

Live Mercy: Feed the Hungry

A faith-sharing resource for small groups that forms, inspires and prepares communities to show Christ's compassionate love to people around the world who hunger.



THREE 90-MINUTE SESSIONS
BEST FOR SMALL GROUPS OF 4-8 PEOPLE
DESIGNED FOR PEER FACILITATION

SESSION ONE

What Is Hunger?



Photo by Jennifer Hardy/CRS

MATERIALS

- Name tags
- Bible opened to Matthew 14:13-21
- Technology needed to show the YouTube video **"What Is Mercy? | Jim Martin"**
- Copies of **"Prayer for the Hungry"** for each participant (or, email participants the prayer after this meeting)

Welcome and Overview (10 minutes)

- Welcome all participants and introduce yourself.

EXPLAIN

- Jesus' whole life and ministry reveals God's mercy. Jesus pardoned the sinners, cared for the poor, hung out with the marginalized, healed the sick and walked with the suffering. We are to be merciful like the father is merciful, and Jesus shows us exactly what that looks like.
- In Matthew 25:40, he identifies the works of mercy, saying whenever we care for people who are in most need, we care for him. Jesus specifically names feeding the hungry as one of these corporal works of mercy.
- Throughout these three sessions, we will reflect on the issue of hunger, how it connects to our faith, and how we might be called to respond individually and as a community to feed the hungry around the world.
- These sessions are developed by Catholic Relief Services, the official humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. Catholic Relief Services serves poor and suffering people around the world in the name of Catholics in the United States.
- In this session, we will get to know each other better, reflect on what we hope to gain and begin to reflect on issues of hunger.

Group Introductions (10 minutes)

- Invite participants to share their names and a little bit about themselves.

Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

- Begin with an adapted Lectio Divina.
- Explain that Lectio Divina is a practice of meditating with the Scriptures. It typically includes reading the Scriptures multiple times and reflecting on them in different ways. Share that in your adapted version of Lectio Divina, you will read and reflect on the Scripture passage twice.
- Invite two people to read Matthew 14:13-21. Begin with "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
- After the first reader reads the Scripture passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask participants to share what word or phrase resonated with them.
- After the second reader reads the passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask participants to share what resonated with or challenged them.
- Once the sharing is complete, close with a prayer and the sign of the cross.

Reflection (20 minutes)

- Explain that as a group, you will now take some time to reflect on why you feel drawn to this topic and discuss the meaning of hunger.

DISCUSS

- Why did you feel drawn to participate in this group and learn about this topic?
- What words or images come to mind when you think of hunger?
- How would you define hunger?
- Why do you think there is so much hunger in the world?



A CRS program in Laos, a country where nearly every second child under 5 is malnourished, guarantees that students at Nongdeune Primary School receive free school lunches. Photo by Jim Stipe/CRS

Hunger, Waste and Our Faith (30 minutes)

- Share that you will now take some time to listen to and reflect on statistics about hunger and waste, along with words from Scripture and our Catholic tradition about responding to hunger.
- Explain that you will read these quotes and statistics slowly, pausing between each one, so people can reflect more deeply on them.
 - *Optional:* Make copies of the statistics and quotes ahead of time and pass them out to various participants to read. Or, hang them around the room and invite participants to walk around and read them.
- Say that after you read the quotes, you will play a short video reflection on mercy.
- Invite participants to close their eyes or assume a contemplative position.
- Read the titles, quotes and reflections slowly, pausing between each one.

HUNGER

- 795 million people around the world, just over 1 in 9 people, are undernourished.¹
- Poor nutrition causes nearly half of the deaths in children under 5—more than 3 million children annually.²
- Nearly half of the world’s population lives on less than \$2 dollars a day.³

Imagine what it is like to live on less than \$2 a day. Reflect with me as I walk you through a typical living situation for billions of people in the world:

- First, imagine your living room. Take away all the other rooms of your house. Your whole family lives in this one room.
- Take out the furniture, except for a few blankets, a kitchen table and one chair.
- Take away all the clothing, except one set of clothing for each member of the family and one pair of shoes.
- Empty the pantry and refrigerator except for a small bag of rice, some sugar and salt, and a few vegetables for tonight’s dinner.
- Shut off the water in the bathroom and remove the electronic wiring.
- Take away your TVs and cable, computer and internet, etc.
- Look around your new home. How do you feel?

As you feel moved, speak aloud one word that describes how you feel.

Our faith calls us to respond to the scandal of hunger.

- Pope Francis has said, “If there are children in so many parts of the world who have nothing to eat, that is not news, it seems normal. It cannot be so!”
- The Letter of James urges us, “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,’ but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?” (James 2:14-16)

Say a quiet prayer, asking God for the grace to respond to the scandal of hunger.

¹ Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, “The State of Food Security, 2015,” fao.org/3/a-i4646e.pdf

² World Food Program, “Hunger Statistics,” wfp.org/hunger/stats

³ United Nations, “Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015 Fact Sheet,” un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_Gap_2015_E_web.pdf

WASTE

- The average American worker spends almost as much on coffee as he or she does on commuting costs each year.⁴
- The United Nations has set the minimum requirement for caloric intake per person per day at 2,410. The world can produce enough food to provide every person with more than 2,700 calories per day, yet many still go hungry.⁵

Reflect on what you have consumed recently:

- Picture in your mind the last full meal you consumed.
- Did you eat all of it? Were there leftovers? Did you throw anything away?
- How many “extras” have you consumed in the past 24 hours—snacks, treats, cups of coffee?

As you feel moved, speak aloud one word that describes how you feel about the extras you’ve consumed.

Our faith calls us to resist the culture of waste and excess:

- Pope Francis has said, “Consumerism has led us to become used to an excess and daily waste of food, to which, at times, we are no longer able to give a just value, which goes well beyond mere economic parameters. We should all remember, however, that throwing food away is like stealing from the tables of the poor, the hungry!”
- And, “We are in front of a global scandal of around 1 billion—1 billion people who still suffer from hunger today. We cannot look the other way and pretend this does not exist. The food and fish teaches us exactly this: that if there is the will, what we have never ends. On the contrary, it abounds and does not get wasted. Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, I invite you to make space in your heart for this emergency of respecting the God-given rights of everyone to have access to adequate food.”

Say a quiet prayer, asking God for the grace to resist the culture of waste and excess.

- Invite participants to open their eyes.
- Then, show the YouTube video ["What is Mercy? I Jim Martin"](#)
- Pause for a moment of silence.

DISCUSS

- Which of the quotes, statistics or reflections resonated with or challenged you, and why?
- Pope Francis asserts that wasting food is like stealing from the hungry. We can begin to fight global hunger by not wasting food. How can you cut back on food waste this week? How can you be a more mindful consumer?

⁴ Chris Morran, “Average American Worker Spends Nearly \$1,100/Year On Coffee,” January 20, 2012, consumerist.com/2012/01/20/most-american-workers-spend-more-than-1000year-on-coffee/

⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “Agriculture and Food Security,” fao.org/docrep/x0262e/x0262e05.htm

Announcements (5 minutes)

- Hand out the “**Prayer for the Hungry**” and invite the group to say the prayer before meals throughout this week. If you have not printed the prayer out, email it to the group after this meeting.
- Invite participants to be intentional about how they spend their money on food and how much they consume, save or waste. Say that you’ll ask participants to share a little bit about their experience with this intentionality exercise at the start of the next session.
- Make any announcements about your next meeting time.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ...

Loving and gracious God,

*When the obedient widow had given her family's last bit of flour
to Elijah,*

You fed them.

*When you called your sons and daughters out of bondage,
You fed them.*

When faced with the hunger of the 5,000,

*With nothing save a few gracious handfuls offered up by a child,
You fed them.*

*Time and again, you have foreshadowed the bread of salvation
By nourishing us with the bread of this world.*

Lord, you filled the fishermen's nets to bursting.

Fill us to bursting.

Fill us with compassion for our sisters and brothers.

Fill us with the grace that pours forth from your loving heart.

Fill us with obedience to your last commandments:

To go forth into the world

To do for others as you have done for us

To feed your sheep.

So many are hungry,

And we are hungry too.

In our weariness, our complacency, our cynicism,

We have grown hungry for your compassionate spirit.

Fill us to bursting.

Amen



SESSION TWO

What Causes Hunger?



Photo by Sam Phelps for CRS

MATERIALS

- Name tags
- Bible opened to Matthew 25:31–45
- Copies of the handouts **“Niger: Hunger Pains a Nation”** and **“What Is Food Insecurity?”** for each participant
- Technology needed to show the YouTube video **“Tanzania | Hungering for a Better Life”** from CRS’ YouTube channel

Welcome and Overview (5 minutes)

- Welcome participants back.
- Explain that this session will delve more deeply into the causes of hunger and ways to respond to it.

Check in (10 minutes)

- Invite participants to share what it was like to be intentional about how much money they spent on food and what they consumed, saved and wasted.

Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

- Explain that one of the corporal works of mercy is feeding the hungry and that Jesus associates these works of mercy with salvation when he talks about the Last Judgment. Say that for your opening prayer, you will reflect on this Scripture passage through an adapted Lectio Divina.
- Share that in your adapted version of Lectio Divina, you will read and reflect on the Scripture passage twice.
- Invite two people to read Matthew 25:31-45. Begin with "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
- After the first reader reads the Scripture passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask participants to share what word or phrase resonated with them.
- After the second reader reads the passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask participants to share what resonated with or challenged them.
- Once the sharing is complete, close with a prayer and the sign of the cross.

Snapshots of Hunger (20 minutes)

EXPLAIN

- Nearly half of the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day, and about 20% of the world's population lives on less than \$1 a day.⁶
- Poverty is the central cause of global hunger.⁷
- Hunger can make it harder for people to work and earn a living because of poor physical and mental health. This can lead to deepened poverty—and even greater hunger.⁸
- Share that you are going to read a story that shows one of the causes of extreme poverty and hunger, and some of the difficult decisions that accompany such poverty.
- Distribute copies of the excerpt from "**Niger: Hunger Pains a Nation.**" Have a participant read it as everyone else follows along.

DEBRIEF

- What struck you about the story?
- What was the main cause of hunger in the story?
- What are some of the difficult decisions that had to be made because of the extreme hunger the people faced?
- What would you have done if you had been in their shoes?

⁶ "U.N. Millennium Development Fact Sheet 2015," un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_Gap_2015_E_web.pdf

⁷ "2015 Hunger and Poverty Facts and Statistics," wfp.org/hunger/stats

⁸ Ibid.

What Is Food Insecurity? (20 minutes)

- Explain that there are many factors that contribute to why people are hungry, such as the severe drought we just read about.
- Share that you will reflect on some of the various factors that contribute to hunger by reading about food insecurity.
- Distribute the handout “[What Is Food Insecurity?](#)”
- After allowing 5 minutes for participants to read the handout, discuss together:
 - What struck you about the reading?
 - How might you break down the concept of food insecurity to a friend or coworker who is unfamiliar with the term?
 - Based on what you read, what do you think might help people gain food security?

Working Toward Food Security (15 minutes)

EXPLAIN

- Though it is important that people who do not have enough to eat have places where they can seek food—like soup kitchens—working toward food security requires a more sustainable solution.
 - CRS tries to live out the Corporal Work of Mercy to feed the hungry by providing food to those who need it in emergency situations and by helping people find ways to gain regular access to food.
 - We’ll now watch a video that shows one example of a way that organizations like CRS help move extremely poor people toward food security.
 - Explain that this video is about a woman named Gertruda, a farmer who works on a small plot of land in rural Tanzania. She depends on agriculture to support her three grandchildren.
- Show the YouTube video “[Tanzania | Hungering for a Better Life](#)” from CRS’ YouTube channel.

DISCUSS

- Invite people to share their reactions to the video.
 - What things do you imagine might help people locally and worldwide gain food security?
- Explain that this is just one example of a creative solution that was used to help people increase their incomes and gain steady access to food.

Announcements (5 minutes)

- Share that even though we may not feel like we can help people gain access to healthy food on our own, we can live mercy by supporting initiatives that do.
- Say that in your final session, we will explore ways that we can live mercy by feeding the hungry individually and as a community of faith.
- Invite people to reflect between now and the next meeting on one way they can respond to issues of hunger as a community of faith. Ask them to be ready to share their ideas when you meet.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Invite someone to read the closing prayer.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ...



Lord of all nations,

I asked how you will know me.

You answered that you will know the ones who have fed you

When they have fed the least of your people.

Send me out to the most famished land

That I may find you there

And give of my portion to eat.

You answered that you will know the ones who have given you water

When they have given water to the least of your people.

Send me out to the driest land

That I may find you there

And give of my portion to drink.

You answered that you will know the ones who have clothed you

When they have clothed the least of your people.

Send me to where the elements have made too large a claim

That I may find you there

And share with you my cloak.

You told me I will know you in the sick:

Send me among the most plagued.

You told me I will know you in the prisoner:

Send me into the midst of the darkest cell,

Into the slave master's marketplace,

For I seek you with all my heart.

As you were revealed in your glory to all nations

Through the miracle of the Epiphany

May you so be revealed through all ages

In the faces of your people:

In their joy and in their struggle

In their dignity and in their vulnerability.

And when I find you in these,

Let them ask who is this Lord who has sent me,

So that they may find you in me as well.

Amen



EXCERPT FROM

NIGER: HUNGER PAINS A NATION

BY LANE HARTILL⁹

Habsu Boubacar has gotten used to being hungry.

The burning stomach, the blurred vision, the joint pain: Habsu has learned how to work through aches, how to force herself to go on.

Growing up in Toudoun Jaka, a sandblasted village full of ribby cattle and bone-thin dogs that slink through the sand, Habsu learned how to cope.

She learned how to mix water and millet husks—the stuff she normally feeds the goats and sheep—and make a sludgy drink. She learned how to gulp the brown, gritty stuff so the bitterness doesn't sit too long on her tongue. She got used to the feel of it in her stomach; it takes up space, so she can feed the real food to her four children.

What she hasn't gotten used to—what she doesn't even like to think about—is “anza.” It's famine food, and only the most desperate donkeys would nibble it during normal times. The plant's fruit is so bitter and tough she has to boil it several times to get the bitterness out of it. Then she adds tobacco to soften it. But she eats it, like most people do, when there's nothing else.

The rain hasn't come to Toudoun Jaka, and the land has withered and cracked. Habsu's millet crops have shriveled and died. She wasn't able to put any grain away for her or her four children. She and her husband grappled with a single question: To stay or leave Toudoun Jaka. Habsu's husband, along with other men in the village, decided to go to the capital, Niamey, where they could work as part-time livestock butchers, a job many here wouldn't do because of the low-class status associated with it. The little cash Habsu's husband could send home would partially meet the grocery bill. God, they figured, would take care of the rest.

Habsu sold off three goats and three cows—all listless and skeletal—in order to pay for food. Only two goats remain, the ones that are nosing around her daughter, Balki, a smiling girl with warm, brown eyes. Due to the famine, her delicate frame has lost what little extra weight it had on it. Her dusty knees are bulbous compared to her stick-like legs.

Balki and her siblings eat nothing but millet mixed with water, a chalky-tasting porridge with little nutritional value. Habsu can't remember the last time she served them anything else. No fruit, meat or vegetables—just millet porridge every meal.

The millet Habsu planted recently has withered and been covered over by blowing sand. Maybe by some stroke of luck, the rain will come and soak the ground and the millet will grow. But even then, nothing will be ready to harvest for another couple of months. So Habsu has a backup plan: the stack of dishes near her sagging four-poster bed. She will sell them to buy food. Until then, its millet husks and that vile green fruit, “anza.”

9 Lane Hartill, “Niger: Hunger Pains a Nation,” Catholic Relief Services

What Is Food Insecurity?

Hunger

Hunger has been defined as the discomfort, weakness, illness or pain caused by a lack of food.¹⁰

About 795 million people in the world were undernourished between 2014 and 2016. The majority live in developing nations, where an estimated 780 million people were undernourished during this same time period.¹¹

People go hungry for many reasons. There are many factors that may limit the availability of food or access to food in a community. Among them are:¹²

- Natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes
- Human-made emergencies such as armed conflict, increased crime and corruption
- Epidemics
- Environmental issues, such as drought
- Poor health and nutritional status, including mental health issues such as depression
- Poor primary education and illiteracy
- Low incomes due to low agricultural production and absence of income-generating activities

Food Insecurity

When people's ability to access and consume nutritious food is limited, they are called food insecure.

Being food insecure may force people to:¹³

- Skip meals
- Compromise on nutrition
- Compromise on the quality of their food
- Rely on emergency food sources such as food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens

The top three causes of food insecurity are lack of resources, low agricultural productivity and climate change.¹⁴ Only 19% of countries worldwide have full food security, 48% are somewhat secure in their resources and 32% of countries are food insecure.¹⁵ While it is important to provide food to meet short-term hunger in emergencies, a greater challenge is to ensure that people have ongoing food security.

¹⁰ Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, "The State of Food Security, 2014," fao.org/3/a-i4030e.pdf

¹¹ Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, "The State of Food Security, 2015," fao.org/3/a-i4646e.pdf

¹² World Food Program, "What causes Hunger?" November 2013, wfp.org/stories/what-causes-hunger

¹³ Alisha Coleman-Jensen et al., "Household Food Security in the U.S. in 2013" Economic Research Report No. 173, September 2014, ers.usda.gov/media/1565415/err173.pdf

¹⁴ Caritas Internationalis, "Caritas Internationalis Food Security Study," May 2015, https://www.caritas.ch/fileadmin/media/caritas/Dokumente/Was_wir_tun_Welt/Sonstiges/Caritas_Internationalis_Food_Study.pdf

¹⁵ Ibid.

SESSION THREE

How Can We Feed the Hungry?



Students at Father Lopez Catholic School in Daytona Beach, Florida, pack 20,000 meals for hungry people in Burkina Faso. Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS

MATERIALS

- Bible opened to Luke 16:19–31
- Technology needed to show the YouTube videos:
 - **“Helping Hands—Join the Movement”** on CRS’ YouTube channel
 - **“How to Kick Off CRS Rice Bowl!”** on CRS’ YouTube channel
- Copies of the **“Personal and Community Discernment Sheet,” “Quick-Reference Hunger Fact Sheet”** and **“Ways to Respond to Global Hunger”** for each participant. Alternative option: Write the questions from the discernment sheet on a large piece of newsprint and email the other two handouts to participants after the meeting.
- Reflective music and music player



CRS Rice Bowl helps Catholics in the United States fight poverty and hunger around the world—and in our own backyards. And it all starts with a small, cardboard box. Photo by Karen Kausmaski for CRS

Welcome and Overview (10 minutes)

- Welcome participants back and ask them to check in about how their day or week was.
- Explain that this final session will focus on the ways we can respond to the call to feed the hungry individually and as a community.

Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

- Explain that in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, we are told that we will be shown mercy to the extent to which we show mercy to others, especially those who are in need. We will reflect on this Scripture passage through an adapted Lectio Divina.
- Share that in your adapted version of Lectio Divina, you will read and reflect on the Scripture passage twice.
- Invite two people to read Luke 16:19–31. Begin with "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
- After the first reader reads the Scripture passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask participants to share what word or phrase resonated with them.
- After the second reader reads the passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask participants to share what resonated with or challenged them.
- Once the sharing is complete, close with a prayer and the sign of the cross.

Two Ways to Make a Difference Globally by Acting Locally

(15 minutes)

EXPLAIN

- We talked in our last session about food insecurity and the ways that organizations like Catholic Relief Services help people find long-term solutions to hunger. The question for us today is: What can we do to take part in this work?
- Before we take time to discern what we might be called to do personally and as a community, we'll learn two ways we can get involved with CRS through CRS Helping Hands and CRS Rice Bowl.

CRS Helping Hands

EXPLAIN

CRS Helping Hands is a food-packing event that brings volunteers together to pack nutritious meals for people in Burkina Faso, a country in West Africa.

In our first session, we reflected briefly on the experience of living on less than \$2 a day, which is a reality for many people in Burkina Faso.

We also talked about food security. The Helping Hands program trains people in Burkina Faso in innovative farming methods that help them develop the knowledge and skills they need to end poverty and hunger in their communities.

The Helping Hands meal-packaging event helps provide a short-term solution, because the meals that are packed ease the suffering of people who are hungry.

The event is a fun and high-energy program that inspires people to learn about food insecurity and how they can help.

Show the video: "[Helping Hands—Join the Movement](#)" on CRS' YouTube channel.

CRS Rice Bowl

EXPLAIN

A second way that we can work to end global hunger is by participating in CRS Rice Bowl. CRS Rice Bowl is a Lenten, faith-in-action program for Catholic families and faith communities in the United States. Throughout Lent, we pray, fast and give to those in need around the world.

The program was started more than 40 years ago as a way for Catholics in the United States to respond to famine in Africa—and it's continued ever since.

Seventy-five percent of the funds raised through CRS Rice Bowl support projects around the world, like agriculture projects that help farmers improve their harvests. And 25% stays in our diocese to support hunger and poverty alleviation efforts in our community.

CRS provides ideas for ways we can get our own community involved—or strengthen its involvement—this Lent.

Show the video: "[How to Kick Off CRS Rice Bowl](#)" on CRS' YouTube channel.

Discernment Activity (45 minutes)

- Explain that you will now take some time to discern how you can respond individually and as a community to Christ's call to feed the hungry.
- Distribute the **"Personal and Community Discernment Sheet"** (or direct them to the questions on the newsprint) and give the group 10 minutes to silently reflect on the questions. Play reflective music.
- Invite everyone to turn to the person next to them and discuss their responses for 10 minutes.
- Bring the conversation back and ask the group:
 - What came up in your discussions together?
 - What do you feel called to do to respond to the call to feed the hungry as a community?
 - Who feels moved to head up one or two of these ideas—and what are some next steps to move this forward?

Distribute the **"Quick-Reference Hunger Fact Sheet"** and the **"Ways to Respond to Global Hunger"** handouts or offer to email them to the group after the session. Encourage participants to use these handouts—and the other handouts from this reflection series—as they implement programs that respond to global hunger in their communities.

Closing Prayer (10 minutes)



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 do not have enough food to eat each day.

May we see and respond with love to Lazarus at our doorstep. May we always believe, as you showed us through your example, that there is more than enough food to feed people who are hungry. Give us the strength and commitment to find ways to make sure everyone has enough to eat.

When we feel disconnected from the reality of people who are suffering from hunger across the globe, Fill our hearts with your mercy.

When we feel disillusioned with or afraid of people begging for food on street corners, Fill our hearts with your mercy.

When we encounter those who go without food in our own communities or families, Fill our hearts with your mercy.

As we continue to discern the role that we can play individually and as a community, Fill our hearts with your mercy.

Invite people in the group to share their own prayers, and ask everyone to respond: "Fill our hearts with your mercy" after each petition.

Loving God, we thank you for the time we have shared together and we ask that you anoint us as we leave this group. Help us continue to discern how you are inviting us to respond to your call to feed the hungry.

In your name we pray,

Amen

Close by inviting participants to share a sign of Christ's peace.



PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY DISCERNMENT SHEET

- What has challenged or resonated with you most from these past few sessions?

- What questions remain unanswered for you about the causes of hunger and possible solutions?

- What are some of the needs facing people who are food insecure in your local community?

- Around the world?

- How do you feel personally called to respond?

- What is your parish community already doing to respond to the call to feed the hungry in your local community?

- Around the world?

- How do you feel your parish community could deepen your response to the call to feed the hungry in your local community?

- Around the world?

- What gifts do you bring that you could offer in service of such efforts?

QUICK-REFERENCE HUNGER FACT SHEET

Hunger

795 million people around the world, just over 1 in 9 people, were undernourished in 2014-16.¹⁶

Nearly half of the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day, and about 20% of the world's population lives on less than \$1 a day.¹⁷

Poor nutrition causes nearly half of the deaths in children under 5—over 3 million children annually.¹⁸

The United Nations has set the minimum requirement for caloric intake per person per day at 2,410. The world can produce enough food to provide every person with more than 2,700 calories per day, yet many still go hungry.¹⁹

Hunger can make it harder for people to work and earn a living because of poor physical and mental health. This can lead to deepened poverty and, as a result, even greater hunger.²⁰

Poverty is the central cause of global hunger.²¹

Factors that lead to hunger:²²

- Natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes
- Human-made emergencies such as armed conflict, increased crime and corruption
- Epidemics
- Environmental issues, such as drought
- Poor health and nutritional status, including mental health issues such as depression
- Poor primary education and illiteracy
- Low incomes due to low agricultural production and the absence of income-generating activities

Food Insecurity

The top three causes of food insecurity are lack of resources, low agricultural productivity and climate change.²³

Only 19% of countries worldwide have full food security—48% are somewhat secure in their resources and 32% of countries are food insecure.²⁴

¹⁶ Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, "The State of Food Security, 2015," fao.org/3/a-i4646e.pdf

¹⁷ United Nations
"Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015 Fact Sheet," un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Goal_1_fs.pdf

¹⁸ World Food Program, "Hunger Statistics," wfp.org/hunger/

¹⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
"Agriculture and Food Security," fao.org/docrep/x0262e/x0262e05.htm

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ World Food Program, "2015 Hunger and Poverty Facts and Statistics," wfp.org/hunger/stats

²² World Food Program, "What causes Hunger?" November 2013, wfp.org/stories/what-causes-hunger

²³ Caritas Internationalis, "Caritas Internationalis Food Security Study," May 2015,
https://www.caritas.ch/fileadmin/media/caritas/Dokumente/Was_wir_tun_Welt/Sonstiges/Caritas_Internationalis_Food_Study.pdf

²⁴ Ibid.

WAYS TO RESPOND TO GLOBAL HUNGER

Programs

CRS Helping Hands is a volunteer service opportunity that helps parishioners learn about and respond to world hunger. Learn how your parish can package nutritious meals for people in Burkina Faso suffering from food shortages and famine. helpinghands.crs.org

CRS Rice Bowl is a Lenten faith-in-action program that includes prayers and activities to help your parish community live in solidarity with those who are hungry around the world through the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. crsricebowl.org

CRS Food Fast is a 24-hour hunger awareness activity for Catholic youth. By spending 24 hours experiencing hunger, Catholic youth deepen their faith and strengthen their yearning to bring change to our world. foodfast.org

Resources

For resources about hunger, visit the CRS Ministry Resource Center at resources.crs.org and search “hunger.” Check out the following snapshot of resources about hunger, available on the CRS Ministry Resource Center.

Caritas Internationalis Food Security Study

Caritas Internationalis is a Catholic confederation of more than 160 members, including CRS, that cares for the poor in almost every country of the world. The **Food Security Study** is a major independent survey of Caritas member organizations that points to the best way to end hunger.

Eucharist Adoration: Food for All

This holy hour includes readings and reflections to pray for an end to hunger.

Fighting Global Hunger Photo Slideshow

This photo slideshow presentation features ways the Church fights hunger around the world.

Quotes on Poverty and Hunger

These quotes from Church documents reflect Catholic social teaching about poverty and hunger.

Faith and Food Jeopardy

This is a fun and interactive way to learn what our faith teaches about responding to hunger.