

# A 10-MINUTE PRAYERFUL INTRODUCTION TO BEGIN LENT

This prayerful reflection will help your community begin its Lenten journey with CRS Rice Bowl. You can incorporate it into Mass after the homily or during a prayer service or other gathering. Make sure you have enough rice bowls for each student or family and recruit volunteers to distribute them.

*Just before the start of the prayer, pass out the rice bowls to your community.*

### LEADER:

Lent is a time for reflection and preparation during which we seek to draw closer to God and turn away from sin. As we walk together on this spiritual journey, may our hearts be transformed by God's love and grace.

Over the next 40 days of Lent, we will encounter Christ through people in Nigeria, Guatemala and Bangladesh, who are finding ways to break the cycle of malnutrition and build resilience. May our hearts be moved to prayer and action to support our sisters and brothers around the world.

### READER 1

*Read John 6:33-35.*

A reading from the Gospel of John:

"For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." So they said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

### LEADER

Through the Bread of Life—which we receive in the Eucharist—we are called to share God's



Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS

# A 10-MINUTE PRAYERFUL INTRODUCTION TO BEGIN LENT CONT.

love with our global family, especially people experiencing great need. We're invited to act on this call through the Lenten pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

## READER 2

The first pillar of Lent is prayer. We pray to grow in our relationship with God and ask him for guidance on how to live according to his will. In our prayers, we thank God for the gifts we have been given. We also pray for people who experience need of any kind: physical, spiritual or emotional.

*Invite community members to find the Lenten prayer on the side of their rice bowls and read it aloud together. Encourage them to read the daily reflections on their Lenten calendars at home with their families.*

## READER 1

The second pillar is fasting. When we fast, we make more room for God in our lives and unite our sacrifice with Christ's suffering. We give something up to better understand the challenges that confront our sisters and brothers who experience hunger and malnutrition around the world. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we recognize that their well-being is important and connected to our own.

*Invite the community to try the meatless recipes found on the CRS Rice Bowl*

*website—[crsricebowl.org/recipe](https://crsricebowl.org/recipe)—at home with their families. Explain that they can put the money their family saves by fasting and eating simple meals into their rice bowls.*

## READER 2

The third pillar is almsgiving. When we give Lenten alms, we honor Jesus' call to care for our sisters and brothers in need. Donations from CRS Rice Bowl help change lives globally and in our own community: 75% of funds support CRS' work worldwide, and 25% stay in our diocese to alleviate poverty and hunger.

*Invite the community to learn more about the impact that CRS Rice Bowl donations have on communities around the world by following along with the Story of Hope each week on [crsricebowl.org/stories](https://crsricebowl.org/stories).*

## LEADER

God of love,

Through prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we ask you to transform us this Lent and open our hearts to our one human family. May the prayers, recipes and stories from CRS Rice Bowl help us recognize the face of your son, Jesus, in all people around the world and, in doing so, grow closer to you during this season of Lent.

Amen



Photo by Lauren Carroll/CRS



# A PRAYER SERVICE TO END LENT

This prayerful reflection can be used as a CRS Rice Bowl closing ceremony or as part of Mass. Ahead of time, set up a collection basket or area for rice bowls. During the prayer service, community members will be invited to process forward with their rice bowls and place them in the basket or other special location.

### LEADER:

Throughout Lent, we have encountered God in the communities and families whose stories of hope inspired us, and we learned about the impact of our Lenten alms. Now let us lift up our prayers for the people of Nigeria, Guatemala and Bangladesh, and for all people who are working to break the cycle of hunger and malnutrition and build resilience. Our response will be, “Lord, hear our prayer.”

### READER 1

For families around the world and for all who lack access to basic services such as education and clean water, that they may have opportunities and resources to create positive change for their communities. We pray to the Lord ...

### READER 2

For farmers near and far and for all who experience severe weather, that they can protect their homes and livelihoods and become more resilient to the effects of climate change, which exacerbates hunger. We pray to the Lord ...

### READER 3

For our sisters and brothers who struggle with hunger and malnutrition, that they can overcome the obstacles that prevent them from accessing healthy food, and for us, that we may continue to work to build a world free from hunger. We pray to the Lord ...

*Invite community members to place their rice bowls in the collection basket or designated area.*

### LEADER

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for leading us closer to you during these 40 days. We experienced your love for us by loving our sisters and brothers. As we end our Lenten journey, we pray that our sacrifices may give glory to you by helping communities access nutritious food and other resources necessary to flourish.

Help us continue what we started this Lent—caring for our global family by addressing poverty and hunger, and issues that exacerbate hunger like climate change. All of which prevent people from living a good and healthy life.

You sent your Son, Jesus, as the living bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. Through his resurrection, we have been given the promise of everlasting life.

By encountering you in the Bread of Life—the Eucharist—may we joyfully share bread *for* life with one another so that all members of our global family can thrive.

Amen



Photo by Karen Kasmausk for CRS