

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 Slipes / 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.

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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 7-8 (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:
 - One in 10 people in the world suffer from hunger. Is that a big number?
 - Why do you think there are still people suffering from hunger today, despite new technology, increased wealth in the world, and other reasons?
 - Why, even if people have food, might they still be malnourished?
 - What are the three pillars of Lent and why is it important to practice them?

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 7-8.
3. If time permits, ask the students to share their answers to the questions.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

All loving God,

We are open to seeing you in all people. We pause to ask your guidance and support in the times we have fallen short of sharing your love with others. (Pause) We offer a time of silence in gratitude for the moments we've upheld the dignity of those we've encountered. (Pause)

Amen

AT HOME

1. Share your activity sheet with your family.
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: _____



Write a prayer about the corporal work of mercy visiting the prisoners.

The seven corporal works of mercy are feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, bury the dead and visit the prisoner. What do they mean to you?
