



Photo by Susan Walters/CRS

**LENGTH** 30 minutes

**OBJECTIVES** Through this activity participants will:

- ❖ Discover the inter-connectedness of the lives of people around the world
- ❖ Learn how water issues impact the lives of people around the world

**SUMMARY** This activity will have two participants portraying two girls, one from the United States and one from Central America. As written, this is not a dialogue, but an interweaving of individual stories. In this way, the audience will hear two different voices, sharing similar challenges about water issues.

- MATERIALS**
- Buckets (or use gallon jugs that can then be used throughout the Food Fast during water breaks)
  - Place to fill buckets
  - Tape

**PROCESS** Select two readers (preferably female) for the monologues. Ask them to practice (separately) their parts, reading with deep conviction. Explain that for the activity, they will take turns reading aloud lines from their monologues.

Ask the two readers to stand in front of the group. They should stand across the room from one another. “Rosario” will be holding a bucket of water. Before the reading, each audience participant will be given a cup. Ask them to fill it from Rosario’s bucket and return to their seat, but do not drink it until instructed.

As the readers take turns reading a line, they should take one step closer to the each other. When they meet in the middle (at the end of the monologues), they should hold the bucket of water together.

## **Introduction**

**Leader:** People around the world live across continents, separated by bodies of water. Yet, in some ways, we are connected through these same bodies of water. Through our faith and in solidarity, our lives are interconnected in many ways. Water is one of these unifying elements. Before we begin this activity, I'd like to ask each of you to bring your cup up to the front and dip it in the bucket of water. Collect only a little and then return to your seat. Do not drink it until you are asked. As we reflect on water issues worldwide, let us purposefully listen to the stories that will be shared with us today. At the end of the reading, the two girls should be standing side by side, both holding the bucket of water. Now, ask the audience participants to silently reflect on the monologues and drink their cup of water.

## **Discussion**

At the end of the reading, ask the audience participants to discuss the following:

- Who of the two characters did you identify with most? Why?
- What challenges did Rio and Miriam face in relation to water?
- How did they resolve these challenges?
- Have you or someone you know encountered challenges similar to these stories? Can you share them with the group?
- How could working on water issues separate or unify people around the world?
- Is there anything about our Catholic faith that guides us in responding to water issues?
- As a young Catholic, what can you do in your own life to respond to the challenges posed by water issues?

*This activity was inspired by "Water and Blood: A True Story", written by Michael Murphy, Development and Peace Animator, Saskatchewan, Canada, 2003 Development and Peace is the official international development organization of the Catholic Church in Canada.*

## ONE BUCKET, TWO LIVES: MONOLOGUES

**Rio:** My name is Rosario but my mother calls me Rio, which is the Spanish word for river. I am 15 years old. I live in the small village of Aguas Calientes with my parents, two sisters and three brothers. We live in a two-room house close to a river. We use the river for many things, but most of all, my friends and I like to swim in it. I once attended school, but now I help my mother at home.

**Miriam:** My name is Miriam. My father always loved the Bible story of Moses, so he named me after Moses' older sister. I am 16 years old and live in the city of Franklin with my father and two sisters. We go to school at St. Ann's Academy. On weekends, love to go fishing with my father.

**Rio:** The river is very important to our village. For my family, it is the source of water we use at home for cooking, washing and eating. We also use it for our farm animals and to water our garden.

**Miriam:** The town of Franklin has a big lake where many people go fishing, swimming and boating. Some people also water ski, jet ski and sail. My dad says that we must all be careful users of the lake. We can't disturb its ecosystem with pollution and overcrowding.

**Rio:** Most days, my brothers attend school, while my sisters and I help my mother at home. One of my main tasks is to collect our family's water from the river since we have no running water in our house. For several years, I had to walk three hours each day to carry water from the river. I could only carry one bucket at a time, so I had to make many trips. A family of eight uses a lot of water each day! We must be cautious with our usage, not wasting even a cupful.

**Miriam:** One thing my sisters and I love to do is take long showers. Last year, we went camping with our father and we had to use buckets for bathing. My younger sister kept whining about it. Eventually, we developed a system using a large plastic cup to pour over ourselves. In the end, we were proud of how we were able to bathe with only one bucket of water each.

**Rio:** My younger brothers and sisters used to get sick a lot. Two years ago, my brother Ronaldo almost died of diarrhea. My mother cried a lot during that time. She was afraid Ronaldo would die, as her younger brother had lots of diarrhea and died from it. When my siblings get sick, I help my mother take care of them.

**Miriam:** Once, when my father traveled to Mexico, he got really sick with diarrhea. He had a bad stomachache and vomited a lot. The doctor said that eating food that was washed with unclean water must have caused it. Rio: I stopped going to school because there were no toilets. My friends and I had to relieve ourselves in a thicket of bushes behind our school and one day I saw a snake coming toward me. I was so scared that I screamed like crazy. After that, I told my mother that I did not want to go to school anymore.

**Miriam:** Two months ago, a big water pipe burst near our school. Classes were cancelled, but I was in a theatre group that was preparing for a play and we needed to continue to practice. We went to school in the afternoons and tried to avoid using the toilets. They wouldn't flush since the water was turned off for repairs. By the second day, the smell was disgusting!

**Rio:** A health educator visited our village and told my parents that many children suffer from diarrhea in our village due to the unclean drinking water. They said that the water from the river looked clear, but the health educator explained that its clear appearance does not mean it is safe to drink. We now boil the water we use for drinking and cooking.

**Miriam:** I used to drink a lot of soda, but since it is unhealthy, I now drink water. I carried bottled water in my backpack, but then I thought about how much trash those plastic bottles generate. I asked my dad to buy me a reusable water bottle. Now my friends all have them, too.

**Rio:** Last year, a church organization built a well in my village. All of us were so happy! No more long walks to the river! Now it only takes me half an hour to collect our family's water. I have more time to hang around with my friends. Having a well right in the village is great. Fewer people are sick since the well water is clean. It's still a long way from having a tap in our house, but I thank God for bringing clean water to Aguas Calientes.

**Miriam:** Our school has a lot of social justice activities. One day, a speaker talked to us about how water issues impact girls in the developing countries. My friends and I got angry when she said that women and girls are the traditional water carriers and men do not even lift a finger to help them. I told the speaker that if my husband forced me to get water for him, he would get an earful from me. It bothered me a lot, though, and I thought about what I can do to make a difference.

**Rio:** The people who built the well held classes on the importance of clean sanitation, proper hygiene and good water usage practices. We learned to keep the area around the well clean and to dispose of used water properly. We can't just throw it around anywhere. My friend Marta told me that the church volunteers built toilets in the school, too. Now I don't feel afraid to go back to school. My friends and I still go to the river, but only to swim.

**Miriam:** I wonder how my friends and I can help people who do not have access to clean water. I know I can raise money through bake sales or car washes, but I want to help more. Personally, I try and take shorter showers and have talked to my dad and sisters about water conservation we can do right at home. But I know I can do more! I have been praying especially for the girls who cannot study and must spend a lot of their day carrying water. Through my prayer, action and educating others, I know I can help those girls.