You Only Have 10 Minutes

1. Read “The Journey of a Rice Bowl Gift.”
2. Lead the discussion reflection questions.

