

rights and responsibilities

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: EL SALVADOR

LESSON PLANS GRADES 1-8



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Photo by Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS

background information for session leaders

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights and Responsibilities is one of the seven principles of Catholic social teaching, as outlined by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, or USCCB. Catholics believe that every person has inherent human dignity, given to them by God. We believe that all people have fundamental rights and responsibilities that flow from this God-given dignity. These include the right to food, clothing, shelter and dignified work. We also believe that we have a responsibility to ensure everyone has access to these basic human rights. The Scriptures instruct us to take special care of those who are on the margins of society. In Matthew 25: 31–36, Jesus says we will be judged based on whether we fulfill our responsibility to care for the poorest and most vulnerable. All people are invited to recognize Christ in the least of his people, and to shape a world where everyone has what they need for the “proper development of life.” (Pacem in Terris, no. 11)



Left: CRS' "Mi Cuenca," or My Basin, project ensures families and communities in El Salvador have clean water.
Photo by Oscar Leiva/
Silverlight for CRS

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. We are motivated by the example of Jesus Christ to assist poor and suffering people in more than 100 countries on the basis of need, without regard to race, religion or nationality. Founded in 1943, CRS reaches 85 million of the world's poorest people each year with innovative solutions to poverty, hunger, drought, disease and emergencies. CRS works in close partnership with the Catholic Church around the world, and with local, national and international organizations that share our commitment to supporting people's immediate needs while empowering their communities for the long term.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, AND CRS

CRS works to ensure that all people live in conditions that protect their basic rights. In El Salvador, CRS' "Mi Cuenca," or My Basin, project brings clean water to families and communities. Clean drinking water leads to better health, and healthier and safer foods. Good, nutritious food and clean water are fundamental rights that must be protected for all people.

Irzan's story



Water used to be scarce at **Irzan Bladimir's** elementary school in Honduritas, El Salvador. And it tasted like mud. Think about all of the things you use water for on a daily basis: drinking, bathing, cooking, watering and even using the bathroom. But Irzan's school didn't even have bathrooms until he was in the fourth grade. The school had a toilet outside, but he and his classmates wouldn't use it because the concrete seat was loose and they were afraid they would fall in!

Everything changed when Catholic Relief Services helped the school build a water tank, two bathrooms—one for boys and one for girls—and a sink with five faucets for hand-washing. The new bathroom is spacious, and has running water and light. Irzan's teacher is teaching students about the importance of hand-washing, and now he and his classmates don't get sick as often. Their drinking water tastes a lot better too.

Top: A CRS water and sanitation project in El Salvador means school children have fewer sick days—and more energy to play. Above left: El Salvador is the smallest and most densely populated country in Central America. Although it's one of the most industrialized countries in Central America, young people are fleeing the country because of gang violence and poverty. Below right: Thanks to CRS, students at Centro Escolar Caserio El Escalon now have running water and clean latrines. Map credit: OCHA. Top photo by Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS. Bottom photo by Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS.



RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are some things in life that we need to live, like food, water and shelter. These are basic necessities, and we all have a right to them. But so many of our brothers and sisters around the world don't have what they need to live. That's where we come in: We know we have a responsibility to make sure everyone, everywhere, has a right to the basic necessities of life.

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COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: EL SALVADOR

LESSON PLAN GRADES 1-3

45 Minutes

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle Rights and Responsibilities (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching) through the story of Irzan Bladimir, a student in El Salvador.

MATERIALS

- Bible
- Bowl of clean water
- Bowl of dirty water
- Coloring supplies
- **Irzan's Story**
- **Rights and Responsibilities Activity Sheets, Grades 1-3**
- Whiteboard and marker
- World map

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Explain that the class will reflect on the Catholic social teaching principle Rights and Responsibilities by reflecting on the story of Irzan, a student in El Salvador.
2. Tell students that we have a responsibility to help others and ensure they have the basic necessities they need to live. Say that these basic necessities are called rights.
3. Ask students what they think every person needs in order to live. List answers on the board.
4. Point out El Salvador on the map. Read **Irzan's Story** and ask if students can identify what basic human right Irzan's community did not always have access to.

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Hand out a copy of the **Rights and Responsibilities Activity Sheet, Grades 1-3, and coloring supplies**, to each student. Allow them 10 minutes to complete it.
2. Ask students to share their answers to question number 2 with the class.
3. Gather students around the bowls of clean and dirty water. Ask them to imagine that they could only use the dirty water. Ask them what daily tasks they would not be able to do if they only had dirty water.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Gather students around the bowl of clean water and read Isaiah 55:1.

Gracious God, thank you for the gift of clean water. We pray for all people around the world who do not have clean water. Help them find ways to bring water to their homes and schools. Amen

TAKING IT HOME

Ask students to make a list of all the ways their family uses water in a single day.

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COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: EL SALVADOR

ACTIVITY SHEET GRADES 1-3

CLEAN WATER IS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

1. Draw a picture in each square showing how we use clean water every day.
We need clean water to:

| | | |
|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| COOK FOOD | DRINK | WASH CLOTHES |
| TAKE A BATH | WATER A GARDEN | GIVE A DRINK TO ANIMALS |

2. What else do we need clean water for? (List three ways that you use clean water.)

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COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: EL SALVADOR

LESSON PLAN GRADES 4-6

45 Minutes

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle Rights and Responsibilities (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching) through the story of Irzan Bladimir, a student in El Salvador.

MATERIALS

- **Irzan's Story**
- Pens or pencils
- **Rights and Responsibilities Activity Sheets, Grades 4-6**
- Whiteboard and marker
- World map

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Explain that the class will reflect on the Catholic social teaching principle Rights and Responsibilities by hearing the story of Irzan, who is a student in El Salvador.
2. Tell students that we believe all people should have access to the basic necessities of life. These are called *rights*. And all people have a *responsibility* to make sure that everyone lives in conditions that respect those rights.
3. As a class, brainstorm 10 things that are essential to life and write them on the board. Ask the class which of these are basic human rights.

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Point out El Salvador on the map. Read **Irzan's Story**. Note that one example of a basic human right is access to clean water.
2. Hand out a copy of the **Rights and Responsibilities Activity Sheets, Grades 4-6**, to each student. Allow them 10 minutes to complete it.
3. Ask students to share their responses.
4. Share that many people around the world live without access to clean drinking water. This is just one example of a basic right that we believe all people should have.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Jesus, you tell us that whatever we do to those who are hungry, thirsty, homeless, without clothes, imprisoned and sick—we do to you (Matthew 25:35-40). Fill our hearts with compassion, that we will fulfill our responsibility to make sure all people have these basic human rights. Amen

TAKING IT HOME

Ask students to pay special attention over the next 24 hours to how their basic rights are met each day (life, food, education, etc.).

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COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: EL SALVADOR

ACTIVITY SHEET GRADES 4-6

WATER IS AN EXAMPLE OF A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT.

Imagine if you had to live without clean water.

1. **Circle** the things you could still do.
2. **Cross out** the things you could not do.

Wash the car

Give your pets water

Water the garden

Wash the dishes

Wash clothes

Use a toilet

Drink a cold glass of water after playing a sport

Fill up a pool and go swimming

Take a shower

Wash your hands

Clean the bathroom

3. Which of the actions that you crossed out are necessary for good health?

Imagine that you didn't have access to clean water for more than a couple of weeks. How would your life change if you couldn't do some of the things you listed above?

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COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: EL SALVADOR

LESSON PLAN GRADES 7-8

45 Minutes

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle Rights and Responsibilities (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching) through the story of Irzan Bladimir, a student in El Salvador.

MATERIALS

- **Irzan's Story**
- Pens or pencils
- **Rights and Responsibilities Activity Sheets, Grades 7-8**
- Whiteboard and marker
- World map

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Explain that today you will reflect on the Catholic social teaching principle Rights and Responsibilities.
2. Tell students that we believe all people should have access to the basic necessities of life. These are called rights. And all people have a responsibility to make sure that everyone lives in conditions that respect those rights.
3. Make one column for rights and another for responsibilities on the white board. Ask students to name some of their rights and responsibilities. As students name them, list them in the columns on the board.
4. Point out El Salvador on the map. Then read **Irzan's Story**. Ask students to identify any additional rights they thought of while listening to **Irzan's Story**.

5. Point out that when our rights are protected, we often do not realize that we have them—or that they are actually rights. But children living in poverty are constantly struggling to acquire these basic rights.

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Distribute **Rights and Responsibilities Activity Sheets, Grades 7-8**, and review the directions.
2. Allow students 10 minutes to develop an original Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities.
3. As time allows, invite students to share their declarations with the class.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Gracious God, you have called us to build up your Kingdom of love, and justice and mercy. We pray for the strength to respect the rights of all people and to accept the responsibilities that correspond to our God-given rights. When we are tempted to tear down others, give us the courage to use the hands you have given us to build lasting peace. Amen

TAKING IT HOME

Invite students to bring their declarations home to share with their families.

