



PREPARING FOR LENT: A 10-MINUTE PRAYERFUL INTRODUCTION

Introduce students to CRS Rice Bowl at the beginning of Lent with this short activity.

SETUP:

Pass out CRS Rice Bowls and give students time to assemble them. They should keep the enclosed Lenten Calendars handy for this activity.

LEADER

Before beginning his ministry, Jesus went into the desert to pray. He didn't eat or drink; he fasted and used the time to focus on his relationship with God. Today, during the 40 days before Easter known as Lent, we too are called to focus on our relationship with God. Catholics do three things to grow closer to God during Lent: **pray**, **fast** and **give alms** to those in need. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are the three pillars of Lenten spirituality.

The CRS Rice Bowl and Lenten calendar will be our guides this Lent, as we reflect on our role to care for the most vulnerable—those experiencing hunger, lack of economic opportunity or violence that forces them to migrate.

READER 1

The first pillar of Lent is PRAYER.

We pray to grow in our relationship with God, and ask God for guidance on how to live our lives. In our prayer, we also thank God for the gifts we have been given, and we pray for those who have less than we do. During Lent, we can make an extra effort to pray each day to become the person God calls us to be.

Invite students to find the Lenten prayer on the side of their CRS Rice Bowls and read it aloud together. Ask them to look at the daily reflections on their Lenten calendars and encourage them to read them at home with their families.

READER 2

The second pillar of Lent is FASTING.

Fasting means we give something up to make more space for what's truly important—our relationship with God and our neighbor. We do this to help us recognize the difference between wants and needs. Choosing to live without something we like reminds us that everything we have is a gift from God. Another aspect of Lenten fasting is not eating meat on Fridays.

Invite students to look at the meatless recipes on their Lenten calendars and encourage them to try some of these at home with their families. Encourage students to help others by putting the money they save by eating simply into their CRS Rice Bowls.

READER 3

The third pillar of Lent is ALMSGIVING.

When we give to those who have less than we do, we honor Jesus' call to serve our neighbors, and we share the gifts we have received. This Lent, we will encounter people from other countries who we can help through our Lenten sacrifices to CRS Rice Bowl.

Invite students to look at the stories and pictures on their Lenten calendars. Encourage them to read these stories at home with their families.

LEADER

We pray that the stories, recipes and prayers from CRS Rice Bowl will help us encounter our brothers and sisters around the world, and, in doing so, grow closer to God during this season of Lent. As we begin our 40-day journey, we ask God to bless these CRS Rice Bowls and walk with us throughout this holy time of encounter.

Amen