

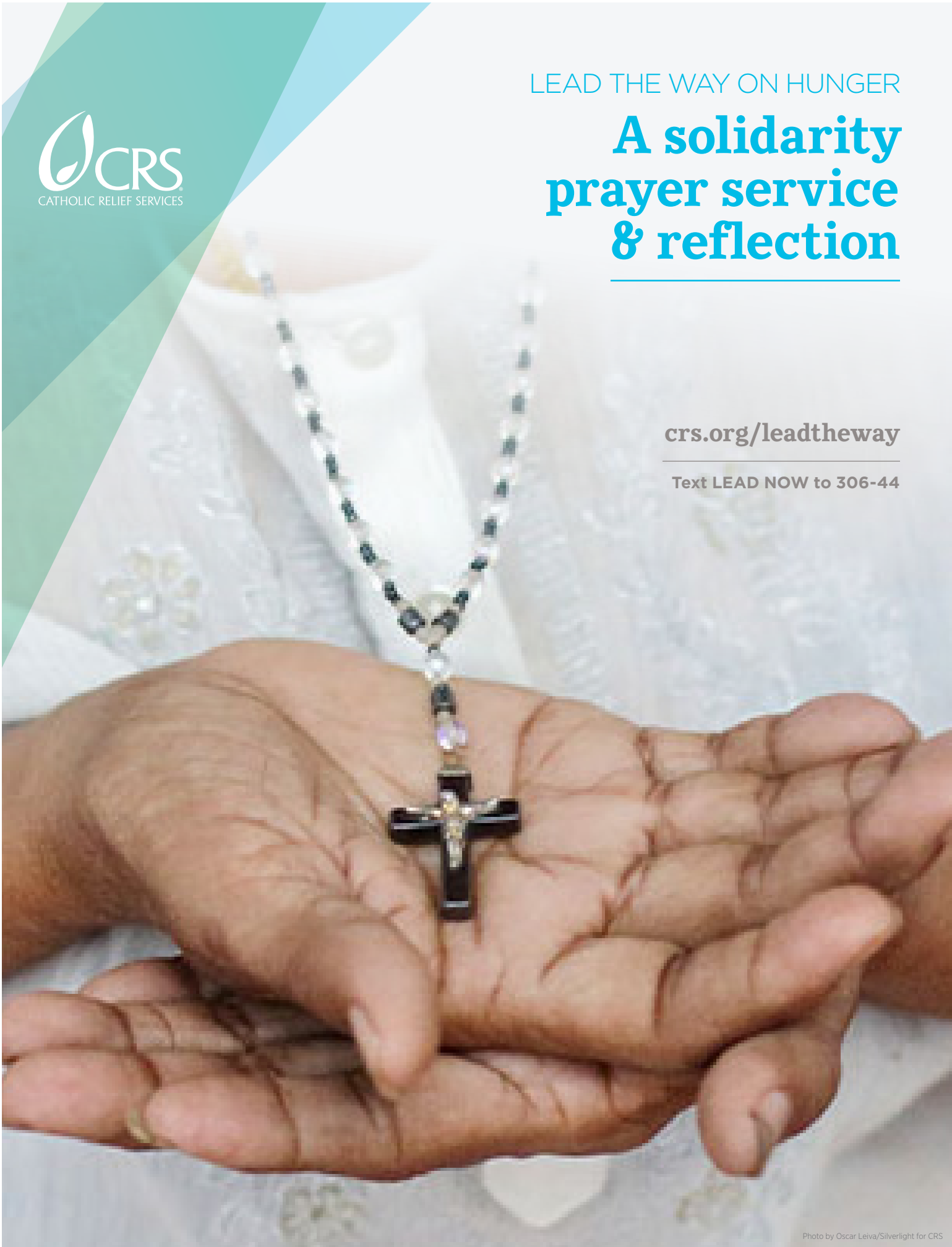


LEAD THE WAY ON HUNGER

A solidarity prayer service & reflection

crs.org/leadtheway

Text LEAD NOW to 306-44





OVERVIEW

Through reflection on their own experiences of hunger, stories of hunger and Scripture readings, participants will consider how they might live out the call to feed the hungry in their own lives.

- This resource may be used in its entirety as a stand-alone prayer service with reflection and small-group discussion, taking approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes. You can also adapt it to fit into another event or specific timeframe.
 - *Using parts of the Introduction, Hunger in Scripture and Commissioning Prayer sections, you can create a 30-minute prayerful experience for your community.*
- Before the event, you will need to decide whether you will include Part 1, Part 2 or both, for the action portion of your prayer service.
- You can find the most updated advocacy letter about hunger on our Lead the Way on Hunger page at crs.org/leadtheway.



FACILITATOR NOTES

MATERIALS

- Bible, open to Matthew 14:14-21
- Candle
- Basket
- Pens
- Copies of “Loaves and Fishes” reflection handout for each participant
- Copies of “Reflection Questions” handout for each small group
- Copies of this prayer service for the leader and two readers
- Copies of “Hunger for Justice” prayer for each participant found on our Lead the Way on Hunger page at crs.org/leadtheway
- Equipment to show a [video](#) and play a [song](#)

PREPARATION

- Determine in advance if you will use Part 1, Part 2 or both, for the action portion of the service.
- Set up the room so that participants will be able to share in groups of four.
- Place the basket, candle and Bible on a table in the center of the room. Distribute the handouts and pens to each participant.
- Select one facilitator per group who will ensure that everyone in the group has a chance to speak.
- Select two readers for the whole group.

INTRODUCTION AND OPENING PRAYER

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

GROUP: Amen.

LEADER: Let's begin by praying "[Give Us a Hunger for Justice](#)" as a group.

Group prays together.

STORIES OF HUNGER (20 MINUTES)

LEADER: One in nine people around the world do not have enough to eat. When people live in poverty, are forced to flee their homes to escape violence or are struck by a natural disaster, hunger and malnutrition may result.

We're going to watch a [video](#) that shows how a family overcomes the food crisis in eastern Guatemala through a CRS project that is reaching 5,000 families.

READER 1: This is only one of many stories we may know about hunger. In some cases, hunger is temporary. In other cases, it is chronic. In extreme cases, hunger can lead to death.

Malnutrition is also a devastating problem around the world. Malnutrition does not necessarily result from a lack of food—though it may. Rather, it specifically results from a lack of *nutritious* food. Malnutrition limits growth and development, especially among the unborn and children.

LEADER: Now, in small groups of four, discuss the reflection questions in the "Stories of Hunger" section of your reflection questions handout. When 10 minutes have passed, we'll come back together and share a couple reflections in the large group.

Give participants 10 minutes to discuss the following questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What stood out to you in the story we listened to? What resonated with you? What challenged you?
- Have there been times when you or someone close to you has experienced hunger? What was that like?
- What do you already know about the impact of malnutrition and hunger?

LEADER: Let's come back together. Are there one or two people who would like to share their reflections with the large group?

Take one or two reflections from the group.



Photo by Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS



HUNGER IN SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

(20 MINUTES)

LEADER: Now that we've reflected on stories of hunger in our own lives and around the world, let's turn to Scripture and Catholic tradition to reflect on how we are called to respond to hunger.

READER 1: A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew. (Mt 14:14-21)

When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, "This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." [Jesus] said to them, "There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves." But they said to him, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have here." Then he said, "Bring them here to me," and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting women and children.

READER 1: The Gospel of the Lord.

GROUP: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Give a moment for quiet reflection and then invite the second reader to begin the reading from tradition.

READER 2: A reading from *Gaudium et Spes*, section 4.

Never has humanity enjoyed such an abundance of wealth, resources and economic power, and yet a huge proportion of the world's citizens are still tormented by hunger and poverty, while countless numbers suffer from total illiteracy. Never before has humankind had so keen an understanding of freedom, yet at the same time new forms of social and psychological slavery make their appearance. Although the world of today has a very vivid awareness of its unity and of how one person depends on another in needful solidarity, it is most grievously torn into opposing camps by conflicting forces.

Give a moment for quiet reflection.

LEADER: Now in small groups of four, discuss the reflection questions in the "Hunger in Scripture and Tradition" section of your reflection questions handout. After 10 minutes have passed, we'll come back together and share a couple of reflections in the large group.

Give participants 10 minutes to discuss the questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the challenge that the Gospel presents to us today, and how can we respond to it?
- Why is the Church insistent on taking care of those who are hungry?
- What are some ways you might help those who are hungry in your own community? In your country? Around the world?



ACT

LEADER: As prophetic advocates in our community, we are called to lead the way to hope and justice through prayer and action. We recognize that hunger is present in many places around the world. Hunger is more than a statistic. Hunger has a face—a human face—that cries aloud to our Lord. We know that the Lord provides us with enough for everyone, yet there are some who do not have what they need to live. We must look at what we have and consider

what we can share with others. We must find our own loaves and fishes that can be broken and shared with many. And we are called not only to give what we can spare, but to build a more just world and work for systemic change so that all people have the opportunity not only to survive, but to thrive.

We're going to take some time now to move from reflection into action.

PART 1. THE LOAVES AND FISHES (15 MINUTES)

LEADER: You each have a copy of the "Loaves and Fishes" handout. In a spirit of prayer and in silence write down some of the gifts that you can share with the world, at the local level and worldwide. For instance, you may write:

I will reach my neighborhood by ...

- volunteering in my local food pantry.
- organizing a food collection among my extended family to be brought to the local food pantry on a specific day.

and I will reach the global community by ...

- writing letters to my representatives in Congress.
- making a donation.
- organizing a bake sale after Mass and donating the proceeds to Catholic Relief Services.

Give the participants five minutes to write down their gifts: Play this song quietly during the exercise to create a reflective atmosphere. ([Ven al Banquete/Come To The Feast by Bob Hurd, Pia Moriarty and Jaime Cortez and Pia Moriarty first published by Oregon Catholic Press in 1994.](#))

LEADER: Now that you have finished, bring the piece of paper where you have written your gifts up to the front of the room and place it in the basket as a symbol of your commitment. As you place it in the basket say, "Here I am, Lord."

Once everyone has placed their notes in the basket, continue to Part 2 of the action exercise.



PART 2. LETTERS TO CONGRESS (15 MINUTES)

LEADER: Now that we've made our commitments to address hunger once we leave this service, we're going to act together as a community. We're going to write to our members of Congress, asking them to address hunger and malnutrition around the world. Advocating with our elected officials is one of the most effective tools we have to positively impact the lives of our brothers and sisters both locally and globally.

Action can be taken digitally or by handwriting letters. Share the relevant instructions with your participants, depending on which method you choose for your event.

DIGITAL ACTION INSTRUCTIONS

LEADER: You can access the relevant action alert in one of two ways:

1. **Visit crs.org/leadtheway** and navigate to the Lead the Way on Hunger page to find our latest action at the top of the page.
2. **Text HUNGER to 306-44**
You'll receive a direct link to the action alert in response to your text message.

Whether you access the advocacy action alert on your phone via text or the website, you'll see a blank text box where you can personalize your message. Be sure to say who you are and why you care about this issue, using the text box. Personalized messages to Congress are 10 times more effective than ones that are not personalized!

OFFLINE ACTION INSTRUCTIONS

LEADER: We've passed out copies of the latest CRS advocacy action alert on hunger as well as blank paper, pens and envelopes. You can use the language in the action alert to help craft your own letters to your members of Congress. Be sure to make your ask clear and to include who you are and why you care about this issue. Your members of Congress want to know what matters to you!

When you have finished your letter, please hand it to me.

NOTES FOR LEADER

- Copies of the advocacy action alert can be found by visiting the Lead the Way on Hunger page found at crs.org/leadtheway.
- Delivering your letters: Decide how you will share these letters with your members of Congress. Your letters will have the most impact if they are hand-delivered to the local offices by organizing a meeting with key members of your community. If this is not feasible you may mail the letters to their offices. Be sure you send the correct letters to the correct members of Congress.

COMMISSIONING PRAYER

LEADER: Let us come together and conclude our time in prayer.

God of all people, throughout history, we have witnessed how your heart moves with compassion for those who suffer from hunger. We pray that we will embrace your call to serve and to share what we have with our brothers and sisters in need.

We humbly ask that all our brothers and sisters who are hungry discover that they are not alone, that YOU are with them. We ask that when they turn their eyes in search of support, they can find help in us. Give us a generous heart so that hope may be reborn.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord, **Amen.**



Photo by Jennifer Hardy/CRS



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

STORIES OF HUNGER

Reflection questions

- What stood out to you in the video? What resonated with you? What challenged you?
- Have there been times when you or someone close to you has experienced hunger? What was that like?
- What do you already know about the impact of malnutrition and hunger?

HUNGER IN SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew. (Mt 14:14-21)

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Reflection questions

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