



# LENT IS A TIME OF encounter

*Photo by Daniel Helfer for CRS*

## INTRODUCTION

During Lent, we walk with Jesus on his road to death and resurrection. Lent is a time of encounter. And, we can use this season of Lent as a special time to respond to the call to be a Church that goes out to encounter ourselves, our neighbor and our God.

This resource is offered for faith formation with spirituality rooted in:

- The liberation of each young person
- The preferential option for the poor
- Our relationship to the Trinity, centered on Jesus Christ
- Our call to communal and personal conversion through solidarity
- The focus and process of V Encuentro

## STRUCTURE OF RESOURCE

Using the structure of the pastoral circle, we recognize that each youth, from their reality, is a protagonist in their community—exploring diverse ways to express themselves, encounter God and examine the reality of injustice in the world.

To this end, this resource has five sessions designed to reflect on Scripture, create unique opportunities for prayer and build global solidarity—personally and communally.

## SESSION 1

### TAKING THE FIRST STEP/PRIMEREANDO

An encounter with Jesus, who calls us to be missionary disciples for personal and communal conversion.

## SESSION 2

### GETTING INVOLVED/INVOLUCRÁNDOSE

An encounter with our realities as a community of missionary disciples.

## SESSION 3

### ACCOMPANING/ACOMPAÑANDO

An encounter with the presence of injustice that moves us to denounce it, and embrace mercy and global solidarity through accompaniment.

## SESSION 4

### BEARING FRUIT/FRUCTIFICANDO

An encounter with our human experience through the presence of Jesus in our life.

## SESSION 5

### CELEBRATING/FESTEJANDO

An encounter with the celebration that is the promise of Jesus' resurrection, and what that means for living a prophetic life of justice and global solidarity.

# SESSION 1: TAKING THE FIRST STEP

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will explore what it means to be called by God and a “callejero de la fe” by reflecting on the life of Jesus.



BE

## OPENING PRAYER

*Spirit of renewal,*

*Entering this journey of Lent, we pause to reflect on our call to personal and communal conversion. May this special time be an opportunity to encounter ourselves and our communities with a renewed spirit.*

*Amen*



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Give time for participants to reflect and journal about their responses. Play music that encourages a reflective environment.

- What does being called and a “callejero de la fe” mean to you?
- In what ways do you take the initiative to know the love of Jesus and to share that love with your neighbor, especially your neighbor who is on the margins?
- How can you use this time of Lent to commit yourself to take the first step to go out to encounter yourself, your neighbor and Jesus in a renewed way?



SEE

## ACTIVITY: OUR JOURNEY (20 minutes)

**Materials:** blank paper, pens, markers

Before beginning his mission, Jesus spent 40 days in the desert praying and fasting. Lent offers us a special opportunity to reflect about our lives and our calling, as well as to take time to examine our relationship with God and neighbor.

Ask participants to turn their piece of paper horizontally and to draw a winding road the width of their paper. After, ask that they write the words “In the beginning” at one end of the road and the word “Today” on the opposite end of the road. Tell them that they are going to describe their personal faith journey; thinking about their formation, the moments that have been important to their faith, from their birth to present day. Ask that they draw a cross for each significant moment of their faith journey. Give them time to share their journey with a partner.



JUDGE

## ACTIVITY: LISTENING TO SACRED SCRIPTURE

Luke 24:13–32 (20 minutes)

Use the *Lectio divina* resource in the appendix or at [crsricebowl.org/youth](https://crsricebowl.org/youth) to reflect on the Scripture.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What does this Gospel story mean to you?
- What phrase called out to you in the Scripture?
- In what ways are you being called by Jesus to go out and encounter who you are?
- In what ways is your heart burning as a disciple to live passionately for justice, love and peace?
- Adipienimin ratem faciae eosam doluptas consequatus.

## SESSION 1: TAKING THE FIRST STEP



### ACT

**ACTIVITY:** OUR IDENTITY IN VALUES (20 minutes)

**Materials:** Blank paper, pencils

One way to reflect on who we are is through our values. Values represent the formation we have received throughout our lives. They also represent our hopes for the world and the way we want to live.

Ask youth to write 20 values that are important to them. After, tell them that they need to reduce their list to the 10 values that are most important. Next, ask that they reduce their list to 5 values and, finally, to only 3 values. Ask youth to share their values and the process of selecting those values in pairs.



### EVALUATE

Take time to have participants evaluate and write their reflections about the activity. After some personal reflection, ask participants to share in small groups of three or in pairs.



### REFLECTION QUESTION

- What is the message that you received from the activity today?



### CELEBRATE

#### FINAL PRAYER

Allow a volunteer to offer a prayer in his or her own words. Then, ask another participant to read these words of Pope Francis:

*"Christ has confidence in young people and entrusts them with the very future of his mission, 'Go and make disciples.' Go beyond the confines of what is humanly possible and create a world of brothers and sisters!"*

*Amen*

## SESSION 2: GETTING INVOLVED

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will name the realities in which they live in—the reality of their joys and struggles—for themselves and for their communities. This will help youth recognize how Jesus moves them to get involved in their various communities, including our one human family.



### OPENING PRAYER

*Creator, present in our realities,  
May we go out to encounter with open  
hearts, ready to examine the realities of the  
world. Inspire us with your mercy and the  
true path to create a world of disciples.  
Amen*



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Give time for participants to reflect and journal about their responses. Play music that encourages a reflective environment.

- In what ways are you engaged in the realities of our world?
- How do you seek to live like Jesus—in a way that is just and supportive of our brothers and sisters on the margins?
- How do you go out in search of God's renewal?



### ACTIVITY: LIFE IN COMMUNION (15 minutes)

**Materials:** Questions in the instructions below

Our lives are a journey in communion. We walk in our realities as a community. And, we are a Church called to conversion through prayer and by following the way of Jesus.

Organize the group into a large circle. Explain that you are going to read a list of phrases that they will complete with one word, aloud, building a communal prayer. The participants should complete the phrases one person at a time, sequentially around the circle. After everyone has responded, continue with the next phrase, and so on, to complete the prayer.

Read the following phrases for participants to complete:

- The world I see is . . .
- What guides me on my journey is . . .
- I commit to . . .



### ACTIVITY: LISTENING TO SACRED SCRIPTURE

John 4:4-14 (20 minutes)

*Use the Lectio divina resource in the appendix or at [crsricebowl.org/youth](https://crsricebowl.org/youth) to reflect on the Scripture.*



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What does this Gospel story mean to you?
- What phrase called out to you in the Scripture?
- How do you go out to encounter your neighbor, as Jesus encountered the woman at the well?
- What do you thirst for, and how can you use that thirst to work for a more just world?



## SESSION 2: GETTING INVOLVED



### ACTIVITY: WORDS IN ACTION (15 minutes)

**Materials:** Bibles or copies of John 4:4-14 for each group of 4 or 5

Written in the sacred Scripture are messages to guide our lives. Jesus teaches us through his words and actions. How can we recognize the message of this passage for our lives, personally and communally? Sometimes we may learn something about ourselves or something about humanity: The Word always has a connection to our realities.

Create groups of four or five people, and ask that they read the Gospel passage together. Give time for the groups to prepare a skit about a situation in which they went out to encounter someone on the peripheries of society. With this skit, the youth should express how they can live Jesus' message of unity with our neighbor, and how people we encounter can teach us many things. Give time for each group to present their skit.



Take time to have participants evaluate and write their reflections about the activity. After some personal reflection, ask participants to share in groups of three or in pairs.



### REFLECTION QUESTION

- What is the message that you received from the activity today?



### FINAL PRAYER

Allow a volunteer to offer a prayer in his or her own words. Then, ask another participant to read these words of Pope Francis:

*"In this 'stepping out' it is important to be ready for encounter. For me this word is very important. Encounter with others. Why? Because faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others. ... We must go out to meet them, and with our faith we must create a 'culture of encounter,' a culture of friendship, a culture in which we find brothers and sisters, in which we can also speak with those who think differently, as well as those who hold other beliefs, who do not have the same faith. They all have something in common with us: They are images of God, they are children of God. Going out to meet everyone, without losing sight of our own position."*

Amen

## SESSION 3: ACCOMPANYING

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will name the injustices that are a part of their lives, including the exploitation and oppression of those in poverty around the world, in order to build a more just world as protagonists in that vision.



### OPENING PRAYER

*Jesus, our companion in truth and love,  
May we create your vision on Earth, your  
mission of justice and peace. Let us own  
our call to conversion in order to transform  
our relationship with all of creation as  
disciples and builders of a world of  
inclusion and liberation.*

*Amen*



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Give time for participants to reflect and journal about their responses. Play music that encourages a reflective environment or CRS' Stations of the Cross video series, available at [crsricebowl.org/holy-week](http://crsricebowl.org/holy-week).

- What are some aspects of the reality in which you live?
- Who is part of your community, and in what realities do they live?
- How do you take into account the injustices present in our world and act to construct a world where everyone can flourish?



### ACTIVITY: MARY, UNTIER OF KNOTS (15 minutes)

**Materials:** Space for a big circle, thick rope, permanent markers, two pieces of white fabric for each person to write on

Examining the realities in which we live means that we need to go out to encounter and investigate the injustice present in the way we live. In doing so, we can recognize our responsibility to accompany our neighbor in their journey. It also means that we share our hopes and struggles in community.

Ask participants to stand in a circle. Arrange the rope in a circle in the middle. Explain that each person will have time to write two intercessions (one on each of their fabric pieces) to offer to the community and to Mary, untier of knots, on their fabric. After they finish writing, ask that one person at a time tie their pieces of fabric to the rope. After everyone is finished, ask them to reenter the circle, one at a time, to untie another person's intercession, read it in silence and offer it to Mary, untier of knots.



### ACTIVITY: LISTENING TO SACRED SCRIPTURE

Matthew 15:22-32 (20 minutes)

Use the *Lectio divina* resource in the appendix or at [crsricebowl.org/youth](http://crsricebowl.org/youth) to reflect on the Scripture.



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What does this Gospel story mean to you?
- What phrase called out to you in the Scripture?
- In what ways are you a part of the injustice that affects your neighbor living in poverty?
- Who are your neighbors carrying crosses of injustice?

## SESSION 3: ACCOMPANYING



**ACTIVITY:** EXAMINING AND BEING IN THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE (15 minutes)

**Materials:** Three poster boards, various magazines, colored paper, markers, glue

In ministry in communion and in the pastoral circle, we reflect not only on the realities in which we live, but also in the mission of our call, and the action that we want to take to build God's vision on Earth.

Put two poster boards on different tables. On other tables, put magazines and other creative materials for the group. Explain that the group will create one poster to represent "the reality," or the world they live in, and another poster that represents "the vision," or the world they want to see. Each person can add what they want to help fill each poster—symbols, words, magazine images, etc. At the end of the activity, there will be two posters that represent the group. To finish the activity, use the third poster to have the group reflect on how they can create the vision in their second poster, by writing a list of their ideas.



Take time to have participants evaluate and write their reflections about the activity. After some personal reflection, ask participants to share in groups of three or in pairs.



### REFLECTION QUESTION

- What is the message that you received from the activity today?



### FINAL PRAYER

Allow a volunteer to offer a prayer in his or her own words. Then, ask another participant to read these words of Pope Francis:

*"God's world is a world where everyone feels responsible for the other, for the good of the other. This evening, in reflection, fasting and prayer, each of us deep down should ask ourselves: 'Is this really the world that I desire? Is this really the world that we all carry in our hearts? Is the world that we want really a world of harmony and peace, in ourselves, in our relations with others, in families, in cities, in and between nations?'"*

*Amen*

## SESSION 4: BEARING FRUIT

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will open themselves up to see how Jesus is moving and present in their lives.



### OPENING PRAYER

*God of humility,*

*Help us to see your presence in our lives,  
in our neighbor, all people who live near us  
and all over the world.*

*Give us the strength to continue working to  
be the person that you call us to be.*

*Amen*



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Give time for participants to reflect and journal about their responses. Play music that encourages a reflective environment.

- How does Jesus accompany you?
- How do you accompany your neighbor in his or her journey?
- What does accompaniment mean to you, and how does that definition include mutuality?



### ACTIVITY: THE EXAMEN (15 minutes)

**Materials:** The Examen

The Examen, an Ignatian meditation, gives us an opportunity to reflect on the presence of Jesus in our lives through our everyday encounters and interactions. In these encounters, we find how God is present in our lives and where we have been open to receive God's messages for us.

If there is space, ask participants to sit or lie down in a comfortable position. After a long pause, begin the meditation, pausing after each question to provide participants with enough time to reflect on the question.

- We pause to take a moment to reflect on our day . . .
  - When you woke up, how did you feel?
  - In the morning, who did you encounter? Were you traveling to a specific place?
  - What was your motivation to do what you did?
  - What did you do this afternoon?
  - How did you finish your day?
  - In what part of the day did you feel closest to Jesus?
  - At what moment of your day did you feel distanced from Jesus?
  - What is Jesus trying to communicate to you?
  - Give thanks to God for this day, in your own way. And, ask for accompaniment in the joyful and difficult moments of each day.
- Amen

After the meditation, ask participants to reflect on the experience in small groups or with partners.



## SESSION 4: BEARING FRUIT



### JUDGE

#### ACTIVITY: LISTENING TO SACRED SCRIPTURE

Luke 10:25–37 (20 minutes)

Use the *Lectio divina* resource in the appendix or at [crsricebowl.org/youth](https://crsricebowl.org/youth) to reflect on the Scripture.



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What does this Gospel story mean to you?
- What phrase called out to you in the Scripture?
- When you go out to encounter your neighbor, do you search for the light and teaching they have for you?
- In your life, what encounters have you had that taught you the truth of who you are and the person you want to be?



### ACT

#### ACTIVITY: GIFTS ARE TO BE SHARED (15 minutes)

**Materials:** paper, markers, pens

Who we are is a gift from God and a gift to our communities. Similarly, the people we encounter are gifts from God and a gift to our communities. Today, we reflect on our gifts and how we can use them to build a more just world through mutual accompaniment, as Jesus accompanies us.

Ask participants to draw a tree with roots, a trunk, branches, leaves and fruit. Explain to the participants that they should write the following over each part of the tree:

- Roots—what inspires you to live connected to Jesus' mission
- Trunk—what you are passionate about and the values you live out
- Branches—your talents that you can offer to others
- Leaves—the moments when you are open to Jesus' movement in your life
- Fruit—the lessons you have received from your neighbor



### EVALUATE

Take time to have participants evaluate and write their reflections about the activity. After some personal reflection, ask participants to share in groups of three or in pairs.



### REFLECTION QUESTION

- What is the message that you received from the activity today?



### CELEBRATE

#### FINAL PRAYER

Allow a volunteer to offer a prayer in his or her own words. Afterward, ask another participant to read these words of Pope Francis:

*"We could never have imagined that the same Lord would become one of us and walk with us, be present with us, present in his Church, present in the Eucharist, present in his Word, present in the poor. He is present, walking with us. And this is closeness: the shepherd close to his flock, close to his sheep, whom he knows, one by one."*

*Amen*

## SESSION 5: CELEBRATING

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will celebrate their commitment to living as their true selves, exploring their role as part of the Body of Christ on Earth.



### OPENING PRAYER

*Jesus, you have walked on Earth, suffered, died and risen.*

*We have reflected on our calling, on your presence and on the need of your vision and mission in the world. Make us an instrument of your mercy and action for liberation and justice.*

*Amen*



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Give time for participants to reflect and journal about their responses. Play music that encourages a reflective environment.

- How do you celebrate, through your actions, the spirit of the resurrection that you receive from Jesus?
- How do you celebrate your faith by constructing the vision Jesus calls us to create as a community of missionary disciples?
- What does the Resurrection mean to you?



**ACTIVITY:** SOLIDARITY WILL TRANSFORM THE WORLD (15 minutes)

**Materials:** large poster, markers

Solidarity is transformative and will transform the world. In the moments that we are open to Jesus' call in our lives, we receive the Spirit, and our hearts are on fire to create a more just world for all. It is not only a feeling that makes us feel a closeness to God, but one that moves us to be a part of the struggle for justice in a renewed way, working for the common good.

Write the sentence "Solidarity will transform the world" on a large poster, and place it on the ground. Invite each participant to write his or her definition of the phrase; it can be a complete sentence or a few words. Then, give time for each participant to examine and review what others in the group wrote, as a walking, silent meditation.



**ACTIVITY:** LISTENING TO SACRED SCRIPTURE  
Matthew 28:1-10 (20 minutes)

Use the *Lectio divina* resource in the appendix or at [crsricebowl.org/youth](https://crsricebowl.org/youth) to reflect on the Scripture.



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What does this Gospel story mean to you?
- What phrase called out to you in the Scripture?
- Do you have the faith to receive the Resurrection of Jesus like the women at the tomb?
- How can you commit yourself to liberation and justice as a disciple of Jesus?

## SESSION 5: CELEBRATING



### ACTIVITY: A LETTER TO YOURSELF (15 minutes)

**Materials:** CRS Rice Bowls and a CRS Lenten Calendar, blank paper, pens, envelopes

After the journey of prayer, fasting and almsgiving that is Lent, we pause to review what we have learned about ourselves, our neighbors and our relationship with God.

Allow time for participants to reflect on their CRS Rice Bowl and Lenten Calendar, including the stories of the brothers and sisters they met this Lenten season. Explain that these are symbols of their faith journey, and ask that they write a letter to themselves about their reflections from this Lenten season, and about what they want to do to live the spirit of the resurrection, both personally and in their community.



Take time to have participants evaluate and write their reflections about the activity. After some personal reflection, ask participants to share in groups of three or in pairs.



### REFLECTION QUESTION

- What is the message that you received from the activity today?



### FINAL PRAYER

Allow a volunteer to offer a prayer in his or her own words. Then, ask another participant to read these words of Pope Francis:

*"Dear brothers and sisters, Christ is risen! And we have the possibility of opening our hearts and receiving his gift of hope. Let us open our hearts to hope and go forth. May the memory of his works and his words be the bright star which directs our steps in the ways of faith towards that Easter that will have no end."*

*Amen*

# APPENDIX

## LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio divina is a way to pray with sacred Scripture through meditation with repetition and imagination.

*Recommendation for the activity:*

Ask the participants to sit comfortably before you begin the exercise. Read the Scripture slowly and with clarity, or invite a volunteer to read to the group using the instructions below.

1. Read the Scripture for the first time. Give time for silence and reflection after you finish the reading.
2. Before reading the Scripture for the second time, ask that participants select a person in the story to focus on for the duration of the reading. Give time for silent reflection after you finish the reading.
3. Read the Scripture for the third time. Give time for silent reflection. Ask participants to share one word or a short phrase that stood out to them in the Scripture.
4. As a group, ask participants to share something about the experience and the messages that they have received from God.

