EDUCATIONAL and LEARNING ACTIVITIES
Through **CRS FoodFast—Be the Change**, Catholic Relief Services helps you create an experience that is unique to the charism and needs of your community. **Be the Change** explores the reality of global hunger in the world through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching. Participants are also encouraged to reflect on Jesus’ call to discipleship as an invitation to effect meaningful change in their own lives and in our world.

Pick and choose from a wide sampling of community builders, prayer resources, learning experiences, and reflection activities to create your own unique CRS FoodFast event. Schedule templates are included in the Coordinator’s Manual and provide a framework to guide your planning. Consider using the supplemental resources on the [CRS FoodFast](http://foodfast.crs.org) website or integrate your own ideas to enhance the overall experience for participants.

We recognize the level of commitment many faith and school communities like yours have to inspire young people to live out their faith in solidarity with our sisters and brothers around the world. We hope the CRS FoodFast resources in this theme help you to achieve that vision.

**EDUCATIONAL AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES:**

This collection of interactive learning experiences is created with two goals in mind: 1) to help CRS FoodFast participants experience and understand the challenges of hunger and poverty, and 2) explore what it means to stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers around the world.

- **Suggested General Activity & Reflection Resources from the Theme-based CRS FoodFasts** 
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- **Proclaim A Fast** 
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- **Solidarity Path** 
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- **Solidarity: A Vision of One Human Family** 
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- **Connection to the World: The Cost of Food** 
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- **Connection to the World: When Did I See You Hungry?** 
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SUGGESTED REFLECTION RESOURCES AND GENERAL ACTIVITIES FROM THEME-BASED CRS FOODFASTS

All of the theme-based CRS FoodFasts contain a variety of educational opportunities that can enhance your CRS FoodFast. The activities listed below are easily adaptable for a variety of settings and can be found in the 24-hour modules of the corresponding theme! Other CRS programs containing a wide variety of lesson plans and educational activities are also recommended.

ENOUGH
- **Experience - Enough**: stories of CRS’ work around the world illustrate the challenges and opportunities for becoming food secure
- **A Day in the Life / Catholic Social Teaching**: the primary themes of Catholic Social Teaching receive in-depth exploration in this group activity
- **A Bigger Picture/Taking Action (Catholics Confront Global Poverty)**: participants understand the role of advocacy and explore concrete ways to respond to hunger
- **SERVICE EXPERIENCE – One More Meal**: participants work together to make Friendship Soup for local pantries

JUST FOOD
- **Melodrama (The Science Fair – An Easy A)**: a short play helps participants trace and understand the complex path of food from farm to table
- **Six Degrees of Separation... What Difference Does My Relationship with Food Make**: a group activity uses the popular notion of “six degrees of separation” to explore the connection between our food consumption and the availability of food elsewhere
- **“TED” Talks about Food**: participants create a motivational mini TED talk about maintaining a “right relationship” with food

UNCOMMON GOOD
- **The Greener The Better Game**: CRS FoodFast’s version of Chutes and Ladders explores the relationship between care for creation and care for our sisters and brothers living in poverty
- **Sharing Pope Francis’ Message – 10 Themes from Laudato Si’**: the work of CRS demonstrates how the primary themes of the encyclical have practical application for helping people around the world
- **In the Beginning – How to Become Change-Makers**: participants explore what it means to be social innovators and make meaningful change in the world

Additional relevant and dynamic learning activities can be found in the following CRS program websites:
- **CRS Education** (education.crs.org) offers numerous educational resources catalogued by different issues, themes and ministry areas.
- **CRS Rice Bowl** (crsricebowl.org), CRS’ Lenten faith-in-action program for families and faith communities, is a vehicle through which the stories of communities around the world can be shared through a variety of catechetical and multimedia resources.
- **CRS Ethical Trade** (ethicaltrade.crs.org/get-involved/resources) provides simulations and other educational resources that explore just economic systems, including coffee and cocoa – all very relevant for a CRS FoodFast.
OBJECTIVES
To help participants understand the definition, role and spiritual benefits of fasting from a Catholic perspective.

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED
- Bibles
- Handout: A Scriptural Look at Fasting, one copy for each group
- Newsprint
- Poster board for each participant
- Markers, pencils, construction paper, poster paint and/or other materials for poster design
- Invite 2-4 young people and/or adults who can speak about an experience of fasting. Invite stories that represent a variety of reasons for fasting (e.g., health, recovery from addiction, spiritual discipline, etc.). Encourage speakers to be honest about their preparation, practices, feelings going into the fast, challenges and rewards. They might also consider sharing a few words of advice about how participants can approach this time. Try to keep the total time of the sharing to no more than 15-20 minutes.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY
This activity should be done towards the beginning of a CRS FoodFast. Through scripture and conversation, participants are encouraged to explore fasting as a faith-based discipline with spiritual benefits. Finally, participants design posters to “proclaim” their fast to the community.

PROCESS
1. Begin by introducing the 2-4 young people and adults you have prepped to tell their story of fasting.
2. After the presenters have shared their stories, invite participants to explore the discipline of fasting using questions like those listed below. Record general responses from the group on the newsprint.
   - What does it mean to fast?
   - What has been your experience of fasting? What did you gain from it?
   - Why did you choose to participate in this CRS FoodFast?
   - What do you hope to learn from your experience of fasting?
   - If your CRS FoodFast is taking place during Lent, ask: How is a Lenten fast defined? When and why do we fast during Lent?

   **Note:** Catholics in the United States are obliged to abstain from the eating of meat on Ash Wednesday and on all Fridays during the season of Lent. They are also obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and on Good Friday. Self-imposed observance of fasting on all weekdays of Lent is strongly recommended. Abstinence from flesh meat on all Fridays of the year [excluding solemnities like Christmas which may fall on Friday] is especially recommended to individuals and to the Catholic community as a whole. Canons 1249-1253, Code of Canon Law

3. Divide participants into small groups and distribute a bible and a copy of the handout A Scriptural Look at Fasting. Invite them to read the scriptural context provided on the handout and the scripture passage from the bible. They should then discuss the question corresponding to each passage. After giving time for small group discussion, invite participants back as a large group to share highlights of their conversations.

4. After small group highlights, share the following information with the group.
Fasting has been practiced for thousands of years. Scripture reveals its use as a means of penance. Fasting calls people back to God and helps us dedicate our lives to God. Fasting is still observed today by people of many different faith traditions. Why do you think faith traditions—even those beyond Christianity—encourage fasting as a spiritual discipline?

5. Invite the group to discuss the benefits of fasting. Make a list of their ideas. Be sure to include the following insights and invite their reflection on the bolded phrases before commenting further. Consider listing the bolded statements on newsprint.

- **Fasting can help us feel compassion for others.** Experiencing the hunger brought on by fasting provides a glimpse—albeit a small one—into the hunger experienced every day by those who do not fast by choice, and do not have enough food to eat.
- **Fasting can prepare one to meet a challenge in one’s life.** Fasting in combination with prayer is a way to prepare for important events. Fasting can help us focus on specific issues, and clear our minds to be more responsive to God’s message.
- **Fasting can benefit others.** You can donate the money you saved by abstaining from a meal or eating simply to benefit our brothers and sisters who are hungry. CRS depends on the support of the Catholic community in the United States, and works on our behalf around the world to assist people who struggle with hunger and poverty.
- **Fasting reminds us that we do not live by bread alone.** Fasting is a way of reminding us that we have spiritual as well as physical needs, and that only God can satisfy our spiritual hunger.
- **Fasting can help make us aware of the difference between wants and needs.** Fasting helps us realize the blessings and privileges that we enjoy. When we experience a prayerful fast, we can begin to see that many things in our lives are non-essential luxuries.

6. After exploring the benefits of fasting, invite participants to return to their small groups and spend some time developing slogans to promote the practice of fasting. Distribute poster board and other art supplies and invite groups to design posters to share their slogans with their larger community.

7. As groups finish, encourage participants to spend some time in the prayer space until all groups have finished their posters.

8. When all groups have completed the task, invite them to share their posters with the larger group. To make a connection to the parish, display the posters in a prominent place at church as a testament to what your group experienced through this Food Fast.
Choose 3 individuals in your small group to read one of the scripture passages listed below aloud. After each passage is read, silently read the statement and reflection question that follows. Answer the question aloud in your small group before moving to the next passage.

**JOEL 1:11-14**
Joel is a book of the Old Testament that calls Israel to rely on God, no matter what. The people have experienced the devastation of a plague of locusts. Joel encourages them to call on God for help, and to rely on God's saving presence, even in the face of despair.

What role do you think fasting plays in Joel's call to the people?

**MATTHEW 4:1-11**
This familiar passage from Matthew's gospel sometimes opens the Lenten observance. It describes how Jesus fasted for 40 days in the desert and then was tempted by the devil.

Why do you think Jesus spent 40 days in the desert without eating?

**ACTS 13:1-3 & ACTS 14:21-23**
These two readings from the Acts of the Apostles focus on the ministry of Paul (Saul) and Barnabas in the young Church.

How is fasting employed in the ministry of the early church? Why do you think this was considered important?
OBJECTIVES
To help participants understand and experience multiple dimensions of poverty through the lens of Catholic social teaching, and to explore what it means to live in solidarity with those who experience poverty in their lives.

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED
- 14 pieces of construction paper (multiple colors)
- 1-2 copies of the resource, Principles of Catholic Social Teaching
- 7 copies of the resource, Seeing Life Situations through Catholic Social Teaching
- scissors
- glue
- markers
- newsprint
- tape

ADVANCE PREPARATION
- On 7 sheets of construction paper (all different colors), write one of the seven themes of Catholic social teaching on the front. Include relevant photos or magazine images to enhance the poster.
  - Life and Dignity of the Human Person
  - Rights and Responsibilities
  - Call to Family, Community, and Participation
  - Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
  - The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
  - Solidarity
  - Care for God’s Creation
- On the back of each sheet, paste or write out the corresponding definition (use the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching resource).
- Display the principles of Catholic social teaching in a prominent place around the room so that participants can see both sides.
- Place seven sheets of blank construction paper in a line on the floor. These sheets will act as “stepping stones” on the “solidarity path.” Feel free to decorate them with pictures or Solidarity and Justice Quotes and World Poverty & Hunger Data (see the Coordinator’s Manual).

BACKGROUND SUMMARY
Participants will learn that multiple factors contribute to the perpetuation of poverty in developing countries around the world. Through interactive participation and role-playing, they will “experience” the joys and challenges in the lives of people living in poverty. At the conclusion of the activity, participants discuss how the principles of Catholic social teaching can provide a framework to address global poverty.

PROCESS
1. Divide participants into two groups and give instructions for the following:
   - **Group A** will represent our brothers and sisters in developing countries around the world. Invite this group to “walk in someone else's shoes” as if they are someone facing poverty and hunger. Instruct them to stand together at the beginning of the Solidarity Path.
   - **Group B** will represent the individual nations, humanitarian organizations and global governing bodies that are working in solidarity with the poor to address the multiple dimensions of poverty. Instruct this group to stand in a semi-circle around Group A.

2. Invite different adult leaders to read aloud the scenarios on the resource, Seeing Life Situations through Catholic Social Teaching. After each one is read, invite both groups to look at the seven themes of Catholic social teaching and decide which principle is most applicable to this scenario. (There is no single right answer;
3. Encourage Group A and Group B to talk to each other, collaborate with each other and listen to each other’s perspectives on the issues. Once both groups agree on a principle and discuss some practical applications and solutions, replace one of the “stepping stones” on the floor with the chosen CST principle. Invite groups to move up one space on the Solidarity Path. Repeat until all seven principles have been chosen.

4. After completing the Solidarity Path, invite participants to discuss the new perspectives they gained from this activity.
   - Ask Group A to explain how it felt to walk in the shoes of those who experience poverty. When did they feel powerless? When did they feel empowered?
   - Ask Group B to share their perspectives on the activity. Were they ever tempted to tell Group A how to resolve a problem rather than work with them? Why was it important to work in solidarity with Group A?

5. Ask all participants to reflect on these final questions.
   - How can you use the principles of Catholic social teaching to guide and direct your own life and decisions?
   - How do agencies like CRS use the principle of solidarity in their relief and development work throughout the world?
LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON
The human person is the clearest reflection of God among us. Each person possesses a basic dignity that comes directly from our creation in the image of God. Through our actions we must express that each person is precious and the lives and welfare of all people are priorities. This belief is the foundational principle of our social teaching.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
People have a fundamental right to life and those things that make life truly human: food, clothing, housing, health care, education and security. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION
We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others. The first community is the family, where we learn and act on our values. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all.

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE
A basic moral test of our society is how our most vulnerable members are treated. Those with the greatest needs require the greatest response.

THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS
Work is an expression of our human dignity. It is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation. The economy must serve people, not the other way around.

SOLIDARITY
We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Learning to practice the virtue of solidarity means learning that loving our neighbor has global dimensions in an interdependent world.

CARE FOR GOD’S CREATION
We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation.
Assign leaders or volunteers to read each of the scenarios below aloud for discussion on applicable Catholic social teaching themes:

**SCENARIO 1**
You are an eleven-year-old boy living in Ghana. Your father died from AIDS when you were nine, and you left school to help care for and support your younger siblings. You would like to return to school, but if you do, your mother will not earn enough to feed you and your siblings. You hear about a school feeding program that is coming to your community. You will receive food every day at lunch, and you can even request a take-home ration that you can share with your family.

Recommended principle: **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

**SCENARIO 2**
You are a young wife and mother living in a small village in Burkina Faso. Your husband has been struggling to find consistent work, and your small children are not getting the adequate nutrition to support their growth. You are interested in starting your own business in the local market, but you do not have enough start-up money to purchase the necessary supplies. You do not have any credit history, and unless you find a way to finance your business, you will have no option but to borrow from the local money-lenders who are notorious for charging exorbitant interest on their loans. You join a community-based savings bank in your village. The small loan that you receive allows you to purchase your supplies and open a stall in the marketplace. You are able to pay back your loan in full and you still have enough money left over to expand your business.

Recommended principle: **Rights and Responsibilities**

**SCENARIO 3**
You are a small farmer in Ethiopia. Over the past few years, you have planted the same three crops. This year, you notice that your crops are withering, and your soil is eroding rapidly. You do not have another source of income. You hear that an agriculture program is coming to your area. You join the program and learn about crop diversification, local growing cycles, irrigation techniques and water conservation practices. Now, your crops are plentiful, and your land is healthy.

Recommended principle: **Care for God’s Creation**

**SCENARIO 4**
You are a woman living in a rural village in Egypt. Work is scarce, and you are frustrated by the perpetual poverty that affects your family and your neighbors. You were not sent to school as a child, and now as an adult, you feel powerless to make any real impact on your community. You feel you have no voice in your local government. You hear about a microfinance program that is coming to your village. You and seven other women in your community form a small loans group. You support and encourage one another and you guarantee one another’s loans, thereby keeping default rates low. You attend an awareness session together about women’s voting rights. Now several members of your group are thinking about running for local office.

Recommended principle: **Call to Family, Community, and Participation**
SCENARIO 5
You are a day laborer in Peru. Your village lacks even the most basic necessities, including clean drinking water, electricity and public sanitation facilities. Large foreign mining corporations profit from your country’s mineral wealth, without adequate regard for the Peruvian people. There is a growing sense of unrest among the laborers, and you worry that violent conflict may break out at any time. You hear about a peacebuilding program that is coming to your community. The program encourages dialogue among workers, grassroots organizations and foreign industries. It strives to promote fruitful collaboration and community development.

Recommended principle: Solidarity

SCENARIO 6
You are a young father with an infant son living in the Philippines. Your son has not received all necessary vaccinations because you could not afford the health care costs, raising concerns about your son’s quality of life. You hear about a new health program that is coming to your community. The program will enable you to secure quality health care at an accredited local clinic for a low price.

Recommended principle: Life and Dignity of the Human Person

SCENARIO 7
You are a young factory worker in Mexico. You and your coworkers have been subjected to a variety of labor violations, including arbitrary firings, a lack of basic occupational safety precautions, sexual harassment and breaches in collective bargaining contracts. You hear about several labor rights projects that are being implemented in your community. You are receiving education on your basic rights, and you feel empowered to improve your working conditions.

Recommended principle: Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers
OBJECTIVES
To help participants understand the concept of solidarity as they explore how they are connected to our global community.

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED
- Gathering space should be open and large
- Activity needs to take place near a wall upon which newsprint can be posted and easily read
- Newsprint
- Tape
- 5 markers of different colors

ADVANCE PREPARATION
1. On 5 sheets of newsprint write the following labels, one per sheet:
   - Family
   - School/Church/Local
   - City/State
   - Nation
   - Global Community
2. On another sheet of newsprint draw the diagram to the right.
3. Post the diagram on the wall and cover this newsprint so that it cannot be read until later in the activity.
4. It is always effective and powerful to invite someone, particularly a young person, to share a personal story or talk about an experience that broke through his/her prejudices and biases and led to a deeper awareness of the connectedness all humans share. You might consider inviting someone who has traveled to a developing nation to share the impact of that experience on his/her life. This can be included toward the end of the activity.

PROCESS
PART I: COMMUNITY
1. Divide participants into groups of varying sizes to create a sense of proportion of the increasing size of the level of each community.
   - Group 1 (2-3 people): Family
   - Group 2 (4-6 people): School/Church/Local
   - Group 3 (6-9 people): City/State
   - Group 4 (9-12 people): Nation (U.S.)
   - Group 5 (12 or more): Global Community
   **Note:** Assign each group a level of community as noted above. Though the proportions are not realistic, they are simply meant to reinforce the notion that we are part of something much bigger than what we often choose to acknowledge.
2. Distribute a sheet of newsprint and a marker to each group, and ask them to pick a “secretary” to take notes. Instruct each group to consider carefully its assigned level of community and brainstorm the following:
   - What does this community provide for us? For instance, what do we gain by being part of that level of community? Include both concrete (e.g., clothing, food, oil, etc.) and abstract (e.g., security, love, freedom, etc.) examples.
Solidarity

Educational and Learning Activities

Activity

Solidarity

A Vision of One Human Family

90 minutes
2 of 3

Educational and Learning Activities

FOODFAST

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• List things, conditions and qualities of life that characterize the reality of being part of that level of community. The list may not necessarily be all positive, but also may present challenges and struggles.

3. Allow 10-15 minutes (or whatever time might be suitable) for the groups to work on the task. Consider assigning to each group a peer or adult leader who can help keep the group on task.

PART II: ONE HUMAN FAMILY

1. Invite each group to share its list in the following order:

   • Invite the “Family” group to report first. When the group has finished, ask if there are questions from those listening. Post the list on a wall. Instruct the group to sit in a small circle on the floor in the center of an open area.
   • Continue the same process with the “School/Church/Local” group. When this group has finished, post its list and instruct its members to sit in a circle around the family group.
   • Follow this same pattern with the “City/State” group, “Nation” group and “Global Community” group, so that participants are sitting in a formation that is somewhat close to a series of concentric circles. Be sure to keep the process moving relatively quickly to maintain participants’ interest.

   Note: If the total group of participants is somewhat small, you may want to map out the concentric circles in advance using string, masking tape or markers; then invite the members of each group to stand in their appropriate circles.

2. After all groups have reported and the concentric circles are formed, continue by first focusing their attention on the lists posted on the wall. Ask participants to review the lists and to describe what they notice about the patterns or relationships between each level of community. Possible answers might include the following:

   • Each list is unique or contains unique items. Thus, we recognize that each level of community benefits us in distinct ways.
   • There are similarities between each list, thus indicating a mutual support across the levels of community. For instance, “security” might be indicated in some fashion (e.g., protection by parents, policemen, armed forces, security from attack, etc.).
   • The items listed in the smaller level of communities may be more intimate or personal, while the items in the larger levels may be more general and widespread.

3. Continue by helping participants identify the interdependence and mutuality between the communities. Use the following points to help develop this idea:

   • Stand in the middle of the circles and point out that each of us are part of ALL these communities and that none of us can separate that from who any of us are. As you stand in the middle, name your families, your church/school/local community, your city and state, and so on, demonstrating this reality in your own life.
   • Point out the unique resources and opportunities you personally have gained from each level of community that helped you to both survive and thrive. Give examples from the lists.
   • Note that our parents provide food for us, but that the food we eat may come from local farmers and, if we are shopping at larger chain grocery markets, from farmers and businesses around the world. If you are holding your CRS FoodFast during the winter months, you can stress the idea that because of trade agreements with other countries, many of the fruits and vegetables we eat during the winter are grown in other parts of the world.
   • Ask participants to look at the shirt tag of someone sitting nearby and to call out the country where the shirt was made. Inevitably, there will be several countries
Solidarity

A Vision of One Human Family

Educational and Learning Activities

Activity

90 minutes

3 of 3

mentioned. Highlight the idea that much of what we use has passed through the hands of people around the globe, sometimes in situations that are just and that promote dignity and life, and many times in situations that are completely unjust and destructive, as in sweatshops or unsafe factory conditions.

4. Discuss how each level of community impacts other levels encouraging participants to explore how we sometimes fail to see beyond the levels of community closest to us. Explore the attitudes and biases that can develop from such a view.

5. Discuss how many individuals and groups indeed understand this reality of who we are in relation to the world and use this knowledge to either foster life or exploit and ultimately destroy life. Through discussion, help bring out some of the following examples:

- Terrorists understand this reality. They may attack a nation or city, and fear sets in at all levels of community.
- Consider the impact on a small community or on a family when a national government breaks down. If a government is not committed to protecting its people, it becomes very difficult for parents and local communities to do so as well. Use examples of war-torn areas like Syria in which human rights have been violated and describe how families and communities have been forced to leave to find safety and refuge.
- Consider the impact of someone like Saint John Paul II who traveled to more countries than any other human in history. The Holy Father also understood the reality that we are part of all these levels of community. He used this understanding to foster life, bridge communities, and lift up the dignity of people from all walks of life. Offer other bridge-builders as examples or encourage participants to share their own ideas.
- Consider the example of Catholic Relief Services and other international agencies that use the wealth of resources from one country to help people in emergency situations in other parts of the world.

6. Reiterate that we inherently a member of each level of community, part of the One Human Family, and that we cannot separate that from our very existence, our very being.

PART III: A VISION OF SOLIDARITY

1. Uncover the Solidarity Diagram to introduce the Catholic social teaching principle of Solidarity. Begin by reminding participants that we are never fully independent even though we like to think we are.

2. Introduce the notion of interdependence. Describe that although we may strive to get to a point where we can be self-sufficient and create a path for our own lives, we CANNOT do that alone; each of us needs others, depends on others, to both survive and thrive.

3. Ask participants to name people closest to them who have helped them to get to this point in their lives. Follow this by asking how they are connected to people in other parts of the city, country and world.

4. Reinforce the Catholic social teaching principle of solidarity as a vision that recognizes an inherent truth about who we are: we are always in relationship with each other, that we are part of a global family regardless of the unique qualities we often use to distinguish ourselves.

5. If you have invited someone to share a personal reflection or story, introduce the person at this point and allow him/her to speak.

6. Conclude by challenging participants to think about the vision of solidarity for the rest of the CRS FoodFast. Challenge them to consider what this vision means for their own lives as it may be a different way of seeing who we are in relationship to all people and all of creation.
OBJECTIVES
To explore the spirit and challenge of the Catholic social teaching principle, “Preferential Option for the Poor,” while learning how communities respond to hunger and food insecurity.

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED
• cut-outs of each role from Handout 1, Role Play Cards, one role per group
• Handout 2, Food Situation: What’s Your Response?, one copy for each group

BACKGROUND SUMMARY
Through role play, participants will learn about the responsibilities and perspectives of various community groups and organizations that must work together to resolve issues related to food security.

PROCESS
1. Divide the large group into 6 small groups. Give each group a Role Play Card and a copy of the handout, Food Situation: What’s your response?. Each small group is to assume the role identified on their card. One group member should read the description aloud. The group should then consider how its role within the larger community (both local and global) relates to the general population’s ability to access food.

2. Give 20 minutes to read about the role, ask clarifying questions, and consider how the role relates to the food situation. Each group should develop a response to the situation. A representative to speak on behalf of the group should be identified.

3. After 20 minutes, bring all groups together and read aloud Food Situation: What’s your response? Invite each group representative to explain his/her group’s position related to the situation.

4. After each representative has presented, invite all participants to work together to come to a common decision to resolve the situation. Some questions to consider are:
   • What makes each role so essential? In other words, what does each group sacrifice by giving in to the position and work of other groups?
   • What actions or factors need to change in each role so that all people have more reliable access to nutritious food?
   • What behaviors should continue or change in each role?
   • How can a preferential option for the poor be a guide for change?

5. Allow the discussion to continue for 20-30 minutes. Moderate as necessary.

6. Debrief the discussion with all participants. Remind participants that, in the real world, groups must often compromise with one another. Explore the solutions that were named. Invite participants to consider the opportunities and the challenges to compromise and joining efforts. How are people living in poverty affected by our ability to compromise and join efforts?
ROLE PLAY CARDS

URBAN FARMER
You are young adult members of an urban parish, and you have developed a program that plants vegetable gardens in abandoned lots where row houses have been demolished. The neighborhood has high poverty and crime rates and no place to buy healthy food — there are no supermarkets in the area, only local stores with canned and packaged foods. Fresh vegetables and fruits are a real luxury here. Your group teaches local children to be “farmers” and to grow food that they will ultimately feed their “farm” community. They are also able to take extra food home to their families. You teach sustainable methods of growing produce and taking care of the soil. You have recently received a grant for a greenhouse, and you plan to diversify and expand your plant growth. You also connect ecological and liturgical seasons; so, you celebrate holidays and feast days with awareness of the gifts of growing food and the abundance of the earth.

COMMUNITY GARDENER
You have always loved to garden, and you have decided, with other members of your parish, to locate a large area of land for a community garden. You invite both young people and retired adults to have plots of land in your large planting space. This multigenerational group fosters community as participants share seeds, tools, responsibilities and conversations. Older adults receive access to fresh food, companionship, and help with their gardening efforts. Youth and young adults learn gardening skills, healthy eating habits, and lessons and wisdom from a wide range of adults.

COMMERCIAL FARMER
You are a farmer who owns, operates and manages a large, commercial farm. In an increasingly industrialized and integrated food production market, you are one link in the chain of crop cultivation, food processing and product distribution. You understand that global trade can affect the price of food, and you are concerned that imports will impact the value of your crops. You also understand that the export of your crops to other countries likewise affects foreign, local markets. However, to support your family, you must sell your crops for the highest price possible. Your crop yields are still subject to unpredictable weather patterns and unfavorable growing seasons, although you have invested in agricultural technologies that help to reduce the impact of these events.
PARISH YOUTH GROUP MEMBER

You are a member of your parish's youth group, and you regularly volunteer with a soup kitchen. You understand the importance of helping people who are homeless and hungry gain access to regular, nutritious meals, and you practice this commitment by serving those in your local community. You are also concerned about poverty and hunger in developing countries around the world. You want your faith community to respond to the needs of the poor both in the United States and around the world.

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES STAFF

You are an agriculture expert at Catholic Relief Services. You help farmers around the world improve their crop yields through alternative farming methods, improved seed choices and better access to markets. You have seen firsthand how helping farmers change the way they cultivate crops increases the amount of food they can produce. Using new methods, farmers are able to increase their income and ensure that their families eat nutritious foods on a regular basis.

SUBSISTENCE FARMER

You are a subsistence farmer, and you are only able to feed your family when you make a good harvest. In productive years, you have a surplus of crops, which you bring to a local market to earn an income. The income allows you to buy necessities for your family, send your children to school, and save money for the future; however, you are also vulnerable to changes in the weather, to delicate socio-economic-political relations in your country, and to a variety of other external factors. If any one factor disrupts this fragile equilibrium, you will not have enough food or income to support your family.
Over 800 million people, nearly 12 percent of the planet’s population, are suffering from hunger. Lack of employment, minimal access to markets, limited agricultural technologies and expertise, poor water sanitation and health, illiteracy, soil infertility, environmental degradation, droughts, floods, and harsh weather conditions — some brought about by climate change — are some of the factors that contribute to food insecurity issues around the world. Often, poor families must consume less nutritious foods in order to survive; otherwise, they will not have any food at all. As food prices continue to increase, people living in poverty will be forced to make more difficult choices about what they can eat.

WHAT’S YOUR RESPONSE?
Reflect on the role your group has been given. Discuss the situation above and develop your response to the following questions. Select a speaker to represent your group.

- How are you impacted by the availability of food in the world?
- How does your role affect the availability of food and contribute to the end of global hunger?
- How do you bring food to a community? What role do you have in ensuring people have access to food?
- Are you guided by a preferential option for the poor? Why or why not?
- Who are your partners in your work?
- How can your group improve people’s access to food in your local and global communities?

PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR
The Gospel calls us to assist those most in need and to reach out to the most vulnerable members of society. The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable reminds us that as Catholics we have a responsibility to ensure that every person has access to basic material necessities, including food.
OBJECTIVE
To present to participants the challenges of making a budget based on the minimum wage and to foster an understanding of the connection between domestic and global poverty.

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED
- Handouts, Month-to-Month on Minimum Wage and Minimum Wage Roles, one copy for each group
- Handout, Poor Because, one for each participant
- Pens or pencils
- Current local newspaper Housing Classifieds or access to the internet with pre-identified websites containing local housing information
- Flipchart
- Markers
- Pens/pencils for each participant

BACKGROUND SUMMARY
This activity attempts to integrate an understanding of both domestic and global poverty. Participants will be assigned a minimum wage earner role, and be asked to come up with a budget for rent, food and living expenses. They will then learn that while it is difficult to make ends meet on what they ‘earn’ in a week on minimum wage, this amount is still more than what many people in the world earn in a year. Participants are encouraged to explore relevant global realities at the end of the activity.

PROCESS
1. Set the stage for this activity with the following script:

To help us to begin to understand the reality of global poverty, we have to build a connection from the place where we live. In the United States, we enjoy a very high standard of living compared to people in developing countries. It is very easy to live with the idea that money is readily available to us.

We are surrounded by wealth and a culture that encourages spending. For many of us, our parents give us money for spending; some of you may have a job and you may even make more than minimum wage! The fact is that most young people live with their parents or guardians who pay all the bills and living expenses.

Your current situation in life does not necessarily give you an accurate picture of the cost of living on your own. Imagine if you were living on your own, and making only the minimum wage. This is a reality facing many adults, not to mention young people no longer at home. That wage must go toward rent, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, and other necessities. Many adults don’t make enough on minimum wage to live on their own. In order to understand the poverty and lack of food and resources that our counterparts in developing countries have, we can start by examining the challenges of poverty at home.

2. Ask the group to identify the present minimum wage in your state. Unless the state-mandated scale is appreciably higher in your area, you can also work with the federal minimum wage ($7.25 in 2017) for this activity.

3. Divide the group into small groups of 4-8. Assign, or ask each team to select for itself, one of the Minimum Wage Roles. Ask each team to come up with a name for the minimum wage earner (and family members) selected.
4. Instruct groups to use the *Month-to-Month on Minimum Wage* handout and the dollar figure at the end of each descriptive paragraph (standard weekly/four-week monthly income; FICA and federal taxes already subtracted) to develop a realistic monthly budget for your worker. Use the internet or distribute the Classified section of the newspaper to each group so they can estimate rent and housing costs. Allow 30 minutes for groups to complete their budgets.

5. Ask each group to share its budget, mentioning briefly the challenges they encountered in the process. Talk through some of the feelings and issues faced by team members as they struggled to survive on minimum wage.
   - What did each group identify as “absolute essential” needs?
   - How do these match up with our experience or understanding of “needs” and “wants”?
   - Discuss, as well, any new questions that surfaced through the process. (e.g., What’s our state tax? Who can get food stamps or assistance? Do minimum wage workers get health or dental coverage?) List the questions on newsprint as they are raised.
   - Lastly, discuss where you can go for answers.

6. Move the group to a discussion of the causes of poverty. Distribute the *Poor Because...* handout and ask participants members to fill it out individually.

7. Form groups of 4-8. Invite participants to share what they listed as the primary causes of poverty, and why they chose those causes. Ask a representative from each group to share the major agreements and/or disagreements that arose in the group around the causes of poverty. Record on newsprint.

8. Close with a discussion on poverty in the United States and around the world. Record on newsprint participants’ answers to the following questions:
   - Why do you think there are people who struggle with poverty in the United States?
   - Why do you think there are people who struggle with poverty in developing countries?
   - What are the similarities?
   - What are the differences?

**Note:** This activity can be paired with either or both *Connection to the World* activities as a way of deepening participants' understanding of poverty. These activities can be found in the remaining pages of this manual.
MINIMUM WAGE ROLES

You are single, 19 years of age with a high school diploma. Your health is great and you enjoy being on your own before getting serious about further schooling or getting a “real job”. You live near enough to your family to stop in for an occasional meal and to do your laundry there when you run out of money. Unfortunately, you don’t have a car and finding a job to earn more has been a challenge. You keep looking, but openings are limited and you are already working 50+ hours a week. ($300 week/$1200 month)

You are a single, only child, 22 years of age, without a high school diploma. Both of your parents are deceased—your mother passed away when you were a child and your father died from cancer earlier this year. Your health is okay, but you wear contacts and need to have impacted wisdom teeth removed sometime soon. You are struggling to figure out what to do next after spending most of your time caring for your father in the past year. You currently have a minimum wage job, and as much as you have looked, you have not been able to find anything else in your area. ($243 week/$972 month)

You are single, 17 years of age, with a six-month old daughter. You gave up on school at 14, around the same time that your family and friends gave up on you. You have just moved to give yourself a chance to start over fresh. You are staying with a friend for a couple of weeks, but know you must get a place of your own soon. You are eager to return to school. You know a GED is possible, but college seems out of the question with your income. ($255 week/$1020 month)

You are 36, married and the proud parent of three-year—old twins! You work full-time, and your spouse works part time—20 hours a week, also at minimum wage. With the cost of child care going up, you’ve decided as a family to try to make it on just one income and are trying to imagine what your budget would look like. You get along well with your extended family, but they are no better off than you, so you need to get by financially on your own, apart from occasional hand-me-down clothes for the twins. ($265 week/$1060 month with a single income)
# MONTH-TO-MONTH ON MINIMUM WAGE

Name:

Monthly Budget:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUDGET ITEM</th>
<th>MONTHLY EXPENSE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>electricity, gas, water</td>
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<td>Food</td>
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<td>Phone</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>auto expenses, public transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
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<tr>
<td>purchase, laundry/cleaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church &amp; Charitable Gifts</td>
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<td>Medical/Dental</td>
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<td>Insurance</td>
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<td>renters, health, life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Savings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>vacation, education, major purchases</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspaper &amp; Magazines</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>eating out, having friends in, concerts/movies/music/books</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total Expenditures**
POOR BECAUSE...

From the following list, choose the three responses you think best describe why people are rendered poor.

PEOPLE ARE POOR BECAUSE...

- they are lazy and do not work hard enough to earn what they need
- they do not have work (unemployment)
- even though they work hard, they do not earn enough money to buy what they need (wages are too low)
- they do not have enough education or skills
- they have too many children
- they are discriminated against (treated unfairly) because of their color, nationality, religion or sex
- government ignores the needs of the poor
- of illness or disease
- they do not have enough initiative (people just sit back and wait for things to happen)
- no reason in particular, that’s just the way the world is
- there are too many needs in the world and not enough resources to meet them all
- of natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes
- there are enough resources in the world for everyone to have what they need but these resources are not shared fairly
- too much money is spent on defense and weapons and not enough on assisting people with what is most needed
- resources (food, water, land, energy) are wasted rather than being used for what people need
- the current economic system does not need as many workers as technology improves, leaving many people underemployed or unemployed
- other reasons (list any you can think of):

- 
- 
- 

foodfast.crs.org
OBJECTIVES
To help participants see firsthand the actual cost of food and experience the difficulty of feeding a family on minimum wage.

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED
• Completed Month-to-Month on Minimum Wage handout from previous activity, Living on Minimum Wage (if your group did not complete that activity, complete the handout separately and make copies for each group)
• Handout, Grocery List, one copy for each group
• Calculators for each group
• Pens/pencils for each participant
• Identify a grocery store in advance of the CRS FoodFast in order to arrange for your group to visit and to gage price costs for a weekly food shopping list

BACKGROUND SUMMARY
Participants will go grocery “shopping” and “spend” only what they have budgeted for during Living on Minimum Wage activity.

PROCESS
1. Gather participants in the same small groups they were in for the Living on Minimum Wage activity. Ask each group to make up a food shopping list for a week applicable to their unique circumstance. Adult leaders may need to assist participants in making up a balanced shopping list to cover the basic food needs. Avoid telling them that they can’t afford anything—just have them make the list they want to.
2. When they have their lists, it’s time to go to a local grocery store! Once at the store, participants locate the items on their lists and write the prices down for each item. They will not actually buy items or put items in carts; they will simply record the prices.
   Option: Purchase the non-perishable food participants have on their list and donate the items to your local food pantry.
3. Debrief the experience with the following questions:
   • Were you able to buy everything on your list?
   • Did you have to decide between items? How did you decide which one to buy?
   • How are income and hunger related?
   • What might people with limited incomes need to forgo in order to buy food?
   • What circumstances might force people with limited incomes to spend their money on other things instead of food?
   • How can we, as Catholics, assist the poor and hungry in our world so they do not have to choose between food and other necessities?
GROCERY LIST

Compile a shopping list of food items needed and desired for one week. When at the grocery store, note the price cost for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOD ITEMS</th>
<th>PRICE</th>
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TOTAL COST OF SHOPPING TRIP $ _____ • ____
OBJECTIVES
To help participants understand the concept of food security and become familiar with circumstances that threaten it in their local communities as well as more broadly in the United States and across the world.

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED
- Projector, speakers and access to YouTube video: Africa in Crisis/CRS in Kenya (youtube.com/watch?v=mkjtX9mCymE)
- Handout, When Did I See You Hungry?, one copy for each participant
- Flip chart
- Markers
- Bible
- Pre-arranged visit to local shelter or soup kitchen
- Journals or journaling sheets for each participant
- Pens / pencils for each participant

BACKGROUND SUMMARY
This activity begins with a group discussion of food security. Participants then visit a local agency that serves the poor in their community to understand the needs of those in your area. Following the visit, the group will reflect on the experience and discuss ways to assist people around the world who are food insecure.

PROCESS
PART I – WHAT IS FOOD SECURITY? (45 MINUTES)
1. Begin this activity by discussing the following questions to review the concept of food security. Note responses on a flip chart or newsprint so that you can return to them later.
   - From where did the food you last ate come? Was it a domestic product or something that was imported? What route did it take to get to you?
   - Are you ever concerned that food will not be there when you are hungry?

   Note: Consider the situations of participants in your group when asking this question. If you feel that this question might be uncomfortable for a participant, skip the question and read the statements to introduce the concept of food security.

2. Review the concept of Food Security and Food Insecurity. Have the basic World Health Organization definition posted on newsprint.
   - Food Security: “All people at all times having access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” (World Health Organization) That means that all of the following factors must be true for food security to be real:
     - All people have this security.
     - People have this security all the time.
     - People have access to food no matter what their transportation limitations are.
     - Food can be acquired in safe ways. In other words, people don’t have to do anything illegal or life-threatening to get food.
     - Healthy, nutritious food is available to all people, not just junk food. People can get the fresh produce and other foods needed to maintain an active life.

   - When individuals cannot be assured that food will be available when they need it, or when a country cannot produce enough food to meet the caloric needs of its people, those individuals and that country lack food security or are food insecure.
3. Ask participants to consider the process of food traveling to them and to name the factors that affect whether the food reaches them. Be sure to highlight the following:

- Agricultural production: land availability, knowledge, seed, weather, soil fertility, etc.
- Transportation: vehicles, gasoline, roads, drivers, weather
- Processing: processing facilities, water, electricity, workers, knowledge of processing
- Retail sales: transportation, facility, staff, roads
- Individual purchase: money, transportation, roads

4. Understanding all the factors in place, explore the greatest challenges to food security as identified by the United Nations: (Note: This list is available as a small poster in the CRS FoodFast Poster Pack or you can list these on newsprint.) Explore how this list relates to participants’ understanding of hunger and poverty.

- **Poverty** is the number one cause of food insecurity. Food costs money, even for farmers who are growing it.
- **Lack of investment** in agriculture can cause large scale food insecurity. The more people learn good agricultural practices that are effective for their local climate and protect the land, the more food is available.
- **Climate and weather** can cause food insecurity. Drought, floods, hail, wind, too much cold or heat can damage or destroy crops. Change in climate patterns, increasingly prevalent in recent years, also impact access to food.
- **War and displacement** cause food insecurity for many people in our world. When people must flee their homes to be safe from violence, when they join thousands of others in refugee camps, or when they settle in areas where they don’t know how or where to acquire food, food insecurity is likely.
- **Unstable local and global markets** can challenge food security. Food prices often rise or fall with the market.
- **Food wastage** on the part of some contributes to food insecurity on the part of others.

5. Show the video, *Africa Hunger Crisis/CRS in Kenya*. Discuss the current realities in Africa. Discuss the current realities in Africa with participants, naming what they learned through the video and identifying the contributing factors to the famine that has developed in Kenya and other regions of Africa.

6. Ask participants to consider how they would answer this question:

- Are people generally more food secure or less?
- Why?

7. When the discussion ends, explain to the group that you are going to take a trip to learn about, meet, and visit with some of their neighbors who are struggling to attain food security. Encourage them to ask questions during the visit while being sensitive to the stories they are hearing.

**PART II – VISIT TO LOCAL AGENCY (TIME TO BE DETERMINED LOCALLY)**

1. Before departing for the local agency, ask participants to stand in a circle. Remind them that they are going as part of a community of faith. Ask them to watch you as you do something very familiar. Make the sign of the cross while saying as you touch your forehead, “God, open my mind”, as you touch your heart, “my heart”, as you touch your shoulders, “and my hands to reach out to my brothers and sisters”. Ask participants to make the sign of the cross in this way as well. Invite a participant to read Matthew 25: 37, 40.

2. Depart for the agency to meet and visit with people being served. When you arrive, tour the facility to learn about the services that are provided. If possible, have one of the staff talk to the group about his/her responsibilities and some of his/her personal...
Educational and learning Activities

Connection to the World

When Did I See You Hungry

Activity

Experiences on the job. Ask if it is appropriate for your group to interact with people being assisted who might be willing to share with the group their own experiences. You might also break your group into smaller groups with each one visiting different local agencies to gain an understanding of the variety of services in your community.

Option: Prior to your visit, arrange with the volunteer coordinator or other personnel from the agency to provide a task that your group can work on with the people served by the facility. Working together is a great way to visit and get to know people.

Part III – Debrief (Time To Be Determined Based on The Process Chosen.)

1. Review other BE THE CHANGE manuals. You may prefer to integrate a prayer or reflection activity to close this learning opportunity.

2. When you return, invite participants into a quiet time of journaling and reflection. Review with participants the process they have just completed: understanding food security, exploring underlying causes of hunger and food insecurity, spending time with people who are food insecure and with agencies who serve them in their need. Read the following questions and allow at least 15 minutes for journaling time. Distribute the handout for participants to reference as they write:
   - What surprised you about the local agency and the people there?
   - What inspired you?
   - What troubled you?
   - How is this agency helping people in our community be food secure?
   - What services are available for members of our local and global community who are not food secure?
   - How can you, through this Food Fast, help people in both our local and global community be more food secure?

3. After a designated amount of time for journaling, invite the group to share one or two thoughts or reflections that seem to be speaking to their hearts at this moment.

4. Reread Matthew 25: 37, 40. Ask participants to name someone in whom they have seen the face of Jesus Christ during the FoodFast thus far.

Optional Activity

Explore the concept of food security further by inviting participants to consider the following scenarios and to determine the impact these would have on people who are food insecure around the world.

- A fire destroys the local health and gourmet food store.
- A local farm offers its excess produce to low income families who are willing to come pick it.
- Catholic Relief Services staff shares ideas with farmers on how to maintain soil fertility.
- A change in weather patterns creates a long period without rain.
- A soup kitchen opens in the neighborhood, providing free meals to anyone who comes.
- Contaminated water causes severe diarrhea and dehydration, making work impossible.
- The car will not start and repairs are costly, making it difficult to get to the store for groceries.
- Catholic Relief Services provides corn to families affected by a drought.
- To cut federal spending, Congress votes to reduce food stamp benefits and international assistance.
Reflect on your experience of serving your community during your CRS FoodFast.