

WEEK 1

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY: VISIT THE PRISONERS

People in prison are still people—they are made in the image and likeness of God. No matter what someone has done, they deserve the opportunity to hear the Word of God and find the truth of the message of Christ.

STORIES OF HOPE

“Lord, when did we see you?” —Matthew 25:37

Matthew’s Gospel invites us to remember that we are responsible for helping all our sisters and brothers, even those who are strangers to us. When we do this, we care for Christ.

The season of Lent gives us a wonderful opportunity to reflect and make room in our hearts to welcome the stranger. Through our **prayer**, we encounter Jesus, who is present in the face of every member of our human family. When we **fast**, we encounter the obstacles that stop us from fully loving God and our neighbor. When we **give alms**, we share what we have with others.

This Lent CRS Rice Bowl takes us to three countries—Madagascar, El Salvador and Timor-Leste. Hunger and malnutrition, which happens when we don’t get the right amount of nutrients, are challenges that too many families face each day. One out of every 10 people worldwide don’t have enough to eat. Sometimes this is caused by natural disasters like floods and droughts. Other times, families don’t have enough money to buy the food they need, or the food they can get doesn’t have all the vitamins and minerals they need to stay healthy.

CRS helps communities find solutions to each of these problems. Farming families learn new skills and grow stronger, healthier harvests. Communities train health care workers so children can get regular check-ups and parents can learn new nutritious recipes to make sure their families get a balanced diet. People in vulnerable areas prepare for unpredictable weather that could destroy crops.

Jesus calls us to help those in need. Our Lenten prayers, fasting and sacrificial gifts help us answer this call.



Photo by Jim Stipe / CRS

FACTS TO CONSIDER

- One in 10 people worldwide don’t have enough to eat and almost 1 in 4 of all children under age 5 are stunted, meaning that they are struggling to grow and develop.
- A study done by the World Health Organization and other international organizations estimates that almost 690 million people went hungry in 2019—up by 10 million from 2018, and by nearly 60 million in five years.
- The term malnutrition refers to deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in a person’s intake of energy and/or nutrients.



For downloadable photos, visit crsricebowl.org/photos and watch the video from Week 1 at crsricebowl.org/stories.

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY: VISIT THE PRISONERS

45 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE

This Lent, by journeying to Madagascar, El Salvador and Timor-Leste, students will have a deeper understanding of how their sacrifices benefit communities around the world and will reflect on our Christian call to serve Jesus by carrying out the corporal works of mercy. In this lesson, students will identify prayer, fasting and almsgiving as the three pillars of Lent while reflecting on the corporal work of mercy visiting the prisoners.

MATERIALS

- Map
- Week 1 story or video (available at [csricebowl.org/stories](https://www.csricebowl.org/stories))
- Week 1 Activity Sheet: Grades 1-3 (available in this guide and at [csricebowl.org/1-8](https://www.csricebowl.org/1-8))

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Find Madagascar, El Salvador and Timor-Leste on the map.
2. Read or watch the story from Week 1.
3. Reflect:
 - What are the three pillars of Lent and why are they important?
 - One in 10 people in the world suffer from hunger. Is that a big number?
 - *You can demonstrate with the students in your class what 1 in 10 people looks like. Emphasize that one person suffering from hunger is too many.*
 - What are some reasons people do not have enough to eat?
 - How do you think we can help someone who is suffering from hunger by praying, fasting and giving alms?

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Explain the corporal work of mercy visiting the prisoners. People in prison are still people—they are made in the image and likeness of God. No matter what someone has done, they deserve the opportunity to hear the Word of God and find the truth of the message of Christ.
 - *You can refer to when we had to stay home because of the COVID-19 pandemic: Many felt like prisoners in their own home. Wouldn't you have liked to be visited by others?*
2. Have students complete the Week 1 Activity Sheet: Grades 1-3.
3. If time permits, ask the students to share their answers.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Merciful Jesus,

May we welcome you joyfully into our lives, and may we see you in those who are suffering, so that through our works we share with them your mercy, your forgiveness and your love.

Amen

AT HOME

1. Share your activity sheet with your family and mail your card to someone you know who may need words of encouragement.
2. As a family, read today's reflection found in your **CRS Rice Bowl Lenten Calendar**.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE



1. Read or watch the Week 1 story.
2. Lead Discussion step 3.

Name: _____



When Pope Francis visited the United States in 2015, he met with a group of people in prison and spoke to them. After his address, Pope Francis shook hands with each one of them and hugged them to let them—and all of us—know that God loves them and is with them.

Draw yourself holding Jesus' hand. Then add kind and encouraging words to tell someone you and Jesus love them. *Note to the teacher:* Encourage kids to mail their card to someone they know who needs words of reassurance.





Choose the right word to complete this paragraph:

visited *food* *stranger* *clothed* *ill* *drink*

“For I was hungry and you gave me _____, I was thirsty and you gave me _____, a _____ and you welcomed me, naked and you _____ me, _____ and you cared for me, in prison and you _____ me.

Give an example of how you can help others using the seven corporal works of mercy below.

1. Feed the hungry

Example: _____

2. Give drink to the thirsty

Example: _____

3. Clothe the naked

Example: _____

4. Shelter the homeless

Example: _____

5. Visit the sick

Example: _____

6. Visit the prisoners

Example: _____

7. Bury the dead

Example: _____