

EATING IS A MORAL ACT

Activity and reflection

OBJECTIVE

Through this activity participants will:

- Reflect on the different ways we receive nourishment and where that nourishment comes from, and
- Reflect on how our Catholic faith calls us to feed the hungry

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Use this activity to help participants begin to think about their relationship with food and how we, as Catholics, are called to feed the hungry.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Flipchart paper
- Markers
- Tape
- Copy of *What I Ate Today* for each participant
- Copy of *Eating Is a Moral Act: Table Talk* for each participant
- Pens/pencils
- Basket

PREPARATION

Before the activity, distribute a copy of *What I Ate Today* to each participant. Ask participants to write down what they eat in a typical day. Let them know that they will use this information during the activity as a way to reflect on food, but will not be judged by what they eat.

Eating is a Moral Act is an initiative sponsored by the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. Visit ncrlc.com to learn more about its work and to access additional resources.

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For additional prayers and other resources on global hunger, please visit [CRS FoodFast](#).

PROCEDURE

Part I (20 Minutes)

Start this activity with the entire group.

Leader:

We are going to reflect on our relationship with food. We are not going to judge or question the amount of food we eat. Rather, we are going to reflect on how we enjoy food in our lives and our food traditions.

I would like us to think a little about where food is important in our lives. Are there times in the day, week or year when food has special importance?

Invite participants to share and write down their answers on the flipchart paper. Some examples include holidays, Sunday dinners, or evening meals with family or friends.

Looking at our *What I Ate Today* handouts, please share a little about the meals you ate. What meals did you eat? What did you eat at those meals? Who was with you when you ate? Where did you eat?

Invite participants to share and record their answers on the flipchart paper. Highlight similarities in eating behavior among the group to highlight how the group relates to food.

I would like us to think a little about where our food comes from. Do we know where our food is grown or raised?

Invite participants to share and record their answers on the flipchart paper. Some examples include local farms, corporate farms and personal gardens.

What does our relationship with food tell us about ourselves? Do we share meals with others? Do we have many options when it comes to purchasing or obtaining food? What other reflections would you like to share about food?

When the large group is finished sharing, divide the group into small groups with no more than five people per group.

Part II (20 Minutes)

Tell participants that they are going to take a deeper look at their relationship with food in a small group reflection. Distribute copies of Eating is a Moral Act: Table Talk, pens or pencils, markers and flipchart paper.

Participants should spend 15 minutes briefly discussing the questions on the handout. They don't have to respond to every question. Have each group write their responses to the questions on the flipchart paper:

What similarities exist between our family's table and the Eucharistic table? How does our faith encourage us to invite the hungry to our table?

When groups have finished talking, invite each group to share their answers. Allow time for other groups to respond and ask questions.

Part III (20 Minutes)

Leader:

Now that we have discussed our personal relationships with food, I'd like us to think about the members of our local and global communities who go hungry. What do you think their relationship with food is?

Let's consider:

- Do they have regular access to food?
- How do the poor get food?
- What barriers do the poor face in accessing food?
- Can they access the same variety of food that we do?
- The poor in our local community: Where does their food come from?
- The poor in our global community: Where does their food come from?

Write responses on the flipchart paper.

As Catholics, we have a responsibility to ensure that every person has access to basic material necessities, including food. This value is the Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.

How can we help the poor access food? How can we help them access a greater variety of food? Throughout our activity, we will come back to our relationship to food and how it might differ from the relationship of the poor to food.

On the back of your *What I Ate Today* handout, I would like you to write a pledge about how you'll use this activity as an opportunity to act on behalf of people all over the world who do not have equal and reliable access to food. When you are finished with your pledge, please place it in the basket and return to your seat.

Allow participants time to write their pledges and place them in the basket. When everyone has returned to their seats, read the following:

We believe that feeding people is an honorable and socially just endeavor, that farming is a noble vocation that gives great pride to those involved in it.

We believe that we are responsible for promoting justice in our own lives, in our communities and in the world. We do this for the sake of our neighbors, future generations and all of God's glorious creation.

We believe that all of our actions have an effect on the common good of creation, that we must carefully consider the choices we make. Amen.

This prayer is based on the National Catholic Rural Life's Ethics of Eating cards. Learn more at ncrlc.com.

WHAT I ATE TODAY

Write down what you eat on an average day. We will use this information as a way to reflect on the kinds of foods we enjoy.

DAY:

Breakfast:

What did you eat?

Where did you eat?

Lunch:

What did you eat?

Where did you eat?

Dinner:

What did you eat?

Where did you eat?

General:

Who do you eat meals with?

Do you know where your food comes from?

Who prepares your food?

EATING IS A MORAL ACT: TABLE TALK

Reflect on your family's table.

Is everyone called to the table? Is everyone's presence expected at the table?

Do you express gratitude or pray before you eat?

Do you remember the many hands involved in bringing food to your table?

- The hand of God
- The hands of farmers, transporters, processors, grocers and preparers

How is food distributed or shared at your table?

- Are you expected to try everything?
- What is your family's attitude toward throwing out food?

Think about the Eucharistic table.

Who is called to Christ's table?

Does Christ have any expectations of his disciples when they gather at his table?

How are the disciples expected to treat one another?

On flipchart paper, respond to these questions:

What similarities exist between your family's table and the Eucharistic table?

How does our faith encourage us to invite the hungry to our table?