The content for the CRS FoodFast was developed in partnership with the

The Center for Ministry Development is an organization which promotes the development of ministry and catechesis with youth and families through leadership formation, service learning, and resources rooted in Catholic tradition and Scripture. For more information, go to: cmdnet.org.
Welcome to *FoodFast—Uncommon Good*. Pope Francis is the inspiration for this theme. When he wrote the encyclical *Laudato Si’ (On Care for Our Common Home)* in 2015, the Holy Father challenged all of us to remember that the earth is our common home. It’s not just mine or yours—it’s ours. We are all called to care for God’s creation, and to care especially for the poor and vulnerable who are most affected by climate change. We are called to make choices that help all of God’s people, not just ourselves. In other words, we are called to do uncommon good, so that the common good can be realized!

As you prepare for FoodFast, think about how you will practice what you will be sharing with your participants. A great way to demonstrate that you care for God’s creation during the FoodFast is by practicing the following:

- Ask participants to bring their own sustainable go-cups or mugs for drinking water during the fast so you can avoid using throwaway items.
- If the weather is cold, keep the temperature a bit lower and invite participants to wear an extra layer. If the weather is warm, keep the temperature set a bit higher and invite participants to wear appropriate lighter clothing.
- Turn off lights whenever possible, and invite participants to help keep energy use down as much as possible.
- Place recycling bins in the gathering space, and encourage participants to use them.

*Catholic Relief Services is proud to partner with the Center for Ministry Development, which developed the content for all CRS FoodFast programs.*
### 10-HOUR VERSION

#### NOTE:

The schedule below provides a same-day schedule; however, this version can be easily adapted as an overnight retreat. For example, begin your FoodFast at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday and end with a noon liturgy on Sunday. Likewise, feel free to adapt the sessions themselves to focus on themes or ideas that most resonate with the community you serve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Welcome / Icebreakers: Shape Shifters and Speed Sharing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Opening Prayer</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:50 a.m.</td>
<td>The Greener the Better Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:40 a.m.</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Love My House—Caring for God’s Creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:40 a.m.</td>
<td>Sharing Pope Francis' Message—10 Themes from Laudato Si’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:55 p.m.</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Mystery Mix –Soup for a Hungry Soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Common Good – Get People Going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 p.m.</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>#Hashtag Challenge!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15 p.m.</td>
<td>In the Beginning—How to Become Change-Makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:15 p.m.</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Where Is God Leading Me? Taking Action!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Mass or Prayer/Commissioning Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Dinner/Break the Fast/Share Stories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SPECIAL NOTES TO ASSIST YOU IN YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLANNING AND USE:

In our collective commitment to living our faith in solidarity with our one human family, we find solid ground where we can be active builders of a common good. Social media is one tool—and an important one—through which we can spread the gospel of love, justice and peace. We know young people are all about social media, and encourage you to use your FoodFast as a learning opportunity to help young people understand how it can be a tool to promote the common good! The guidelines below can help you do just that!

1. **Ensure that all participants have signed and returned the permission slip**, which includes a media release.
2. **Determine which social media outlets you would like to utilize** during your CRS FoodFast. Consider platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
3. **Decide if your fast will be better served by an event page, new profile or an existing social media profile** connected to your church, youth group or school.
4. **Create a plan for how you will use social media** throughout the fast. If desired, create a schedule for when different participants and/or leaders will post videos, pictures and tweets.
5. **Promote your media**! Make sure that your community is following your posts by advertising your social media outreach with your FoodFast. Encourage your church or school community to like, comment, share, retweet and otherwise promote the great good that you are doing during your fast.
6. **Feel free to gather inspiration and quotes from the FoodFast materials** to write your tweets and posts. Share pictures and reflections from participants who give permission to do so.
7. **Connect with CRS**! CRS is active on many social media platforms, and we would love to see your FoodFast pictures and posts. Make sure to find the profiles below and visit the CRS Connect page for all of our social media outlets.

**CRS FOODFAST**
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/EducationCRS](http://www.facebook.com/EducationCRS)
- #CRSFoodFast

**CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES**
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CatholicReliefServices](http://www.facebook.com/CatholicReliefServices)
- Twitter: @CatholicRelief
- Instagram: @CatholicReliefServices
- #CRSFoodFast

**CRS ESPAÑOL**
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CRSespanol](http://www.facebook.com/CRSespanol)
- Twitter: @noticias

8. **Watch for social media symbols** that mark the key points during the FoodFast when posting is most effective.
9. **Make sure to include your fundraising information on your profiles and posts. Ask people to support you** in your desire to create a more just world.
ADVANCE PLANNING CHECKLIST

Review the Coordinator’s Guide for a helpful timeline. This simple guide summarizes the most important elements to complete a successful FoodFast!

- Make sure you have downloaded two important guides:
  - The CRS FoodFast Coordinator’s Guide (This manual provides all the guidance you need for advance planning.)
  - The CRS FoodFast Manual (This manual matches your chosen schedule. In it you will find the Advance Planning Checklist providing a summary of your advance setup instructions. This manual also contains a complete & Materials Checklist summarizing everything you need for your CRS FoodFast. Instructions for Setup/Materials are also listed with each activity and prayer, but the complete summary provides a simple checklist for your advance planning and organization.)
- If you want to extend the time designated for your CRS FoodFast, or substitute any activity with others, look for additional resources on the CRS Education website (education.crs.org and foodfast.crs.org).
- Order your complimentary CRS FoodFast materials well in advance of your FoodFast. These include a poster pack, fundraising envelope and One Human Family, Food for All prayer cards. These can be ordered through the link on the CRS FoodFast website.
- CRS has made special arrangements with our partner Serrv, allowing you to choose from a selection of fair trade gifts handcrafted by artisans around the world. These are appropriate for commissioning services and other celebrations. Visit the CRS FoodFast website for the link to our special Serrv page to order commissioning gifts for your fast.
- Create your marketing plan for inviting youth to participate in the CRS FoodFast. Consider using different social media platforms to spread the word.
- Follow the safe-environment policies of your local (arch)diocese concerning youth permission slips and adult volunteers. A sample permission slip is provided in the Coordinator’s Manual.
- Make sure you have internet access for multimedia and social networking. If this is not available, download all multimedia prior to your FoodFast.
- Be sure to set up a projector, speakers/sound and screen for the video and PowerPoint presentations.
- Prior to your FoodFast, invite adults and youth to serve as guest speakers, music leaders, readers, and prayer leaders where noted throughout the FoodFast. If you are preparing a “Break the Fast” meal or gathering after your FoodFast, invite a special team to serve as planners and organizers for this portion.
- Have enough water, juice and small snacks available for participants who need the nourishment throughout your FoodFast. For health reasons, no participant should go without drinking water.
- See Soup Recipe and assign each participant an ingredient to bring. Consider sending out a reminder postcard, email and/or text prior to your FoodFast. Include the following reminder at some point in your communication to participants:

  Hello! We are so happy you will be participating in our (name of parish or school) FoodFast! We have a great experience planned for you, but do need you to bring some special things with you. We ask that you bring your own sustainable water bottle, go-cup or mug for drinking water during the fast. We also ask that you bring __________________________ for a project we will complete during the FoodFast.
  If you are unable to bring this, please let us know by calling, texting or emailing at: ____________________________

  See you soon!

  Date:______________________________ Time:______________________________
  Place: _________________________________________________
SUPPLIES & MATERIALS CHECKLIST:
Each activity and prayer in the CRS FoodFast manual lists the materials that are needed for that specific activity or prayer. Be sure to consult that list and organize your materials in advance by session. This simple list simply summarizes everything you need for a successful FoodFast!

- Because this FoodFast integrates the theme of “Care for God’s Creation” throughout, explore how certain prayers and activities can be done outside, weather permitting
- CRS FoodFast Poster Pack for décor and inspiration
- Copies of the Justice and Solidarity Quotes and Scripture Passages (in the CRS Coordinator’s Guide) for participant use for social media or in sessions and activities in which they plan a presentation
- Copies of all handouts and resource sheets
- Free resources available through the CRS FoodFast website (fundraising envelope, posters and prayer cards)
- Commissioning gifts from CRS FoodFast’s partner Serrv
- Supplies for making journals. Consider using recycled paper and additional items that connects the journal to the earth. Some sample ideas can be found at Imagination Soup: [www.imaginationsoup.net/2011/06/27/make-handmade-journals-directions-and-variations](http://www.imaginationsoup.net/2011/06/27/make-handmade-journals-directions-and-variations). Consider gluing the handouts in the journal for easy access.
- Microphone and sound system as needed for large groups
- Review the following videos prior to your FoodFast:
  - CST 101: Care for God’s Creation ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSnXuCxiHXE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSnXuCxiHXE))
  - Laudato Si’ – CRS Animated High School Brief ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fj4WSTken3w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fj4WSTken3w))
  - ‘Top 10 Things You Need to Know about Pope Francis’ Laudato Si’ ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_lqFTylc4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_lqFTylc4))
  - Catholic Social Teaching in 3 Minutes ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELyLdMLFdzA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELyLdMLFdzA))
  - The Vanishing Water of Bolivia ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVjYhAAPxFw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVjYhAAPxFw))
  - Climate Change / It Changes Everything ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=glidELXNuVU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glidELXNuVU))
  - Turning Innovation Into Impact ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkwVCnfjWqQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkwVCnfjWqQ))
  - Catholic Relief Services’ ICT4D Programs: Using Technology to Empower Those We Serve ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=HabaEzhFS74&list=PLt5PsPJAK-1aa8nsZhCPENajx_Jhmsq9&index=3](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HabaEzhFS74&list=PLt5PsPJAK-1aa8nsZhCPENajx_Jhmsq9&index=3))
  - Growing Sanitation with the Arborloo ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvWRWOac9lM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvWRWOac9lM))
  - The SILC Road ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdDtpA9eN1o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdDtpA9eN1o))
  - The ValLimar Jansen videos, available on the CRS FoodFast website

- Chairs
- Tables
- Several Bibles
- Music (Suggestions are made on both the website and in modules, but feel free to include your own selections.)
- Music player
- Speakers

fooodfast.crs.org
10-HOUR VERSION

ADVANCE PREPARATION

- LCD projector and computer for presentations
- Screen
- Depending on size of teams, have on hand a number of fair trade crafts to give as prizes for quizzes
- Access to the internet and to social media
- Decorations (e.g., pictures, plants, cloths, maps)
- Assorted Colored Markers
- Sharpies or thin markers, one per participant
- Thick chisel-tip black markers
- Large blank name tags for participants
- Pen or pencil for each participant
- Large newsprint or poster-size paper
- Roll of butcher or craft paper
- Painter’s masking tape
- Materials for a favorite community-building or icebreaker activity
- Stopwatch, watch or smartphone app to time the sharing processes
- Cardboard cutout of Pope Francis (amazon.com has several choices)

- Prayer table/focus and related supplies (Build the prayer space in progression through each of the prayers. Feel free to adapt using your own creativity.):
  - Basket of fresh fruits and vegetables, plants and a globe or other depictions of creation and life
  - Candle, light stick and crucifix
  - A potted tree, or several tree branches, 3 to 5 feet in length, placed in a pot of rocks to stand straight up
  - 1-inch x 6-inch pieces of colored ribbon or fabric
  - Several yards of twine
  - Sharpie markers
  - Pitcher or bowl of water
  - Instrumental music
  - Commissioning crosses
**The Greener, The Better** Supplies

- **NOTE:** Check out this link for a visual of what the life-size game will look like: [www.literacious.com/2015/09/16/life-size-chutes-ladders](http://www.literacious.com/2015/09/16/life-size-chutes-ladders). Looking at this visual before reading the instructions will help make sense of the game assembly described below.
- Create large dice made out of square boxes approximately 12” x 12” ([see link for a visual](http)), one for each group of eight participants.
- Cut out square 1” x 1” tokens in various colors of the earth: blues, greens, browns, yellows, reds, etc.
- Print out each of the following numbered pages on 8 ½” x 11” paper, preferably in different colors, with one set for every 8 participants. These will serve as the board squares. Arrange them on the floor by number using the layout below as a guide; make sure there is enough room between squares allowing participants to stand on squares with other players nearby.

![Game Board Layout](image)

- Create the ladders with washi tape or colored masking tape from number to number as shown in the straight lines on the diagram above. One ladder will be from #16 to #40, another from #35 to #46, another from #10 to #32, and the last one from #28 to #55.
- Create the chutes following the lines marked in curved lines. The chutes will be from #23 to #8, from #45 to #30, and from #48 to #26.
- For the mosaics, provide one large sheet of poster board or newsprint per group of eight. Provide each group with two or more glue sticks.

- Six paper grocery bags or large gift bags filled with the following items: Hat, gloves, scarf, large boots
- One sheet of watercolor paper for each participant. Copy Resource 1 art work onto half of the papers and leave the other half blank.
- Watercolor paints
- Small jars or cups of water to clean brushes
- Paint brushes of different sizes
- Pastel chalk
- Crayons
- Several copies of *Laudato Si’* in case the participants want to take quotes directly from the encyclical
- Ten smartphones or cameras for participants to use to film their videos in the session

**Sharing Pope Francis’ Message—10 Themes from *Laudato Si’***
A centrally located computer or phone on which you will download all of the videos created by the ten teams.

Have a basket with five slips of paper in it for the drawing in the session, Sharing Pope Francis’ Message. Each slip will have its own task. Prepare these ahead of time with these five different messages, one per slip:

- Your part of the event is music and musicians. Which songs would you choose to get people excited about caring for creation, for the poorest and most vulnerable, and for the common good? Which singers and musicians would you invite to be part of the event?
- Your part of the event is speakers. Who are the great speakers you want to get to inspire people to donate on behalf of the poor, the environment, and the common good of all? You will have one MC, four keynoters and another six people who will speak.
- Your part of the event is the environment. How will you decorate the stage and the room/stadium to convey care for creation, for the poor and for the common good?
- Your part of the event is publicity. What theme will you choose which expresses the importance of the common good while emphasizing care for the poor and care for God’s creation? How will you get people to participate and donate? What social media will you use?
- Your part of the event is a blessing, ritual or prayer service to ground the event in faith, in our Church’s commitment to the common good, to care for the poor, and to care for God’s creation. How will you inspire participants in the event?

Be sure to review all recipe needs for the Mystery Soup Mix: Soup for the Hungry Soul. See the Recipe Resource provided with that session. In addition to recipe ingredients, the following are needed:

- Create and print postcards which remind participants of the details of the FoodFast and also give them an item of food (see recipe) to bring with them. Send out post card several days in advance of the FoodFast with last minute instructions and highlighting the item they need to bring.
- Have extra vegetables and chicken broth on hand in case someone forgets or cannot bring it.
- Provide the salt, pepper and thyme as well as cutting boards, soup pots, knives, gloves and quart canning jars. Potholders are a must as well!
- Check on your parish or school policy regarding the use of knives. If you are worried about using knives in your facility, ask participants to bring their ingredient already chopped up at home.
- Provide construction paper, markers, stickers or note cards.
- Include jar labels, ribbon or twine.
- Make sure there is a refrigerator available for storing the soup once it’s made.

- 8½” x 11” pieces of card stock, at least 3 per person
- Space for photographing and videotaping teamwork during sessions that call for it. (Option: The photo station could have a fun backdrop such as nature, animals, a chalk mural of a map, the earth, a farm, fruit, vegetables, etc.) You will need a youth or adult with the knowledge of how to make a short, fast-motion video to take pictures and put them together in a fast-motion video. If you have a very large group, consider inviting several photographers to work on this.
- Good-quality digital cameras
- Food for “Break the Fast” gathering
Welcome to our FoodFast, brought to you by Catholic Relief Services and your local (parish or school name)! During this time together, we are not just giving up food, we are going on a journey with a very special person—Pope Francis himself. (If you have a cutout of Pope Francis, point to it.) We will build from his 2015 encyclical, Laudato Si’, which is Latin for “Praised Be.” The subtitle of the encyclical is On Care for Our Common Home. Put the two titles together and we might interpret that giving glory to God—our praise and worship of our Creator—includes embracing our responsibility to care for all God’s creation.

During our FoodFast, we will take this time to learn more about climate change and what we can do to care for God’s creation! We will make the connection between how we live, and how our choices affect the most vulnerable people across the globe. We will learn how the Catholic Church, through Catholic Relief Services, is working hard to help combat the negative effects that climate change has on people who are poor and therefore more vulnerable to these effects. We will also discover ways that CRS helps people feed their families and obtain clean drinking water without harming the environment. Finally, we will explore what we can do to join these efforts and make a difference.

So let’s get started.

1. Introduce Shape-Shifters, the icebreaking activity:

   We are going to play a quick game that needs a little cooperation and teamwork. I will shout out a number, and you will get into a group with that many people. Then I will shout out a shape or a thing, and you will need to create that with the people in your group. Let’s try an easy one:

   - FOUR (get in groups of four) BOX! (create that shape)

   Good—now let’s get going!

2. Affirm their efforts, provide clarification if needed, and continue with the following numbers and configurations. Feel free to add your own if time allows!

   - EIGHT .......... TREE
   - FIVE .......... OCEAN WAVES (not the kind with your hands)
3. When finished, continue with the following:

Thanks for playing, everyone! And thanks for starting the day with enthusiasm. We are in it as a community, and we stand as people committed to being confirmed. That also means we pledge to care for the poor and to care for God’s creation, just as Pope Francis has challenged us to do!

4. Next, invite participants to do a warm-up exercise called “speed sharing.” They are to find a partner, someone they don’t know or don’t know very well, and then you will pose a question. Each person gets 30 seconds to answer. Let them know you will keep track of time. After a minute, they are to switch partners with a pair standing close to them. You will ask the second question, and each has 30 seconds to share his/her answer. Continue the process until all of the questions have been answered.

5. Invite participants to pair off, then ask the participants the following questions in the order provided:

1. What is your favorite part of all God’s creation? Why?
2. What is your favorite season of the year? Why?
3. What is your favorite outdoor activity?
4. How much time have you spent on a farm, in a vineyard, in a greenhouse or in any place that grows food? What did you do there?
5. If you had to pick one environmental cause to support, what would it be and why?
6. If you could own a farm, what would you like to grow or raise? Why?
7. What are your favorite fresh foods, vegetables or fruits?
8. Do you own a bike? How often do you ride it?
9. Have you or a loved one ever had to use an oxygen mask? Why? Regardless of whether or not you know someone who has to use an oxygen mask, what do you think it would be like to have to wear one?
10. Are you more like air/wind, earth, water or fire? Why?
11. Do you think climate change has impacted your life? Why or why not?
12. What is one thing you know about Catholic Relief Services?
13. Before today, what did you know about Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment and climate change? What do you know about Church teaching on the environment?

6. After all the questions have been answered, share...

Hopefully these questions have you thinking about how awesome God’s creation is and maybe a little bit about ecology. Perhaps you have even started thinking about faith and its connection to caring for God’s creation! Let’s go deeper.
**OPTIONAL ACTIVITY:**

1. If time permits, show the video, *Laudati Si’* – CRS Animated High School Brief ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fj4WSTken3w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fj4WSTken3w)). Introduce the video by saying:

   At the beginning of our gathering, I referenced Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si’*. Since that is the cornerstone for this FoodFast, let’s take a look at a quick summary of the encyclical.

2. Show the video. When completed, invite participants to prayer by saying something like:

   We will be exploring some of the issues and themes mentioned in this video throughout our time together. Let’s begin by taking all of this to prayer ... and in our gathering prayer, let’s focus on praising God, thanking our God, for the gift of God’s remarkable creation. After all, it is in acknowledging all creation as gift and as sacred that we are then moved to better care for this gift.
OBJECTIVE:
• To gather and begin the FoodFast as a community of faith
• To celebrate God’s gift of creation

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED:
• Prayer table with basket of fresh fruits and vegetables, plants and a globe or other depictions of creation and life
• Candle, light stick and crucifix
• A potted tree, or several tree branches, 3 to 5 feet in length, placed in a pot of rocks to stand straight up
• 1-inch x 6-inch pieces of colored ribbon or fabric
• Several yards of twine
• Sharpie markers
• Pitcher or bowl of water
• Five people to proclaim Scripture and read prayer
• One musician to help lead the prayer
• Consider holding this prayer service outside if weather permits
• Choose a closing song that reflects the power of God and the wonder of his creation

PROCESS:

PROCLAIM OPENING PRAYER:

We are gathered together for a bit of—your Confirmation retreat, which is also a FoodFast! We are grateful for your presence, and we ask God to help us let go of all the things in our minds, things we’ve left undone, things on our to-do list and all the worries we carry in our hearts. We continue in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

Loving God, we invite you into our hearts... to open them to all you would have us learn and experience in this amazing time together. May we all come to know and understand the love you have for all creation. Make us into passionate disciples called to care for the gift you have given us, and to make a difference in the world. We ask this in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reader 1: Genesis 1:1-5
Reader 2: Genesis 1:11-12
Reader 3: Genesis 1:24-28
Reader 4: Genesis 1:31

Pass out a ribbon and marker to each person and share the following:

Imagine that you could change one thing about the earth today—that this little hopeful ribbon was all it would take to change, improve or recover something about the planet we live on. What would it be? Write your answer or answers on your ribbon. When you are finished, bring it forward and tie it onto the twine near the tree on our prayer table.

When all are finished, wrap the twine with ribbons around the tree on the prayer table like garland. Continue with the fifth reader.
Reader 5: Pope Francis says, “Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose ... The entire material universe speaks of God’s love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God.” (Laudato Si’, 84)

Every living thing is important to the balance of nature—the world which God created. We know that much work is needed to fix the damage we have done to the earth, but we are not without hope. You and I put our hopes here on our prayer table...maybe we hope for clean rivers and oceans, or that no species should be threatened or endangered, or for an end to air pollution and climate change. This FoodFast is one way to take time to learn and to think about ways we can do something that will change the course of things so we can be better caretakers of all God has given us.

Let’s close our prayer with a song as we ask God to make this time together filled with fun, creativity and inspiration! We pray all this in the name of Jesus, our brother and friend. Amen.

CLOSING SONG:
Sing closing song. Consider choosing a song from the Spirit & Song CD collection, “AKWAABA! Songs of Peace and Solidarity”
OBJECTIVES:
• To engage participants in a fun activity (similar to the game of Chutes and Ladders) that aims to open their eyes to the different ways their decisions and actions can help care for – or harm – God’s creation
• To begin to make connections between caring for and empowering impoverished people and caring for the earth

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED:
NOTE:
Check out this link for a visual of what the life-size game will look like: literacious.com/2015/09/16/life-size-chutes-ladders. Looking at this visual before reading the instructions will help make sense of the game assembly described below.

• Create large dice made out of square boxes approximately 12” x 12” (see link for a visual), one for each group of eight participants.
• Cut out square 1” x 1” tokens in various colors of the earth: blues, greens, browns, yellows, reds, etc.
• Print out each of the following numbered pages on 8 ½” x 11” paper, preferably in different colors, with one set for every 8 participants. These will serve as the board squares. Arrange them on the floor by number using the layout below as a guide; make sure there is enough room between squares allowing participants to stand on squares with other players nearby.

• Create the ladders with washi tape or colored masking tape from number to number as shown in the straight lines on the diagram above. One ladder will be from #16 to #40, another from #35 to #46, another from #10 to #32, and the last one from #28 to #55.
• Create the chutes following the lines marked in curved lines. The chutes will be from #23 to #8, from #45 to #30, and from #48 to #26.
• For the mosaics, provide one large sheet of poster board or newsprint per group of eight. Provide each group with two or more glue sticks.
PROCESS:

1. Introduce the activity with the following words:

   We are going to play a game called “The Greener, The Better.” It’s like “Chutes and Ladders.” Do any of you know how to play that game? (Let participants share a few ways to play.) It looks like you are experts!

   As mentioned, we are playing a variation of the game, “Chutes and Ladders.” This version helps us explore how we can better care for God’s creation. In order to play this version, you need a few tokens at the start. You get your tokens by taking a “Care for Creation” quiz! We can’t make it too easy!

2. Have participants take the CRS Creation Quiz (located at www.crs.org/resource-center/care-creation-quiz or also found on the CRS FoodFast website) Their score determines how many tokens they get to start the game. Each player gets 10 tokens, plus a token for each of the eight items on the quiz he/she gets right.

3. Divide the participants into groups of eight. Give each group the game. Tell them the game is similar to any board game.

4. The person with the highest number of tokens goes first, rolls the dice and advances. This continues until time is called or all players have completed the game and reached #56.

5. At the end of the game, gather the group in a large circle. Acknowledge the players with the most tokens.

6. Debrief with the following questions:
   - What is your general reaction to what we just did?
   - How would you compare the way you really live with the score you got in the game? Are you greener than that? Are you not quite as good about caring for creation?
   - Did the game give you any new ideas about how you can better care for God’s creation and/or the poor and vulnerable?

7. Wrap up the game by inviting each team to create a mosaic using their tokens and glue sticks. Encourage them to think of an idea that inspires care for God’s creation and to title their mosaic. Offer an example or two, like “And God saw that it was good” or “Life is good” or “I love the earth.”

8. Invite participants to take pictures of their mosaics and post on social media.

10:40 a.m. — 11:00 a.m. BREAK
Start here to play...

THE GREENER, THE BETTER
# 2

You cranked up the air conditioner in the car because it’s so hot.

LOSE ONE TOKEN.
When you have leftovers at a restaurant, you request that they not be put into Styrofoam containers or plastic bags.

GET TWO TOKENS.
You took plastic bottles of water with you to your job to stay hydrated. Couldn’t you have brought a sustainable container instead?

LOSE TWO TOKENS.
#5

You left the lights on when you knew you would be back in half an hour.

LOSE A TOKEN.
You made a donation to Catholic Relief Services when a tsunami hit a developing country.

GET THREE TOKENS.
# 7

You agree to meet your friends at the movies, but drive yourself instead of carpooling. The movie is across town.

LOSE ONE TOKEN.
You’re not thinking about how your decisions affect the earth and its people.

LOSE FIVE TOKENS.
You buy the coolest name-brand clothes all the time without looking to see where and how they were made.

LOSE TWO TOKENS.
#10

You changed all the light bulbs in your house to LED or CFL energy-efficient bulbs.

CLIMB THE LADDER.

You are awesome!
#11

You don’t recycle because your community doesn’t have curbside pickup.

LOSE THREE TOKENS.
You buy food that tastes good and is what you crave at the moment. You never check to see where it comes from.

LOSE ONE TOKEN.
#13

You insist your family use only cold water in the washing machine.

GET TWO TOKENS.
Your family only runs the dishwasher when it is full.

GET ONE TOKEN.
#15

You are a red meat eater and unaware of the costs involved in getting the meat to your table.

LOSE TWO TOKENS.
#16

You look for a Fair Trade logo when you buy things.

CLIMB THE LADDER!

You rock!
You helped plant a garden to grow produce for the parish’s food pantry.

GET THREE TOKENS.
#18

You use paper towels a lot because they’re very convenient.

LOSE A TOKEN.
When something breaks, you throw it away. It’s cheaper and easier than repairing it.

LOSE TWO TOKENS.
# 20

You wear a sweater at home in the winter so you can keep the thermostat lower.

GET TWO TOKENS.
You ride your bike to practice instead of taking the car.

GET THREE TOKENS.
#22

You leave your TV and computer or other devices on all the time.

LOSE A TOKEN.
You rarely drive the speed limit – always over it.

SLIDE DOWN THAT CHUTE!
You have a very large collection of shoes – many of which you don’t wear anymore.

LOSE ONE TOKEN.
You roll down the windows in the car when it’s hot rather than cranking up the AC.

GET TWO TOKENS.
You rarely think about where your water, electricity and even clean air come from.

LOSE FOUR TOKENS.
You make a conscious effort to “de-rapidify” (slow down) your life and try to stay away from social media at least part of every day.

GET THREE TOKENS.
When you make decisions about what to buy, how to live or what to do, you reflect on how it will affect the most vulnerable people on the planet.

CLIMB THE LADDER.
#29

You leave your car running to stay cool on a hot day while you run a quick errand.

LOSE ONE TOKEN.
#30

You aren’t paying attention and you’re unaware of caring for God’s creation.

LOSE FIVE TOKENS.
#31

You compost.

GET THREE TOKENS.
You often find yourself thinking about how you can truly care for God’s creation.

GET 10 TOKENS!!!
#33

You have many electric appliances in your kitchen – nothing manual.

LOSE ONE TOKEN.
You politely decline the plastic bags at stores.

GET TWO TOKENS.
#35

You buy sweat-free clothing.

CLIMB THE LADDER.

Way to go!
#36

You turn down offers to carpool and prefer to drive solo.

LOSE A TOKEN.
You emailed your representatives in Congress when a bill came up supporting foreign aid for the poorest countries in the world.

GET THREE TOKENS.
You signed up to get text alerts from Catholic organizations that track when a bill that impacts the poor and vulnerable goes before Congress.

GET THREE TOKENS.
You introduced and implemented a parish-wide recycling program.

GET THREE TOKENS.
Pope Francis would be proud of you for your efforts to care for God’s creation!

GET 10 TOKENS.
# 41

You stand in front of an open refrigerator a lot in the summer!

LOSE TWO TOKENS.
Your family has a five-minute (and no longer than that) shower rule.

GET TWO TOKENS.
When you eat out, you tell the server not to give you a straw for your beverage because you’re aware of its impact on the environment.

GET TWO TOKENS.
# 44

You and your family shop at farmers’ markets.

GET THREE TOKENS.
You never pay attention to how much packaging surrounds things you buy. It’s the item inside that is important.

Slide down that chute!
You got your high school to purchase logo-wear from a sweat-free organization.

GET TEN TOKENS.
You contributed to a Catholic Relief Services microloan program allowing farmers to plant drought-resistant seeds.

GET FOUR TOKENS.
You like having a window open even when the air conditioning is on.

JUMP ON THE CHUTE AND SLIDE DOWN!
You flip over and reuse paper only printed on one side.

GET ONE TOKEN.
#50

Once your mobile devices are charged, you unplug them.

GET TWO TOKENS.
When you choose where to eat out, you try to pick a restaurant that buys locally grown fruits and vegetables.

GET THREE TOKENS.
You always try to carpool to games and movies.

GET TWO TOKENS.
You take time to thank God for beautiful sunsets, fall leaves, ripples in water, butterflies and other parts of nature.

GET THREE TOKENS.
You convinced your parents to use green bags when going grocery shopping.

GET TWO TOKENS.
Your care for others makes you a very blessed steward of all of God’s creation.

GET 15 TOKENS.
You’ve made it!
You love God’s creation!

GET 20 TOKENS
and get ready to be creative.
OBJECTIVES:
• To introduce the Catholic social teaching principle of Care for God’s Creation
• To show the connections between climate change, stewardship and care for impoverished and vulnerable people
• To highlight the concept of the common good

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED:
• Have video, CST 101: Care for God’s Creation, queued up. ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSnXuCxiHXE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSnXuCxiHXE))
• Projector, speakers, laptop
• One sheet of watercolor paper for each participant. Copy Resource 1 art work onto half of the papers and leave the other half blank.
• Watercolor paints
• Small jars or cups of water to clean brushes
• Paint brushes of different sizes
• Pastel chalk
• Crayons
• Black sharpie markers

PROCESS:
1. Introduce this session with the following:

   There is so much we don’t know about this planet we call home. We often see things from a very small window, such as the city or town we live in or the country that we call our own. We often don’t know anything about the reality experienced by people who live in other countries and how the climate and its changes are affecting their work and their lives. This video is a little glimpse of what it means to care for God’s creation—one of the seven principles of Catholic social teaching. Let’s take a look...

   Do you have any comments, questions or concerns about the video? What struck you? What was something you already knew? What did you learn that you didn’t know before? How did the video—and what you learned—make you feel?

   Did you notice the painter throughout the video? That was Brother Mickey McGrath, who paints with bright colors and uses positive messages to convey the joy of our faith. In this case, he gives us something to think about, to hope for and to be joyful about. He reminds us that the earth is our common home.

   We are going to take some time to create our own masterpieces right now to celebrate God’s creation. We have some of the same materials that Brother Mickey uses, but remember that there is no right or wrong way to make your Care for God’s Creation inspiration. You can use the outline and fill it in, or you can make your own artwork from scratch—it’s up to you.

   Please find a place at a table and share the supplies. There are watercolors, pastel chalk, markers and crayons—use whatever you like! We will have 20 minutes for the project.
3. Give participants a chance to show their final works to each other by inviting them forward to share, or if your group is large, have them gather in smaller groups to share and answer these two questions:
   • What part of this picture speaks most to you?
   • What does the final project say about creation?

4. Display the artwork near the prayer table when finished.
Care for God's creation.

Cuidado de la creación de Dios
OBJECTIVES:
• To introduce the major themes of *Laudato Si’*
• To connect the themes to the work of Catholic Relief Services around the world
• To provide young people with the opportunity to share a major theme of the encyclical with others through a YouTube-style video

SETUP/MATERIALS:
• Have the video, *Top 10 Things You Need to Know about Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si’*, queued up ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_lqFTY1c_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_lqFTY1c_4))
• Projector, screen and sound system
• The PowerPoint Pope Francis: Share His Message ready to project.
• Several copies of *Laudato Si’* in case the participants want to take quotes directly from the encyclical
• Ten smartphones or cameras for participants to use to film their videos
• A centrally located computer or phone on which you will download all of the videos created by the ten teams
• Pitchers of water and glasses on a table for the end of the session
• Copies of the Journal Reflection and each handout.

NOTE:
CRS is constantly updating stories about the impact of climate change on the world’s vulnerable people. You might consider substituting the stories in these handouts with these more recent examples, or drawing participant’s attention to these stories for additional information. Visit [crs.org/climate-change](http://crs.org/climate-change) to review the latest information.

PROCESS:
1. Introduce the session with the following:

   In 2015, Pope Francis wrote an encyclical sharing the teachings of the Catholic Church on what subject? (Invite answers from the group until the correct one is given.) Yes, Pope Francis cares deeply about the environment. And he challenges all Catholics to get involved as he emphasizes the connection between climate change and our Catholic call to always choose the common good. This is also part of the challenge of the Sacrament of Confirmation. We are called to fully live in the Spirit of God, which means care for others and care for our common home—the earth. Father James Martin, a well-known Jesuit priest here in the United States, has a great summary of 10 key themes which Pope Francis identifies. Let’s listen to his message.

2. Show the video with Father James Martin (*5 minutes*).
3. Quickly review the 10 themes, using the PowerPoint as your guide:

   **Theme One:** This encyclical was written from a spiritual perspective, and uses the language of faith to talk about climate change.

   **Theme Two:** There is a disproportionate effect of climate change on the poor, especially in developing countries. They are harmed by climate change much more than we are, even though they aren’t the major contributors to the problem.

   **Theme Three:** There is a technocratic mindset in our world today. We embrace all technological advances without asking how they affect the world and its people. We don’t seem to value moderation or the capacity to be happy with little.
10 Themes from Laudato Si’

Theme Four: This encyclical is added to the full body of the Catholic Church’s social teaching, which began with Pope Leo XIII in 1891. It defines the Church’s teaching on climate and climate change. Theme Eight: Pope Francis critiques those who ignore climate change and its effects, especially on the poor. He notes that decision-makers are often removed from the poor, and this can cause an evaporation of seeking the common good. We then make decisions out of selfishness, asking what’s in it for us.

Theme Five: The encyclical is grounded in Scripture and Catholic Church tradition, which is as old as our faith. The call to care for creation is included in Genesis, right in the second chapter of the very first book of the Bible, when God tells us to “cultivate and care for” the earth. Sadly, we’ve done too much cultivating and not enough caring.

Theme Six: Everything is connected. We are linked to creation/nature, we are part of creation, and we are constantly interacting with it. Some of our choices, like the blind pursuit of money, are connected to the ruination of the environment and harm to the poor and vulnerable.

Theme Seven: Pope Francis builds on the best scientific research and the Church’s teaching.

Theme Eight: Pope Francis critiques those who ignore climate change and its effects, especially on the poor. He notes that decision-makers are often removed from the poor, and this can cause an evaporation of seeking the common good. We then make decisions out of selfishness, asking what’s in it for us.

Theme Nine: Pope Francis draws on the experiences of people around the world, including those in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. He calls the earth our common home.

Theme Ten: The encyclical is addressed to everyone on the planet, not just Catholics. Pope Francis says the earth is becoming a “pile of filth,” but he remains hopeful. He calls for an “ecological conversion,” which will happen when we truly hear the cry of our earth and the cry of the poor.

4. Divide the group into ten teams. Randomly assign each team one of the ten themes. Give them the following guidelines:

Your task is to take the Pope Francis theme assigned to your group, and go a bit deeper in understanding what it means by studying the handout. The handout contains direct quotes from Laudato Si’, as well as action that Catholic Relief Services is engaged in around the world that embodies Pope Francis’ message. Your challenge will then be to create a three-minute video that shares with people your age an understanding of the message, along with a challenge to do something to help protect our environment and those who suffer the most due to climate change.

Your video should have two persons in it, one portraying an interviewer and one portraying Pope Francis. Your team can choose any style of interviewing you wish, but the character of Pope Francis should be as genuine as you can make it. The questions the interviewer asks can include some of the misconceptions you’ve heard people state about climate change, such as “Isn’t climate change just a myth made up by tree-huggers?” Make the last question one in which the
5. Circulate among the groups, offering encouragement. After about 10 minutes, guide them to move toward the creation of their video.

6. Circulate and help groups as needed. After 20 minutes, give a five-minute reminder that if they haven’t already, groups should move to actual taping of their interviews.

7. Affirm them for their good work, and let them know you will be sharing all of their videos, some a bit later in the fast. Ask the groups to send you their videos, or have them post it on a YouTube channel.

8. Share two of the videos.

12:55 p.m. — 1:15 p.m.  

**BREAK**

Interviewer asks Pope Francis what teenagers can do to help. Make sure Pope Francis’ reply is doable and connected to your theme. But also make sure you are being very respectful of our Church’s leader as you do this.

Keep these words from Pope Francis’ encyclical in your hearts as you design your video:

“Our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God.”

—(Laudato Si’, 119)
1. What about Pope Francis’ encyclical meant the most to you? Why?

2. What would you like to tell your classmates and your family about what you learned?

3. What does Pope Francis motivate you to do to care for God’s creation?

4. What did you discover about Catholic Relief Services? How does it make you feel, knowing that CRS is part of the U.S. Catholic Church—and therefore belongs to all of us?
THEME ONE:
This encyclical was written from a spiritual perspective, and uses the language of faith to talk about climate change.

POPE FRANCIS:
Our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God. (Laudato Si’, 119)

As Christians, we are also called “to accept the world as a sacrament of communion, as a way of sharing with God and our neighbors on a global scale. It is our humble conviction that the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God's creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet.” (Laudato Si’, 9)

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES:

FAITH COUNTS: 5 FACTS ABOUT CRS’ COMMITMENT TO ITS MISSION
1. While it is an official agency of the the U.S. Catholic Church, CRS provides aid on the basis of need, not creed.
2. The faith that shapes the agency influences the manner in which CRS provides aid. A deep love for and commitment to the beneficiaries are apparent in the work.
3. CRS is in 101 countries, serving more than 85 million people. Through the global Catholic Church, CRS is afforded access to remote locations where no other organizations serve, yet where some of the world's most vulnerable populations live.
4. In 2015, 93 percent of revenue was spent on programs that benefit the poor overseas. About 35 percent of our programming focuses on emergency relief and recovery. Once we meet immediate needs for food, water and shelter, we transition to rebuilding and reconstruction, supporting the survivors of natural disasters and chronic emergencies in reclaiming their lives.
5. In the U.S., CRS carries out the social mission of the Church with 8.5 million Catholics in more than 14,000 parishes, dioceses and schools.

VALUES & COMMITMENT
• CRS works passionately on a global scale to contribute to a more just, peaceful and prosperous world.
• CRS uses innovative approaches to meet the world’s toughest humanitarian problems.
• CRS is committed to the pursuit of the common good and focused on delivering sustainable solutions that create lasting impact.
• CRS is approachable and accountable to one another, our partners, donors and the people we serve.
• CRS serves those people in greatest need, and is inspired by their potential and opportunities for positive change.
INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

IF CRS AND ITS PARTNERS:

- Protect human life and dignity by caring for poor and vulnerable people;
- Increase resilience by protecting, building and maximizing family and community, human, social, political, physical, financial, natural and spiritual assets;
- Promote just relationships between all people, within and across families, communities and nations; and
- Increase equitable and inclusive access to and influence on structures and systems at all levels...

THEN PEOPLE CAN REACH THEIR FULL HUMAN POTENTIAL IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF PEACE, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN DIGNITY,

BECAUSE:

- People use their assets to develop strategies to manage risk, build resilience and improve their lives;
- People use their assets to influence structures and systems; and
- Social equity and inclusion are essential to creating an atmosphere of peace, social justice and human dignity.
THEME TWO:
There is a disproportionate effect caused by climate change and felt by impoverished people, especially in developing countries. They are harmed by climate change much more than we are, even though they aren’t the major contributors to the problem.

POPE FRANCIS:
Some strategies for lowering pollutant gas emissions call for the internationalization of environmental costs, which would risk imposing on countries with fewer resources burdensome commitments to reducing emissions comparable to those of the more industrialized countries. Imposing such measures penalizes those countries most in need of development.

A further injustice is perpetrated under the guise of protecting the environment. Here also, the poor end up paying the price. Furthermore, since the effects of climate change will be felt for a long time to come, even if stringent measures are taken now, some countries with scarce resources will require assistance in adapting to the effects already being produced, which affect their economies. In this context, there is a need for common and differentiated responsibilities. (Laudato Si’, 170)

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES:
Kim Pozniak of CRS shares the story of Jemal Bedhaso, who lives in eastern Ethiopia. Jemal measures a year by the number of rains that fall rather than by 365 days or 12 months. Some years have only three rains, or two, or even one rain. And then there was this year. “We haven’t had rain for one year,” Jemal states.

His family relies on two cows and two calves for income, but for the past 20 years climate change has caused erratic rainfall patterns in Ethiopia. This in turn causes drought and flooding. Catholic Relief Services and the local church communities are helping Jemal and his neighbors adapt to climate change.

“Environmental degradation, deforestation and water supply problems expose most communities to food insecurity,” says Belayneh Belete, the program director for a CRS partner, the Hararghe Catholic Secretariat. “There are many cases of malnutrition as a result.” Everyone suffers, she says.

Jamal has a wife and children, five of whom have dropped out of school—as many other students did—because of the lack of water. “Children don’t have the strength to walk to school and had to quit,” Jemal explains. “They’re not strong enough to go to school. Especially this month, we’re starving because there’s no water.”

But there is hope. CRS and the Secretariat launched a three-year project that will help nearly half a million people adopt climate-smart agriculture to better withstand the changing weather patterns. The project is called REAAP—Resilience through Enhanced Adaptation, Action-Learning and Partnership. Farmers will learn new technologies that consider not only crop types and soil fertility, but also landscape restoration to address the degraded terrain and climatic conditions.

“What makes REAAP different is that it focuses on people’s ability to cope with disasters instead of looking at outside assistance,” explains Alemayehn Ayele, one of 50 people who are receiving training on climate mitigation and will share that knowledge with his community. “Before the training, I thought only the government or NGOs can solve communities’ problems, but now I understand that we can solve our own problems.”
Although there is food in the market in spite of bad harvests, most people don’t earn enough to buy it. Many are forced to migrate to bigger cities in search of work. Families like Jemal’s bear the brunt of dramatic climate change that has turned their farmland and pasture into a desert. “Twenty years ago, there was more rain,” Jemal says. “Today,” he says, pointing to a nearby mountain range, “there are no clouds above the mountains where they used to gather. I was a farmer 20 years ago. I even grew coffee here. Our land, 20 years ago, looked like a place in the highlands. It has now changed to a desert. Everything has dried up and totally disappeared.”

“We depend on collecting rain water,” he says. “The kind of pond we’re digging does not retain the water because we use only soil. We don’t have any cement. I know about REAAP, and that it will address the effects of climate change. In case REAAP can help us with plastic to reduce the absorption of the water into the soil, we would be very happy. We believe it will help us a lot.”
Are We Over-Teched?

**THEME THREE:**
There is a technocratic mindset in our world today. We embrace all technological advances without asking how they affect the world and its people. We don’t seem to value moderation or the capacity to be happy with little.

**POPE FRANCIS:**

> Technology which, linked to business interests, is presented as the only way of solving these programs, in fact proves incapable of seeing the mysterious network of relations between things and so sometimes solves one problem only to create others. (Laudato Si’, 20)

At one extreme, we find those who doggedly uphold the myth of progress and tell us that ecological problems will solve themselves simply with the application of new technology and without any need for ethical considerations or deep change. At the other extreme are those who view men and women and all their interventions as no more than a threat, jeopardizing the global ecosystem, and consequently the presence of human beings on the planet should be reduced and all forms of intervention prohibited. (Laudato Si’, 60).

**CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES:**

Over the past five years, CRS has assisted more than two million people worldwide in gaining access to clean water. We have provided more than a million people in rural areas access to improved sanitation. We support water, sanitation and hygiene services in more than two dozen countries, focusing on services for the poorest and most remote communities. Much of our assistance is directed to sub-Saharan Africa.

CRS supports WASH programs in coordination with the three CRS strategic priority areas of health, agriculture and emergencies. Our work improves health and well-being, supports emergency preparedness and response efforts, and contributes to the sustainability of water and natural resources.

CRS’ PASAM-TAI program tackles food security and malnutrition in Niger through water, sanitation and hygiene programming (WASH). Our main approach is to promote hand-washing using water and soap and the use of latrines to end the practice of open defecation. The goal of the program is to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition in the Zinder and Maradi regions of Niger. We teach household members, particularly pregnant and nursing women and children under five years of age, to use appropriate health, hygiene and nutrition practices.

Another goal of the project is for households to increase their production of food to increase their income and their consumption of higher value nutrition while improving their resilience in case of future food insecurity or malnutrition crises.

Our WASH program includes four main activities:

- Community-led total sanitation (CLTS)
- Hygiene and nutrition education in schools
- WASH-friendly school approach and the construction of school latrines
- Construction and rehabilitation of hydraulic infrastructures

Photo by François Therrien for CRS
Laudato Si’
On Care for Our Common Home

We promote handwashing and the end of open defecation by sponsoring plays, storytelling sessions, puppet shows and listening clubs. Children, a vital group we want to reach, participate in CRS activities at schools. The WASH-friendly school program includes hygiene education, construction and usage of latrines and promotion of handwashing, among other activities. To encourage communities that make progress based on our initial activities, we provide modern water points to help people abandon the practice of defecating outdoors and to adopt consistent handwashing practices.

We also demonstrate the proper way to wash hands and teach residents how to create a tippy-tap, a low-tech handwashing station that uses branches, twine and a plastic container to suspend water. With a tippy tap, people pull the twine to invert the bucket so they can wet and rinse their hands under the pouring water. This method is more hygienic than the practice of using a bucket of water on the ground. More than 70 villages are now certified Open Defecation Free, which means the communities have abandoned the practice of open defecation and use latrines instead. Twenty borings have been rehabilitated and made available to the local population, 15 wells are being rehabilitated, three mini-pipings of potable water are being constructed, and more than 20 school latrines have been—or are being—are being built.

One exciting aspect of this project is the innovation we’ve seen in the types of latrines constructed in villages. We’ve seen latrines made from old tires, buckets, wood and cans. Many people have inquired how to make latrines using locally available materials, and our partner staff has advised them to ensure the latrines are durable and safe. As soon as the Community-Led Total Sanitation initiative was launched in Gamouza, the village chief, Issoufou Abdou, set the example by designing a simple latrine and using it. The latrine is made of two 25-liter cans, entirely buried, with a cover made from a section of one of the cans. This type of latrine is made in less than an hour and costs less than $3—12 times less than a manufactured latrine slab.

Having new latrines has become a sort of status symbol in the village, and individual families now want their own latrines to show off to their neighbors. In the first two years of PASAM-TAI, the communities have constructed 8,569 latrines without any subsidy from CRS. Mariama Abdou, a single woman living alone, created a latrine all by herself, and other women have mobilized to carry out systematic sweeps in their villages. Because of this initiatives, true changes are occurring and there are noticeable increases in village cleanliness.

Are We Over-Teched?
**THEME FOUR:**

This encyclical is added to the full body of the Catholic Church’s social teaching, which began with Pope Leo XIII in 1891; it is the Church’s teaching on climate and climate change, the environment and ecology.

**POPE FRANCIS:**

*The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. At the global level, it is a complex system linked to many of the essential conditions for human life.*  
*(Laudato Si’, 23)*

**CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES:**

CRS’ Savings and Internal Lending (SILC) methodology is a holistic, savings-led microfinance approach that provides a safe place for poor households to save and borrow to increase their income. The goal is to help members better manage their existing resources by teaching them basic financial management skills. CRS’ savings-led microfinance methodology has its roots in traditional community-based rotating savings and credit associations. Our approach, however, significantly improves upon the methodology by helping poor communities create highly sustainable, accessible, transparent, flexible and self-managed Savings and Internal Lending Communities.

By facilitating savings services, CRS enables the poor to build up useful lump sums without incurring excessive debt or interest charges. Moreover, the SILC process helps protect members’ limited resources by shifting their money from poorly protected informal locations (e.g., under the mattress) to investments in group members’ businesses. This provides a positive return (dividend) on their savings. The accumulation of savings and the subsequent ability to access flexible credit through an internal lending mechanism leads to greater financial resilience among participating households and investments in productive assets, ranging from agricultural production to small business activities.

As of December 31, 2014, CRS has almost 73,000 active SILC groups in 43 countries. Of these, 15,000 groups are in their first cycle and together have $6.8 million in total savings.

From day one, **SILC groups are owned and managed by their members.** This ensures the long-term sustainability and financial independence of the groups. Participation in SILC increases social cohesion by building trust among members, which results in greater financial inclusion of marginalized groups, such as rural farmers, women, people affected by HIV, and vulnerable youth, who are often excluded from formal financial services.

To address the need for sustained community-level financial services, CRS has introduced a market-based strategy that **enables local entrepreneurs**, or Private Service Providers (PSP), to expand savings group services on a fee-for-service basis anywhere there is demand. The PSPs are paid directly by the savings groups, resulting in an easily replicable and self-sustainable savings-led program. PSPs earn an income as they help create and support groups, and groups receive support from a quality-assured service provider independent of CRS or donor support.

Here’s an example! Every morning, Dayaba Ibrahim woke up worrying if it would be a good day. Too often, it was a bad day—a day when few, if any, of her seven children would eat. Today she’s able to feed her family—and pay their school fees—with proceeds from her fried bread business.

Dayaba, who lives in Niger, credits the change to a local Savings and Internal Lending Communities
group, or SILC, organized by Catholic Relief Services. CRS implemented SILCs in her village as part of the USAID Food for Peace-funded PASAM-TAI project. PASAM-TAI is an acronym from French and the local Hausa language that means “provision of household food security.”

“Before there were women who weren’t organized,” says Dayaba. “But CRS helped us form a SILC group with our friends.” She and her friends have been able to slowly increase their savings. The group pools their resources at weekly meetings and makes small loans to fellow members. Many of these loans are used to buy livestock, which provide food and income for families—and a pathway out of poverty. Without a SILC loan, even a goat can be out of reach for families living on less than a dollar a day.

“Before SILC, I never thought I could get livestock,” admits Dayaba. “I borrowed money from friends. Now I can more easily obtain a loan in peace.” Through the project, CRS supports high-performing SILCs with vouchers and organized fairs so members can purchase goats and sheep. They also learn how to manage and raise their livestock for profit.

After Dayaba joined SILC in February 2015, she received two vouchers—essentially a loan from the group—so she could buy two sheep for about $100. She raised them and sold them for almost $200. Dayaba paid back her loan with interest, capital that can now be loaned to another SILC member, and Dayaba kept the almost $100 return on her investment.

“With the profit, I bought flour, a female goat and oil,” says Dayaba, who has expanded her business.

The women set an interest rate as a group, and decide who gets loans. Profits from their businesses, like selling livestock, pay back those loans and are then reinvested in the group.

CRS has helped organize more than 625 SILCs in Niger, with more than 14,000 members. By 2017, the program will reach almost 87,000 households in more than 900 villages.

“I can make money, and pass it on to other women,” Dayaba says. “I don’t worry about feeding my children and how I can pay for their education. The work I’m doing, I see progress,” she says. And it’s progress that will continue even after CRS’ work is done. “After the project, I will have capital so I will continue.”

Michael Stulman, who wrote this article, is the CRS regional information officer for western and central Africa, based in Dakar, Senegal.
THEME FIVE:

The encyclical is grounded in Scripture and Catholic Church tradition, which is as old as our faith. The call to care for creation is included in Genesis, in the second chapter of this first book of the Bible, when God tells us to "cultivate and care for" the earth. Sadly, we've done too much cultivating and not enough caring.

POPE FRANCIS:

Without repeating the entire theology of creation, we can ask what the great biblical narratives say about the relationship of human beings with the world. In the first creation account in the Book of Genesis, God's plan includes creating humanity. After the creation of man and woman, "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good" (Gen 1:31). The Bible teaches that every man and woman is created out of love and made in God's image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26). (Laudato Si', 65)

...human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself. (Laudato Si', 66)

An integral ecology is inseparable from the notion of the common good, a central and unifying principle of social ethics. (Laudato Si', 156)

Underlying the principle of the common good is respect for the human person as such, endowed with basic and inalienable rights ordered to his or her integral development.” (Laudato Si', 157)

In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good immediately becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters. (Laudato Si', 158)

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES:

Feed the Future Zambia Mawa is a project that helps 20,000 smallholder farmers and their families develop the skills needed to intensify and diversify their agricultural production. This increases with the health of the farming family, provides them with food security, and helps them find a market for their products. Many of the farmers are women.

Agricultural growth is limited by diminishing productivity, insufficient access to financial services and poor engagement with markets. Unsustainable production practices, limited land availability and high input costs combine to limit agricultural productivity. Maize is the most important staple crop in Zambia. Despite dedicating half of the cultivated land to maize, yields for smallholder households remain low. Smallholders lack the agricultural inputs needed to maintain and increase production. Limited knowledge of improved production practices leads farmers to adopt unsustainable practices that degrade natural resources, further limiting production potential of scarce land.

Smallholder farmers’ capacity for agricultural production and market engagement is compounded by limited access to financial services, which are needed to build and protect productive assets. Few smallholders in Eastern Province have access to credit from banks or other formal financial systems. Farmers in Eastern Province do not have the resources or knowledge to engage effectively and equitably in markets. Poorly organized, with few financial resources and limited market information, they have little
power to negotiate confidently with buyers or manage commercial relationships.

Smallholder households in Eastern Province do not produce sufficient quantities of quality foods, nor have the financial means, to meet the family’s nutritional needs. Poor dietary diversity and inadequate care and feeding practices contribute to high levels of undernutrition, particularly for children under two (CU2) and pregnant or lactating women (PLW).

Mawa’s integrated package of services helps households reap the nutrition and economic benefits of diversified agricultural production for more resilient farmers and communities.

**AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION:**

CRS provides agriculture extension and advisory services, with emphasis on conservation agriculture, through 520 lead farmers to more than 10,000 smallholder households, with plans to expand to 20,000. Extension services are provided at demonstration plots, established with technical assistance from Golden Valley Agricultural Research Trust (GART), farm visits and field days. Sustainable production practices and technologies set the foundation for increased incomes and market engagement and improved health and nutrition practices.

**NUTRITION:**

CRS promotes essential health and nutrition practices through a network of 950 nutrition volunteers to households with pregnant or lactating women and children under two to prevent malnutrition. Through complementary feeding and learning sessions, mothers and caregivers of children under two receive intensive support on proper processing, preparation and preservation of diverse and nutritious foods, with opportunities to reinforce positive health and nutrition practices.

**MARKET ENGAGEMENT:**

To support the transition from subsistence farming to production for markets, Mawa offers smallholder farmers five essential skills:

1. Savings and lending skills to maintain and grow assets
2. Group management skills to plan for collective activities
3. Business and marketing skills to prepare groups to organize their production process to meet market demand
4. Natural resource management skills to protect and sustain natural resources
5. Innovation to adapt to change and manage risks

Misozi Zulu is a member of Chyembekezo Savings and Internal Lending Community (SILC) group in Chise village. As a budding entrepreneur, she started small, selling buns to neighbors within her village. After successfully paying back her initial loan, Misozi took a larger loan (USD $80) and bought 60 day-old chicks. At six weeks, she sold them, earning about $260. She paid back her second loan, and invested her profits in more chicks. As her poultry business continued to grow, she invested in stocking up a small grocery store, and plans to open to the public in the coming months. Misozi is even expanding her animal husbandry venture to raise cattle. Through the access to financing provided by Mawa’s SILC program, Misozi was able to use her entrepreneurial skills to become a successful businesswoman and a leader in her community.
THEME SIX:
Everything is connected. We are linked to creation/nature, we are part of creation, and we are constantly interacting with it. Some of our choices, like the blind pursuit of money, are connected to the ruination of the environment and harm to the poor and vulnerable.

POPE FRANCIS:
Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous. The entire material universe speaks of God’s love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. (Laudato Si’, 84)

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES:
In April 2015, a devastating 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck Nepal, claiming more than 8,600 lives – perhaps even thousands more as many lives remain unaccounted for and are not included in the official death toll - and severely damaging or leveling more than 500,000 homes and temples. Catholic Relief Services was on the ground within hours of the earthquake, providing emergency shelter materials, water and hygiene kits, and blankets.

From July through September, monsoon rains severely hampered recovery efforts. Roads were washed out and blocked by landslides, and transportation—including by helicopter—was extremely limited. Despite the logistical challenges caused by the monsoons, field teams continued to reach families living in remote areas with vital relief supplies and resources. As soon as the rains subsided, CRS was back on the ground, implementing the next stage of our recovery plan.

CRS and our partner Caritas Nepal fully transitioned to early recovery activities, and focused on the neediest communities in Gorkha District. Our emergency efforts included helping people rebuild their homes, ensuring they had access to clean water and proper sanitation, and providing cash assistance so families could rebuild their assets and purchase critical supplies. Over the next 4 years, CRS will continue to work with communities to construct safer homes, protect the environment during reconstruction and get people back to work.
In the earthquake’s aftermath, CRS supported 20,625 families, or 103,125 people, with critical shelter materials, living supplies and water treatment and hygiene kits. We continue to help them lay a foundation for full recovery. Our efforts to date include:

- Emergency relief and shelter supplies to 12,496 families, or 70,351 people
- Transitional shelter materials like tin sheeting, tool kits, blankets and mats; and hygiene kits with buckets, soap, towels and laundry detergent
- Cash grants to 11,976 families so they can buy key items locally
- Trauma healing for communities through theater group presentations at distribution sites
- Clearing debris, and providing iron sheeting and tool kits so 210 vendors can construct transitional shops as they await reconstruction of their stores

In Bungkot, CRS and Caritas Nepal collaborated with the local government to train masons and local communities on safe and durable techniques that will help them build homes resilient to natural disasters. CRS specialists trained 11 masons, who received certificates at a public ceremony. We also built demonstration panels showing key construction components appropriate for the region. The panels demonstrate:

- Foundation with seismic reinforcement band
- Details with seismic reinforcement bands in timber, bamboo and concrete
- Roof detail
- Household toilets—including a model for people with disabilities

CRS and Caritas Nepal teams continue to train local masons, and increase awareness of safe and durable construction techniques that will improve resilience to natural disasters, especially earthquakes.
**THEME SEVEN:**
Pope Francis builds on the best scientific research and the Church’s teaching.

**POPE FRANCIS:**

*If we are truly concerned to develop an ecology capable of remedying the damage we have done, no branch of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out, and that includes religion and the language particular to it. The Catholic Church is open to dialogue with philosophical thought; this has enabled her to produce various syntheses between faith and reason. The development of the Church’s social teaching represents such a synthesis with regard to social issues; this teaching is called to be enriched by taking up new challenges.* (Laudato Si’, 63)

*In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the word “creation” has a broader meaning than “nature”, for it has to do with God’s loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance. Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion.* (Laudato Si’, 76)

**CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES:**

In Niger, Chaibou Alzouma works long hours every day in the heat. He used to face poor millet and sorghum harvests because of drought and expanding desert sands. But with the help of CRS, he is now able to sow and sell more crops because he has drought-resilient seeds.

Now, with support from Catholic Relief Services, he is sowing—and selling—new, more drought-resilient seeds.

“People used to go to the market to buy ordinary seeds,” says Chaibou. “Sellers promised it was good, but when they went to sow it, it wouldn’t grow well.”

The goal of this project is to help farmers in Niger cope with the effects of climate change. “The rainy season isn’t the same as before,” he says. “The rain supply is not enough for a good harvest.” Another effect of climate change was a shorter growing season. “We needed faster crop varieties,” Chaibou says.

The better seeds, which are indigenous to Niger, could be found in more populated areas, but they weren’t available in rural communities. The companies that sold the seeds weren’t aware of demand and had no distribution system.

Chaibou was already familiar with CRS because, as he said, “During hardships, CRS has helped us cope.” So he trusted that CRS could and would help him.

First, CRS held a competition among commercial seed providers to determine which companies were interested in working with rural farmers to create a viable distribution network. It then worked with leaders in the villages to select the right people to market and sell the seeds. Chaibou was one of those people, and he received sales and marketing training. But his farming is still his most important career. “I’m a farmer first and a community agent second,” he acknowledges.

CRS works directly with the farmers to teach them how and when to plant the seeds to get the best results. For example, the farmers wait to plant their seeds after it rains.

Chaibou will make about $80.00 this year. “I can buy food for my family,” he said. “I have a water pump for the rice field, and now I can buy fuel.”
THEME EIGHT:
Pope Francis critiques those who ignore climate change and its effects, especially on the poor. He notes that decision-makers are often removed from poor, and that can cause an evaporation of seeking the common good. We then make decisions out of selfishness, asking what’s in it for us.

POPE FRANCIS:

Efforts to promote a sustainable use of natural resources are not a waste of money, but rather an investment capable of providing other economic benefits in the medium term. \((\textit{Laudato Si'}, 191)\)

We know how unsustainable is the behaviour of those who constantly consume and destroy, while others are not yet able to live in a way worthy of their human dignity. \((\textit{Laudato Si'}, 193)\)

Put simply, it is a matter of redefining our notion of progress. A technological and economic development which does not leave in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life cannot be considered progress.” \((\textit{Laudato Si'}, 194)\)

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES:

Peter Buck, the Senior Representative of Interfaith Program & Community Sales at Equal Exchange, writes:

“There’s excitement here at Equal Exchange about Pope Francis’ encyclical letter on the environment, \(\textit{Laudato Si’}\) \((\textit{Praise Be}): \textit{Care for Our Common Home}\). In the Pope’s encyclical, he makes a powerful call for urgent action on climate change and environmental pollution. These issues are of paramount importance to many, including us at Equal Exchange.”

Buck notes that Pope Francis calls us to close the gap between the wealth of the global north and the poverty of the global south. And it can’t be done by merely providing more education and resources to developing countries. To truly make a change, we must address “unequal power relationships between the north and south, the wealthy and the poor, and the disproportionate effect of pollution and climate change on the most vulnerable communities.”

Equal Exchange is a Fair Trade organization dedicated to overcoming this inequality. As a Fair Trade organization, these issues are known well Equal Exchange; challenging this inequality is at the heart of their mission.

In the first chapter, Pope Francis discusses pollution, climate change, water, and the decline of biodiversity. He emphasizes the ways in which the poor, individually and as nations, bear the brunt of environmental degradation and climate change. These problems are worsened by the reckless business practices of “companies which operate in less-developed countries in ways they could never do at home.” When such companies close down their mines, factories or plantations, “they leave behind great human and environmental liabilities” like unemployment, deforestation, open pits and polluted rivers.

In illustrating an alternative, the Pope highlights communities of small farmers, like those who partner with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Equal Exchange. He describes them as “co-operatives of small producers [who] adopt less polluting means of production,
and opt for a non-consumerist model of life, recreation and community.” We were thrilled to see the Pope recognize and promote the importance of small farmer co-ops and their role in driving forward a more sustainable farming model.

Equal Exchange and our interfaith partners have had close relationships with such communities for decades, and we strive to champion and support them in all we do. For example, Catholic Relief Services has helped farming communities develop organic coffee farming and processing systems, among many other projects. Equal Exchange has consistently offered a premium price to communities which produce their coffee organically and helped encourage organic innovation wherever possible. Recently, both Equal Exchange and CRS have worked to support efforts to implement organic solutions to the one of the most pressing environmental issues in Latin America: coffee rust fungus, a widespread and devastating crop disease exacerbated by climate change.

The Pope also praises the “great variety of small-scale food production systems which feed the greater part of the world’s peoples, using modest amounts of land and producing less waste.” He describes the central problem that Equal Exchange and other Fair Trade organizations work to resolve: “[Communities’] attempts to move to other, more diversified means of production proving fruitless because of the difficulty of linkage with regional and global markets, or because the infrastructure for sales and transport is geared to larger businesses.”

Finding access to the market as a small farmer is a serious challenge, and historically it has not favored the farmer. Trading with small producer co-ops and giving them market access, without middlemen or exploitation, is a central tenet of Fair Trade. Co-ops also allow farmers to pool resources to build up the essential “infrastructure of sales and transport,” supported by Fair Traders like Equal Exchange and development organizations like Catholic Relief Services.

Pope Francis has written a profound, rich document that warrants several careful readings. His Holiness delves into the science, politics, economics, and theology surrounding the global crisis. I have just commented on a small piece of it that speaks most particularly to our work. Read the Pope’s encyclical and you will find many passages that speak particularly to you.
THEME NINE:
Pope Francis draws on the experiences of people around the world, including those in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. He calls the earth our common home.

POPE FRANCIS:

*Beginning in the middle of the last century and overcoming many difficulties, there has been a growing conviction that our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home. (Laudato Si’, 164)*

Inequity affects not only individuals but entire countries; it compels us to consider an ethics of international relations. A true “ecological debt” exists, particularly between the global north and south, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment, and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time...The warming caused by huge consumption on the part of some rich countries has repercussions on the poorest areas of the world, especially Africa, where a rise in temperature, together with drought, has proved devastating for farming. (Laudato Si’, 50)

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES:

In Madagascar, CRS uses the System for Rice Intensification to help farmers like Suzy Razafindrafara save water, take care of the land, preserve the nutrients in the soil and maximize crop yields. These practices promote environmental stewardship, long-term sustainability and respect for the goodness of God’s creation.

Suzy Razafindrafara, pronounced Rahzah-feen-drah-far-ah, is a farmer in Madagascar, an island off the coast of Africa. Many farmers like Suzy depend on creation for resources like water and seeds so they can grow their own food—but these resources are often scarce. A few years ago, Catholic Relief Services taught Suzy a new way to plant rice that used less water and fewer seeds. When she first heard about it, she thought the idea sounded a little crazy. If you used less water and fewer seeds, how could you possibly grow more rice? Her neighbors laughed at her for trying it. But when her fields produced 1.5 times more rice than theirs did, no one laughed anymore. Instead, people in the village asked her to teach them the new method too. This new way of planting requires more work. Suzy and other farmers used to flood their fields to get rid of the weeds, but they learned that this damages the roots of the rice plants. It also wastes water. So now they weed by hand, a task that takes four people 2 whole days to complete. But the extra work is worth it. Before Suzy learned this new way of planting rice, her family was only able to grow enough rice to provide meals for about 10 months. Now the rice crop lasts the whole year. The family often has extra rice to sell, which helps Suzy pay for her children’s education. Now every farmer in Suzy’s village is using this new planting method, and they are conserving precious resources like water and seeds while producing greater harvests.

We believe that God created the world and all living things. God invites us to care for all of his creation, no matter how big or small. Suzy and other farmers who depend directly on creation for their food are very vulnerable to climate change. For example, if there is a natural disaster or it becomes too hot to grow rice, Suzy will not be able to feed her family.
THEME TEN:
The encyclical is addressed to everyone on the planet, not just Catholics. Pope Francis says the earth is becoming a “pile of filth,” but he remains hopeful. He calls for an “ecological conversion” which will happen when we truly hear the cry of earth and the cry of poor.

POPE FRANCIS:
It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an “ecological conversion,” whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience. (Laudato Si’, 217)

This lack of physical contact and encounter, encouraged at times by the disintegration of our cities, can lead to a numbing of conscience and to tendentious analyses which neglect parts of reality. At times this attitude exists side by side with a “green” rhetoric. Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach: it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. (Laudato Si’, 49)

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES:
To live in rural southern Bangladesh is to play an endless game of Chutes and Ladders. Long days of hard work—tending rice fields, selling eggs, buying goats—of scrimping and saving, of buying medicines and paying school fees, let you climb the ladder rung by rung.

The project with Caritas has given the people a planning system. They can think through what will happen in future cyclones and make decisions that will help them recover.

During Cyclone Mahasen (May 2013), there was so much wind with clouds so thick they looked like smoke. The people took their savings to the school (being used as the evacuation center), as well as dry food, documents, and their portable oven. They put the remainder of their food in plastic bags and stored them in the rafters. When the cyclone ended, there was standing water everywhere and trees were down. Their belongings were scattered and their home was damaged, but because they had tied down the roof, they could easily collect the material and begin repairs.

The people could cook immediately because they carried the oven with them. “I remember, before our portable oven, that we would be hungry for days as we had lost our food in the storm and even when government relief came, we had no way to cook the rice. In earlier storms we were totally dependent on relief goods. This time, because we stored the food and had our utensils stored in plastic, we had everything we needed to eat.”

“I dream of making my house even stronger with pillars and good fences, and I will paint it beautiful colors—red, green and blue all together.”

“Now we have savings and we want to buy goats or even a cow eventually. We want to live off of our assets someday. We didn’t save money before. Now we have money when we need to make purchases right away.”

And then one natural disaster hits and you are sent down the chute. That’s what happened to Almas Sikdar and his wife, Rina Begum.

“Our house was destroyed in [cyclone] Aila,” says Sikdar, reflecting back to the loss in 2009, “Nothing was left. Our food, cooking pots, even our chickens were gone. I felt so much sadness not only at the loss, but at the time I had spent to build the house. I had nothing to show for my effort.”
When CRS and local partner Caritas Bangladesh met with Sikdar and Begum after the cyclone, they encouraged the family to rebuild using strategies and techniques that would help end the Chutes and Ladders cycle, that would leave them in better shape after the next cyclone inevitably crossed their tiny plot of land.

It’s called disaster risk reduction, and it means not only responding to families’ immediate needs, but also ensuring that they rebuild in a way that helps them recover better and faster after the next emergency.

“When Caritas came here, I first talked about disaster risk reduction and how to tie my house down and prepare for cyclones,” Rina Begum says. “After the training I planned my new home. This home is raised enough not to flood but not so high to blow over in a cyclone. We must have a firm foundation not to lose our home in a storm.”

They were following disaster risk reduction training that says homes should be on raised mud foundations 2-3 feet high, instead of directly on the ground, giving families a dry place to sleep during gradual flooding from monsoon rains. Tin roofing must be tied down securely so the sheets will be around for rebuilding instead of becoming deadly projectiles in high winds.

Then there are the small things that can make all the difference between a chute back into poverty or just moving back a couple of spaces.

A portable mud oven, instead of one built into the foundation of the home, can be taken to an evacuation center during a storm along with cooking pans and food. “The family can cook as soon as the storm passes,” says Badal Rozario, project manager with Caritas Bangladesh. “Before, families would lose their ovens, pans and stored food during a cyclone, so they went hungry for days as they waited for food relief from the government.”

A community-appropriate, low-tech early warning system, also part of the project, ensures that families have time to gather these essential items and reach evacuation centers ahead of a storm. Volunteers—kitted out with rain gear, a hard hat, radio and megaphone—blast evacuation messages from the back of a slow-moving cart, motorcycle or boat.

The USAID-funded project also focuses on helping families build up and securely store savings of both money and food. Families now keep their food stocks high in the rafters and in watertight plastic jars whenever possible.

This training isn’t just for big disasters, but for seasonal flooding as well. And any family could suffer a shock from an injury, illness or other crisis that would send relatives scrambling to cover unexpected costs.
Caritas and CRS combine trainings on saving money and food with helping families increase their income with the resources they have. These resources include better practices of raising chickens, planting vegetables in kitchen gardens that command a higher price when there is a surplus to sell and composting to get better production in the gardens.

“With the new income we’ve made from better gardening taught to us by the project, we were able to get a loan to buy a solar panel,” Sikdar says. We only have two payments left. It is much better for children to see to study at night.”

Begum adds that a secure roof and a fan that runs off the solar panel means the family now sleeps through rainy and hot nights.

Their 12-year-old daughter Sathi Aktar especially likes the light. “Now I can study as long as I need to,” she says.

Sikdar and Begun smile at their eldest daughter, knowing that studying will take her up an even higher ladder and that good disaster risk reduction will keep her from sliding down a chute.
OBJECTIVES:

• To highlight the importance of working together to accomplish something for the greater good
• To make soup to be shared with a designated group in the parish or school or brought to a shelter or soup kitchen
• To write notes of encouragement for the recipients of the soup
• To connect the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit to providing food for those in need

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED:

• Create and print postcards which remind participants of the details of the FoodFast and also give them an item of food (see recipe) to bring with them.
• Send out post card several days in advance of the FoodFast with last minute instructions and highlighting the item they need to bring.
• Have extra vegetables and chicken broth on hand in case someone forgets or cannot bring it.
• Provide the salt, pepper and thyme as well as cutting boards, soup pots, knives, gloves and quart canning jars. Potholders are a must as well!
• Check on your parish or school policy regarding the use of knives. If you are worried about using knives in your facility, ask participants to bring their ingredient already chopped up at home.
• Provide construction paper, markers, stickers or note cards.
• Include jar labels, ribbon or twine.
• Make sure there is a refrigerator available for storing the soup once it’s made.
• Copy of the story, Stone Soup. An overview is provided by Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stone_Soup). Search Google or Amazon for a copy of the story.

PROCESS:

1. Introduce this activity with the following:

Each of you received a notice before you came that you were to bring an item or two with you. We didn’t tell you what it was for, and it must have felt a little funny walking in with a potato or some green beans! However, we have a project that might just transport you back to preschool and the story of Stone Soup. Does anyone recall the story?

2. Share the story or let one of the young people share their version of Stone Soup. Then continue:

The story is timeless because it is really about stewardship, sharing, abundance and need. In a community where some had much and others had little, someone with a little ingenuity and creativity—and courage, too—invited the people to share from what little they had or from their abundance. The final result was a delicious soup—and there was enough for all.

An interesting thing about food is that there is enough on this earth to go around and to feed everyone. That anyone goes hungry today is a real problem, and an issue that can be solved. Our little endeavor for the moment is to take what each of us has brought with us. Some brought it from home, where there might have been abundance; others may have been worried about sharing from their family’s cupboard. We are grateful for all that was brought here. From our contributions, we will be creating something delicious to feed our hungry brothers and sisters. We are caring for the common good, our human family.
3. Follow the recipe and have the young people prepare the soup.

4. Once the soup is cooking, continue:

Let's gather what we have and make a pot of soup—we will be sharing it with a family in need at the end of our FoodFast. Remember, it’s the uncommon way we look at food and possessions that make followers of Jesus a bit different!

We will let our soup simmer and then put it into containers when it is cooked and cooled a bit. We also have time now to write some notes of encouragement for those who will receive the soup. Others can make the labels for the soups jars. The materials are set out on the tables. Let’s take a few minutes for this activity. What a wonderful gift this will be.

5. Invite participants to write a note or a card or draw a picture to be shared with the recipient(s) of the soup or make jar labels and decorations. The filled jars can have a label attached on the front. Once the lid is secure, have the youth tie a ribbon or twine around it.

6. Have a place to store the jars of soup (refrigerator) or have a way to distribute it immediately.

7. Some of the soup can be used for breaking the fast meal at the conclusion of FoodFast.

This is a great opportunity for social media!
INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cans (14-1/2 ounces each) chicken broth (2 people bring)
- 4 medium red potatoes, cut into eighths (2 people bring)
- 1 yellow summer squash, chopped (1 person brings)
- 2 medium carrots, chopped (1 person brings)
- 1 medium onion, chopped (1 person brings)
- 2 celery ribs, chopped (1 person brings)
- 1 cup frozen cut green beans (1 person brings)
- 1 cup frozen peas (1 person brings)
- 1/2 cup quick-cooking barley (1 person brings)
- 1 can (14-1/2 ounces) diced tomatoes, undrained (1 person brings)

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a Dutch oven, combine the first eight ingredients.
2. Bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes.
4. Stir in the beans and barley.
5. Add salt, pepper and thyme to taste.
6. Bring to a boil.
7. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 10-12 minutes or until vegetables and barley are tender.
8. Add tomatoes and peas; heat through.
10. Pack in quart jars during a break on Day Two. (Yield is 6 jars.)

NOTES:

1. This recipe is for 12 participants. Adjust or multiply the recipe for the number of young people coming to FoodFast.
2. If a conventional stove is not available, you may use a crockpot with this recipe: (www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/slow-cooked-vegetable-soup)
OBJECTIVES:
- To get the youth to reflect on and understand the Catholic value of seeking the common good over one’s own personal good
- To make the connection between seeking the common good and caring for God’s creation
- To encourage the imaginations of the participants in creating a big event to raise money on behalf of protecting the environment and the poor

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED:
- Have the journal questions ready to be distributed
- Have the Catholic Social Teaching in 3 Minutes Youtube video queued up (www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELyLdMfDzA).
- Have a basket with five slips of paper in it for the drawing. Each slip will have its own task. Prepare these ahead of time with these five different messages, one per slip:
  - Your part of the event is music and musicians. Which songs would you choose to get people excited about caring for creation, for the poorest and most vulnerable, and for the common good? Which singers and musicians would you invite to be part of the event?
  - Your part of the event is speakers. Who are the great speakers you want to get to inspire people to donate on behalf of the poor, the environment, and the common good of all? You will have one MC, four keynoters and another six people who will speak.
  - Your part of the event is the environment. How will you decorate the stage and the room/stadium to convey care for creation, for the poor and for the common good?
  - Your part of the event is publicity. What theme will you choose which expresses the importance of the common good while emphasizing care for the poor and care for God’s creation? How will you get people to participate and donate? What social media will you use?
  - Your part of the event is a blessing, ritual or prayer service to ground the event in faith, in our Church’s commitment to the common good, to care for the poor, and to care for God’s creation. How will you inspire participants in the event?

NOTE:
If you have a large group, make two copies of each of the five tasks and have two groups work on the same task separately.

PROCESS:
1. Begin this session by introducing the concept of the common good:

   You probably know that this year’s FoodFast is named “Uncommon Good.” I don’t know if any of you thought about that ahead of time. But we want to give you a few moments to reflect on that now. Take the journal page, and spend a few moments writing or thinking about your answers, then share them in groups of four.

2. Have participants quietly reflect on the journal questions, and then discuss the questions in small groups of four. Give them about eight minutes for this.

3. Continue:

   Let’s share some of our definitions of “common good.” Who would like to start?
4. Invite answers from several groups of four. Affirm their insights. Then continue:

I imagine that most of us usually ask ourselves what would be good for us, what we really want to do, what others want us to do and maybe what would be the right thing to do. But our Catholic faith challenges us to also ask, “What would be good for everyone?” That is the common good—the best for all of us instead of just for ourselves or a few others. Choices we make which could deny people the things they need to live a life with dignity would be wrong, then, even if they seem like good choices for us individually.

We are going to watch a very short video—literally three minutes long—on what our Catholic Church has to say about the common good. It’s an essential part of Catholic social teaching—a term for all the things our popes and bishops and other Church leaders have taught us over the years about being people of justice and service. Listen carefully to what the Irish Bishops have to say about the common good.

5. Show the Youtube video Catholic Social Teaching in 3 Minutes.

6. After the video, share the following:

Isn’t it great to know that our Church is so dedicated to making sure everyone gets the dignity they deserve? And by nature of our baptism, all of us are called to promote the common good—the good of all.

When it comes to caring for God’s creation, Pope Francis has explicitly challenged us to make decisions about the environment based on the common good. For example, we used to think that using an aerosol can with CFCs—a combination of chlorine, fluorine, and carbon atoms—didn’t hurt the environment. But then we found out that these chemicals can weaken the ozone layer in the atmosphere. And the people in the world who are most affected by the dangerous “holes” in the atmosphere are not the people who used these aerosols the most. We are now faced with the dilemma of whether or not to use aerosols—which can be convenient and efficient—in order to preserve creation and to protect all of God’s people from skin cancer and other related challenges of the thinning ozone.

Many people in our neighborhoods don’t think of the common good when they make choices which involve the environment—the earth, the air, the water, the plants and animals, human persons. So we have a challenge for you. How can you mobilize the whole community—or even the whole world—to make decisions about our air and water and land which are based on the common good, not just the good of a factory or a community or even a country, but the good of ALL God’s creation?

Americans have often come together to create BIG events for a worthy cause—to raise awareness and money for something really, really important, like the health of people with the HIV virus, or the survival of family farms, or survivors of a tsunami or hurricane or earthquake, or farmers in developing countries.
7. Divide participants into five groups (ten if you have a large number of participants). Then invite one person from each group to come up to the front and draw the group’s task from the basket. Ask if there are any questions, and then tell the groups that they have 20 minutes to come up with their concepts for the event. If groups finish quickly and are very general, encourage them to create a timeline and explore specifics.

8. Circulate as groups work, helping as needed. After 15 minutes, do a time check and give a five-minute reminder.

9. At the end of the 20 minutes, invite each group to share its ideas for the event. Then wrap up this session with the following:

   I would love to participate in these events. Wouldn’t it be cool if you really did implement all of these amazing ideas? And why not? What’s to stop us? All people would benefit, and we truly would be helping the common good, not just our own.

10. Point out that Pope Francis, in his encyclical, challenges us to look at how our choices about the environment affect others. He asks us to always reflect on the common good. Share two more videos on Laudato Si’, inviting participants to view their videos through the eyes of what is good for the environment is good for all of God’s people as well.

3:15 p.m. — 3:30 p.m.  
BREAK

THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA!
1. What does the term “common good” mean to you? Have you heard it used before? When or where?

2. Why do you think this FoodFast is called “Uncommon Good”? What does it make you think?

3. What do you take into account when you make a serious decision? Do you think of how your choice will affect yourself? Your loved ones? Everyone? If you had to choose, what percentage of your big decisions are based on each of the following...
   a. how it affects you;
   b. how it affects those close to you;
   c. how it affects the most vulnerable and poor;
   d. how it affects everyone?

4. Discuss your reflections with three other people. Then, as a team of four, come up with a definition of “common good.” You can only use one sentence to do this.
OBJECTIVES:
- To challenge young people to be advocates for environmental justice
- To utilize social media to share our concerns about the environment

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED:
- The video, Climate Change/It Changes Everything, queued up (www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1diELXlVU)
- Projector, speakers, screen
- 8 1/2” x 11” pieces of card stock
- Black markers (wide tip or chisel tip if possible)
- Set up a place in the room for photographing the teams’ work. Invite someone with a good-quality digital camera and knowledge of how to make a short, fast-motion video to take pictures of each group with their hashtags and put them together in a fast-motion video. (Option: The photo station could have a fun backdrop such as nature, animals, a chalk mural of a map, the earth, a farm, fruit, vegetables, etc.) If you have a very large group, consider inviting several photographers to work on this.

PROCESS:
1. Introduce this session with the following:

   What does it take to get us to do something? How many times do we have to be asked to clean our room, do the dishes, finish our homework? Sometimes we need someone to shake us up a bit, and let us know how urgent it is that we do what we should. The same goes for climate change, caring for the earth and advocating for the poor. We need a wake-up call! Preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation can be that wake-up call. When we are open to the call of the Holy Spirit, amazing things can happen. We are going to watch a short video that talks about climate change and some of its effects. We then are going to take a challenge to get the word out!

2. Watch the video, Climate Change | It Changes Everything
3. After the video, divide the group into teams of 5-6. Then share:

   The video summarizes much of what we have discussed in our time together thus far. Now that we’ve seen this little video, we are going to do a little project. Your task is to choose some issue or reality that we have highlighted in our time together, something that your group wants to highlight and alert people about. If it would help, you can watch the video again on one of your personal devices, then choose an issue that has all of you concerned.

   Once you choose your issue, discuss the following questions:
   - What is most worrying about the issue you chose?
   - What effect is it having on people? On the planet?
   - What can be done about this issue?
4. Allow several minutes for discussion, then continue:

Now we’d like to ask you to create one or more hashtags that will ignite passion, commitment, urgency or challenge in others about your issue. Once you have your hashtags, write them clearly on a sheet of card stock. Write only one hashtag on each sheet. Then bring them to the photo station, and let your group decide how to pose with the hashtags. Have fun!

5. Circulate as the teams work. Direct them to the photo station when they complete their hashtags.

6. At the photo station, have the teams pose with their hashtags and have a photo taken. Do this for each hashtag. (Option: The photo station can be placed so all gathered can see the photos as they are being taken.)

7. Show the finished products once all the photos have been taken, and create a fast-forward video!

**NOTE:**
These hashtags can be tweeted out and followed by the CRS FoodFast 2017 # so they will aggregate and be seen over the course of time by FoodFast participants all over the country.
OBJECTIVE:
- To understand that global problems are not quickly solved
- To learn and experience the very basics of social innovation

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED:
- Have one of the following videos queued up. Choose the one that would most resonate with your group.
  - Turning Innovation Into Impact
    ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkwVCnfjWqQ](www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkwVCnfjWqQ))
  - Catholic Relief Services’ ICT4D Programs: Using Technology to Empower Those We Serve
    ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=HabaEzHFS74&list=PLt5PsPjJAkJ1aa8nsZhPEnajx_ihmsq9&index=3](www.youtube.com/watch?v=HabaEzHFS74&list=PLt5PsPjJAkJ1aa8nsZhPEnajx_ihmsq9&index=3))
  - Growing Sanitation with the Arborloo
    ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvWRWOac9IM](www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvWRWOac9IM))
- Projector, speakers, screen
- Newsprint, roll of brown butcher, or roll of craft paper to lay out on tables
- Markers
- Three six-foot tables set next to each other to make a long row

PROCESS:
1. Write the word, "INNOVATION", on a sheet of newsprint. Invite participants to free associate for a few moments: what is the first thing that comes to mind when they see this word? Accept answers and jot down core ideas raised by participants.

2. Let participants know they are going to watch a short video providing a glimpse into the work of development in countries that face what seems like insurmountable problems. Ask them to pay attention to key lessons from the video. *(If using one of the ICT4D videos, explain that ICT4D is an acronym for Information and Communication Technologies for Development, referring to the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the areas of socioeconomic development, international development, and human rights.)*

3. Show the video chosen prior to your FoodFast. After viewing the video, ask participants to identify the ways these see innovation demonstrated through the work of CRS, its partners, AND the people it serves. Accept answers and continue with the following:

   Have you ever wondered how someone’s great idea had its start? What sparked the idea of inside plumbing, tooth brushes, contact lenses, antibiotics, hearing aids, water filters, mosquito nets or giving a pair of shoes to a person in need when you purchase a pair? Behind every great idea is something that inspired it. The person who went on to invent or design it was passionate and couldn’t let go until it became a reality. That is social innovation. That is making change. Every great invention begins with a perceived need first.

   Why talk about this on a retreat that raises awareness of climate change, hunger, poverty and the common good? Well, we need inspiration and great ideas to tackle the world’s problems—problems in our country...in our neighborhoods. Why NOT here? Why NOT you? We are going to have a little Social Innovation 101 and then try it out for ourselves.

4. Show the PowerPoint on “Making Change.” Then continue:
Now you have the basics; they are pretty simple aren’t they? And if you saw the slide that said some things take a long time, that shouldn’t discourage you. Some things just do, but we must start somewhere. Our project at this moment is the foundation of social change—the dreaming stage. There are tables covered in paper set up for us. The goal is to think for a minute or two, and then write down some of your ideas on how to fix climate change or any related issue that results from climate change, such as increased hunger, poverty, drought, health concerns, loss of work, housing risks, food insecurity, air pollution, threats to animals and plants, etc. Whether complicated, realistic or crazy, write your ideas for a solution or solutions on the paper. You will have seven minutes to do that. Then I will call “time.” You will then have to go to someone else’s idea on the tables and build on their idea. We will do that three times. When finished, we will take a look at some of our great ideas for making social change and for innovations where they are most needed. Let’s go create!

5. Have the participants do the seven-minute exercise of writing their ideas for fixing problems. Call time.

6. Have them build on the ideas of others, then call time again.

7. Once more, have them add to the ideas on the sheets.

8. When finished, have some people hold the paper up in front of the group, and read several of the core ideas and what was added to each idea. Then wrap up with the following:

You should all call yourselves social innovators now—these are incredible ideas! A few things we social innovators know that others might not:

1. Any idea might be the beginning of a way to solve a pressing issue, make lasting systematic change or have a big social impact.
2. Take smalls steps.
3. Spend time with people, looking at their perspectives and experience.
4. Listen to people: hear their stories.
5. Look for the deeper root causes of issues.
6. Don’t give up.
7. See resources where others see problems.

Before we move to our next activity, what are your thoughts, reactions, feelings or hopes about making change and being social innovators?

9. Show two more videos created by the participants, pointing out that the videos offer seeds for social innovation.
OBJECTIVES:
• To get participants thinking about life after FoodFast and how they will act on what they’ve experienced during the fast
• To give them information about Catholic organizations and how they can support the work of these organizations, particularly CRS, to help the poor and the environment at the same time
• To encourage them to make a commitment on behalf of the common good, creation and impoverished people

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED:
• Copy of the handout My Personal Commitment, one per participant
• Copy of the handout How I Can Help, one per participant
• Video of ValLimar Jansen’s interview about her CRS trip to Ghana, located on the CRS FoodFast website, queued up and ready to be played
• Internet access so participants can view smart phones, iPads, etc. (Have a few extras for those who don’t have a device of their own.)

PROCESS:
1. Begin this session with the following:

   We are getting close to the end of our FoodFast! But before we do all the wrap-ups and packing for home, we have one very important thing to consider: how does each one of us take this experience home? What commitment can we make to continue our own personal journey of hearing the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth—and to respond?

   We’re pretty tired, so maybe a bit of inspiration will help. I want to share a video of a very special person’s trip to Ghana, West Africa, with Catholic Relief Services. We heard from ValLimar Jansen earlier. She has been a big part of Catholic youth ministry in the U.S. for many years. Let’s listen to her story about a trip she took with CRS to Ghana.

2. Play the video of VaLLimar’s experience in Ghana.
3. After the video, share:

   VaLLimar gives us much food for thought. She challenges us to raise awareness about the work CRS. CRS is the official humanitarian relief and development agency of the U.S. Catholic Church, which includes you and me. So, when CRS is working around the world, it is doing so on our behalf; CRS is representing us. Through CRS, we are working with the poor and vulnerable to dig wells and create better agricultural practices, to give relief after natural disasters, to help people create a better future for themselves and their families through microloans.

   VaLLimar suggests that we can help support the great work of Catholic Relief Services by taking care of this important organization of ours—in whatever way God calls us to do. As VaLLimar said, we can offer support “however.” It might be by educating our families and communities about CRS. It might mean financially supporting the work of CRS.

   We can offer support in other ways. Whenever we make decisions about our lives and think about how those decisions might impact people in other parts
of the world, we are living our faith in a special way. See, Jesus invites us to see everyone as our sister and brother. Everyone is part of our family – our global family. When we work to improve the environment, that may inspire others to do so as well. It creates a ripple effect. When we give of ourselves to help another, that person may do the same and it creates a ripple effect. When we challenge our leaders to make decisions and policies that take into account the lives of people around the world, that changes lives. When we help to reduce our contributions to pollution and climate change, that adds to the overall efforts of others and it makes a collective difference in the world.

There are other organizations working on behalf of the environment and the poor. One is Catholic Climate Covenant. It seeks to care for God’s creation and address climate change through prayer, action and advocacy.

We are going to give you some time now to look through the websites of these organizations. Maybe you will see something that really tugs at your heart. Just start gathering ideas for how you can continue the journey we’ve begun today once you return home.

4. Pass out the two handouts, and encourage participants to spread out and spend some time researching and then reflecting on their next steps.

5. After 15 minutes, tell the participants to move toward filling out their commitment pledges. Tell them they will be sharing one personal commitment with the community.

6. Allow another five minutes for this, and then bring the group back together. Have them form a large circle, and invite each participant to share one thing he/she pledges to do on behalf of the common good, creation and the poor.

7. Wrap up with the following:

I am inspired by your commitment to the common good. I am inspired by your love for Planet Earth—God’s own creation. And I am inspired by your love for the most vulnerable in our world.

I hope you keep in touch with each other about your commitments. Ask your friends how they are doing at keeping their commitment: share your own struggles and successes, and ask them about theirs. This is a great way to support each other.

ValLimar told us that one individual life can make a difference. That life can be YOURS! God bless each and every one of you!

8. Show the final two videos from the participants, reminding them that Pope Francis is calling them to make a difference in caring for God’s creation—both nature and people!
You can come up with your own project and be a change-maker. Or you can join an initiative of a Catholic organization committed to helping the most vulnerable around the world in ways that protect the environment. Take some time to search the following websites for ideas about how you can get involved. These projects are true social innovation!

**CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (CRS.ORG)**
Click the “Get Involved” button and then find the following topics that are youth-friendly and cover various types of involvement.

- Raise your voice for people around the world affected by climate change by getting involved in legislative advocacy through Catholics Confront Global Poverty: [www.confrontglobalpoverty.org](http://www.confrontglobalpoverty.org).
- Support a project that helps communities around the world through CRS FaithActs: [faithacts.crs.org](http://faithacts.crs.org).

**CATHOLIC CLIMATE COVENANT (CATHOLICCLIMATECOVENANT.ORG)**
1. Take the St. Francis Pledge to “pray, act, and advocate to solve climate change.”
2. Find ways to help through the three lenses of Prayer, Action and Advocacy.
3. CCC encourages actions like the following (shared from the CCC website):

**PRAYER:**
- Set a time to pray for climate action
- Pray as a family or as a church group
- Keep a prayer journal
- Publish prayers via a blog or newsletter

**ACTION:**
- Investigate solar and renewable energy options
- Learn how climate—and climate change—affect the vulnerable
- Take steps to reduce your footprint

**ADVOCATE:**
- Connect with policy makers
- Connect with your municipal council
- Explore sustainable policies at school and at work
- Listen to your pastor’s position on ecology
As a disciple of Jesus, a member of the Catholic Church, and a dweller on Planet Earth, I commit to:

1. Learn more, or educate others, by

2. Pray for the common good, for our most vulnerable, and for creation by

3. Do service on behalf of those affected by climate change by

4. Share my own resources, which include my time, my money, and my talent by
OBJECTIVES:

- To acknowledge the work the young people did during their FoodFast
- To challenge the young people to continue their learning, service and commitment to the environment and to impoverished and vulnerable people
- Within a liturgy:
  - To share the experience of FoodFast with the parish/school community
  - To make the connection between being formed by Eucharist and being sent forth in mission

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Gather participants in the prayer space.
- Commissioning gift(s) ready to distribute (See Serrv fair Trade site for suggested items. Consider using the One Human Family, Food for All prayer cards which you can order on the FoodFast website.)
- Invite a musician to play music.
- Invite readers to proclaim the Word.

IF THE COMMISSIONING IS DONE WITHIN A LITURGY:

ENTRANCE PROCESSION
The retreat participants will process in and then sit with their families.

LITURGY OF THE WORD
Readings of the Day

- First Reading
- Psalm Response
- Second Reading
- Gospel

PRESENTATION OF FOODFAST YOUTH (after the homily or Eucharist)
Youth or youth and their parents are invited to stand.

PRESIDER:

Brothers and sisters, by baptism we have all become members of the Church, full members of the Body of Christ. Week by week in our parish assembly, we grow in that life in Christ as we all share in Word and Eucharist...in our common prayer and praise. If we look around, we can see how richly the Spirit has blessed this community with diverse gifts, gifts that we must share with one another and with the world.

Today it is my privilege to present to you some young people from our parish who have been on a special Confirmation retreat [also a Catholic Relief Services FoodFast in which we spent time looking at climate change, hunger, poverty, our common home—the earth—and the common good, all through the lens of our Catholic faith. These young people are an example for us. As they commit themselves to living their faith, so, too do they invite us to re-commit ourselves to caring for each other and this planet we call home. They learned a lot over the time spent on retreat, but it will take a lifetime of commitment to make this world a better place.

As we welcome them today, I would ask each of us to pray for them and their families as well as our parish family.

And so I present to you these young people as we pray a prayer of blessing and commissioning over them. Please raise your hands in blessing and respond “Amen” after each statement.

As Jesus said, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will not hunger, and whoever who believes in me will never thirst.” It is this Jesus who inspires, challenges and loves us. May these young people always be fed by Jesus, the bread of life. We pray...
All: Amen.

May these young people and their families continue to learn how to be good stewards of the earth and care for all God’s creation. We pray...

All: Amen.

May their hearts be turned toward God and their eyes open to see the needs around them. May they take action to meet the needs with courage, justice, compassion and grace. We pray...

All: Amen.

May they be open to the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit on the day they are confirmed, and may they be strengthened to bring about God’s Kingdom here on earth. We pray...

All: Amen.

May each of these young people and their families seek to know your will, Lord, and to follow your call, your invitation to live simply, to share their resources and to have hearts for the vulnerable in the world—plants, animals and humanity. We pray...

All: Amen.

In thanksgiving for our faith community and the ways God has given us to live as disciples in the world today. Bless us in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

I invite each of you forward to receive a cross that signifies your commitment to the environment, to service, to stewardship and to share your gifts with the world.

Once all have received their cross, continue with the liturgy.

**IF THE COMMISSIONING IS DONE WITHIN A CLOSING PRAYER SERVICE:**

**OPENING SONG:**

Choose a recommended song from the CRS Food Fast website or one of your own.

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We have come to the end of our FoodFast, and what an incredible adventure this has been. We have learned so much, done so many creative and interesting things and most important of all, have been changed for the good. God has some big plans for each of us that will unfold over time. We ask God to open our hearts, minds and hands to all he wants to give us and all he wants us to accomplish through us. We ask this in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Reader 1:** John 6:28-35

We hope this FoodFast sparked something in you—an idea, a dream, a hope, a plan. The little seeds that were planted here will continue to grow. If we learned anything, we learned that change takes time. Change happens with prayer, creativity, collaboration, inspiration, support and passion. We have made commitments to continuing our work and seeing where God will take us on this
6:30 p.m.

6:30 p.m.

PRESIDER:

Brothers and sisters, by baptism we have all become members of the Church, full members of the Body of Christ. Week by week in our parish assembly, we grow in that life in Christ as we all share in Word and Eucharist, in our common prayer and praise.

If we look around, we can see how richly the Spirit has blessed our community with diverse gifts, gifts that we must share with one another and with the world.

Today it is my privilege to congratulate you—and thank you—for completing this special Confirmation retreat, a CRS FoodFast, learning about climate change, hunger, poverty, our common home the earth and the common good. You are an example for us to commit ourselves to caring for this planet we call home. You have learned a lot over the time spent on retreat, but it will take a lifetime of commitment to make this world a better place.

As we honor you today, I would ask you to pray for each other and your families as well as our parish family.

And so we pray a prayer of blessing and commissioning over you. Please raise your hands in blessing and respond “Amen” after each statement.

May these young people and their families continue to learn how to be good stewards of the earth and care for all God’s creation. We pray...

All: Amen.

May their hearts be turned toward God and their eyes open to see the needs around them. May they act on these needs with courage, justice, compassion and grace. We pray...

All: Amen.

May they be open to the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit on the day they are confirmed, and may they be strengthened to bring about God’s Kingdom here on earth. We pray...

All: Amen.

May each of these young people and their families seek to know your will, Lord, and to follow your call, your invitation to live simply, to share their resources and to have hearts for the vulnerable in the world—plants, animals and humanity. We pray...

All: Amen.

We pray in thanksgiving for our faith community and the ways God has given us to live as disciples in the world today. Bless us in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.
I invite each of you forward to receive a cross that signifies your commitment to the environment, to service, to stewardship and to share your gifts with the world.

As a sign of solidarity and community, please share a sign of peace with one another.

CLOSING SONG:
Use “One Family” by Pasquale Talarico on the CRS FoodFast website or some other appropriate song.
DINNER/BREAK THE FAST

Share Stories

7:15 p.m.

OBJECTIVES:
• To break the fast and celebrate all that was accomplished
• To share the experience with the faith community and family over a simple meal, highlighting the artwork, videos and other projects the participants created
• To try out some international meals—simple and filling
• To highlight artwork, projects and videos during the meal
• To share the extra soup from the project with the families

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED:
• Invite a team to prepare the meal several weeks in advance.
• Share recipe options with the team.
• Purchase ingredients.
• Print out recipe cards for the dishes chosen.
• Invite someone to lead a meal prayer.
• Determine the amount of food and dishes to be prepared when you have final registration numbers.

PROCESS:
1. After the commissioning or liturgy, gather the participants and their families for the meal. Welcome the group, and invite the kitchen team or cooks to share a bit of information about the food and why the dishes were chosen.
2. Recite a special meal prayer, then invite all to eat. Call one table up at a time.
3. As people eat, invite the young people to share the highlights of the FoodFast with those at their table.

THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA!

10-HOUR VERSION

These recipes can be replaced by others on crsricebowl.org/recipe

OBJECTIVES:

SETUP/MATERIALS NEEDED:

PROCESS:
RIZ NATIONAL – HAITI
(MAKES 4-6 SERVINGS)

Ingredients:
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fair trade olive oil
- 1 cup rice, uncooked
- 2 15-ounce cans kidney beans, drained
- 1/4 teaspoon cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 1/2 cups water

Instructions:
Preheat oven to 350°F. Sauté onion, garlic and green pepper in oil until tender. In a separate bowl, combine and mix all remaining ingredients. Add the onion mixture to the bowl and stir well. Pour mixture into a medium-sized casserole dish. Cover and bake until liquid is absorbed and rice is tender—about an hour. Stir before serving.

Visit CRS Rice Bowl’s Global Kitchen for a short video on making this recipe: www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-7vsDEP9LM&list=PLt5PsPjJAk-2ea_6hc4WgmQ5aYMjYmLw.

BLACK BEAN SOUP – DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
(MAKES 4 SERVINGS)

Ingredients:
- 3 15-ounce cans black beans, drained
- 2 tablespoons fair trade olive oil
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 1 green or red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- 3 cups water
- 2 teaspoons oregano
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 cups cooked rice

Instructions:
Sauté onions, peppers, garlic and celery in oil until soft. Stir in oregano and bay leaves and cook for 1 minute. Add water and drained beans and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for an hour, stirring occasionally. When soup begins to thicken, remove from heat, remove bay leaves and stir in salt and pepper to taste. Using a potato masher or the back of a spoon, mash some of the beans to thicken the soup a bit. Adjust seasoning and serve with rice.
EMPANADAS – COLOMBIA
(MAKES 6-8 EMPANADAS)

Ingredients:

**Empanadas**
- 2 cups flour
- 2 tablespoons vegetable shortening
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 cup cold water mixed with 1 teaspoon salt
- 12 ounces queso fresco or farmer’s cheese, shredded
- 4 tablespoons fair trade olive oil

**Beans**
- 2 16-ounce cans kidney beans, drained
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- Cilantro (for garnish)

Instructions - Empanadas
Mix the flour, shortening, baking powder and salted water in a medium-sized bowl. Knead until combined. On a floured surface, form dough into a roll. Cut into 6 to 8 equal pieces. Flatten each piece into a circle about 5 inches in diameter. Place about a tablespoon of cheese on one half of the circle and fold the other half of the dough over the cheese, making sure to seal the cheese inside.

Add oil to a large pan and heat until very hot. Place one empanada in the pan. Once the bottom is browned, turn over to cook the other side. Remove from pan and place on a paper towel to absorb the extra oil. Repeat with the other pieces of dough.

Instructions - Beans
In a separate pan, sauté the onion and bell pepper with oil. Add the beans and cumin until warm. Garnish with cilantro.

SALAD BAR
- Chopped lettuce – light and dark greens
- Tomatoes
- Cucumber slices
- Chopped hard-boiled eggs
- Cheese
- Croutons
- Sunflower seeds
- Shredded carrots

These recipes can be replaced by others on crsricebowl.org/recipe

DRINKS
- Water
- Coffee
- Tea

DESERT
- Cookies or bars (ask someone to bake for the dinner)