

WEEK 4

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY: FEED THE HUNGRY

Feeding the hungry is the first corporal work of mercy mentioned by Jesus: “For I was hungry and you gave me food” (Matthew 25:35). In Timor-Leste, communities are growing the food they need to thrive with the help of tools and training from CRS.

A STORY OF HOPE FROM TIMOR-LESTE

Timor-Leste is a small Asian country, slightly larger than the state of Connecticut. It’s on the other side of the world near Australia, and it’s one of the world’s newest countries—only 18 years old. In comparison, the United States will be 245 years old this year!

Many families in Timor-Leste live in rural areas and work as farmers. But challenges like changing weather patterns make it difficult to grow enough food. They depend on rice as a main part of their meals, and hunger and malnutrition are big problems. More than one-third of people in Timor-Leste don’t have reliable access to enough nutritious food. This especially affects children and their ability to develop to their full potential.

With training from CRS, families are starting home gardens to grow different vegetables, beans and other foods that are rich in nutrients like vitamin A and iron. The gardens are built to withstand droughts and flooding, and the families add the food they grow—such as spinach, cabbage, peanuts, carrots and tomatoes—to their daily rice staple, providing more nourishing meals that help children grow and stay healthy.

Parents attend nutrition groups in their communities where they learn how to build and improve their gardens. They also learn new recipes that incorporate the produce they grow—and they sometimes have cooking competitions to see who can prepare the tastiest meal!

Eliza and her husband Paulino have six children. After participating in her community’s nutrition group, she and Paulino started a home garden and began growing different crops based on the rainy and dry seasons. They also started



Photo by Amy Djafove / CRS

raising chickens, which provide additional protein to their meals and income from selling the eggs. Eliza wants her children to be healthy and says, “I know the vegetables provide essential vitamins for them.”

FACTS TO CONSIDER:

- Timor-Leste gained independence from Indonesia in 2002, making it the first new nation of the millennium. As a new country, it experienced conflict and other obstacles that have impacted its development and the wellbeing of the Timorese people.
- Most families in Timor-Leste live in rural communities, and more than 80% make their living as subsistence farmers. Frequent natural and man-made disasters make it difficult for families to grow enough food to survive. As a result, the country has one of the world’s worst nutrition rates.
- CRS has been providing aid to the Timorese people since 1979 and works with partners and farming communities to improve farming and storage techniques, to become resilient to disasters such as landslides and flooding, and to improve nutrition within families.



For downloadable photos, visit crsricebowl.org/photos and watch the video from Week 4 at crsricebowl.org/photos.

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY: FEED THE HUNGRY

45 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE

Through the story of families in Timor-Leste who are fighting malnutrition with innovative home gardens, students will reflect on the corporal work of mercy feeding the hungry.

MATERIALS

- Week 4 story or video (available at [csricebowl.org/stories](https://www.csricebowl.org/stories))
- Week 4 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. Ask students if they remember where Timor-Leste is. Locate it on the map. What is one thing you already know about Timor-Leste?
2. Read or watch the story from Week 4.
3. Reflect:
 - What stood out to you in this story?
 - Giving people food and providing the tools they need to get food for themselves are two different but important ways to feed the hungry. Why are both necessary?
 - How can you help to feed the hungry?

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Explain the corporal work of mercy feeding the hungry. There are millions of people around the world who experience chronic hunger and malnutrition, even though there is enough food in the world to feed everyone. Every person has the right to life, including what is necessary to sustain a life with dignity. We need nutritious food to live and thrive, and it is our responsibility as Christians to help those who don't have enough food to eat.
2. Feeding the hungry can take many forms. Giving someone in need a meal, volunteering at a food pantry or hosting a community fundraiser to raise money for programs

that provide food assistance are all ways to practice this work of mercy. Using the Week 4 Activity Sheet, brainstorm ideas of how your students can take action to feed the hungry.

3. Choose one idea from your list and make a plan to put your idea into action. You can use the Week 4 Activity Sheet to help you do this.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

1. Invite students to close their eyes and ask them to think of someone they know, have met or seen in their community who has experienced hunger. Ask them to think about this person: what they look like, what interactions they may have had with them, what their lives might be like.
2. Ask your students to offer up the following prayer for that person, and for every person around the world who is hungry or undernourished.

Lord of Mercy,

You tell us that whatever we do to the least of your people, we do to you. Help us show your mercy to those who suffer, especially those around the world who experience hunger and malnutrition.

Amen

AT HOME

1. Share your class' plan to practice the corporal work of mercy feeding the hungry with your family.
2. As a family, read the daily reflection found in your **CRS Rice Bowl Lenten Calendar**.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE

10

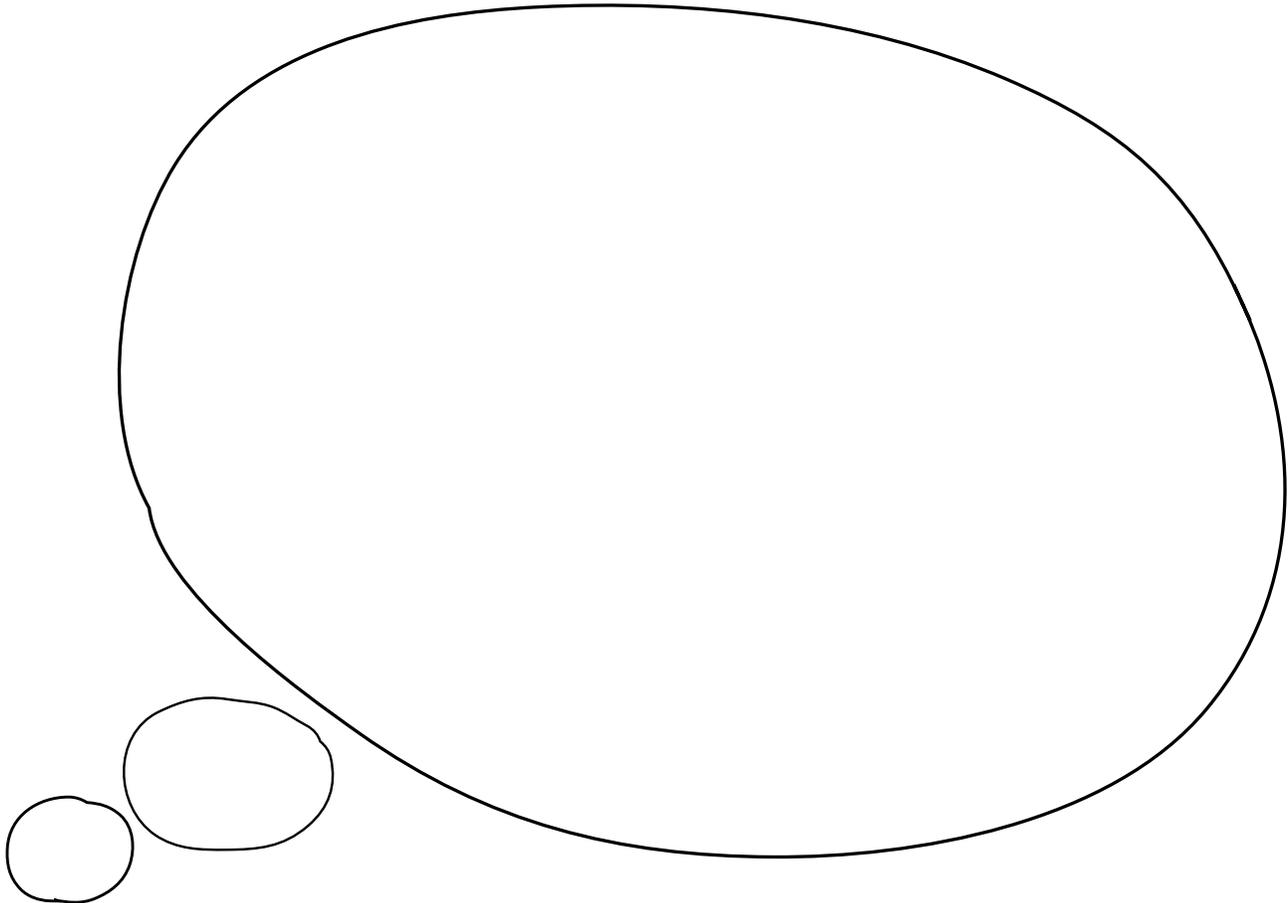
MINUTES

1. Read or watch the Week 4 story.
2. Lead Discussion step 3.

Name: _____



Write your students' ideas for how they can feed the hungry together as a class in the brainstorm bubble.



Action Steps

Who is Responsible

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____