

WEEK 3

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY: GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY

Many of our sisters and brothers in Christ do not have access to clean water, a basic necessity that each person needs to survive. We should support the efforts of those working toward greater accessibility of this essential resource.

A STORY OF HOPE FROM EL SALVADOR

Some young people in Ahuachapán in eastern El Salvador think that being a farmer is a thing of the past. Their families have farmed for generations, but climate change and soil erosion have caused harvests—and therefore their incomes—to shrink considerably.

Edwin Carlos, a 17-year-old eager to support his parents and two little brothers, did not see farming in his future. However, after a teacher told him about how new techniques and technology were changing the way farming was being done to help restore the environment, he changed his mind. Edwin Carlos decided to join a group of 220 students who are learning skills like the importance of distancing when plowing and how burning harvest residue can harm the land and air.

Sadly, El Salvador has lost 75% of its rich land because of the large number of trees that have been cut down and harmful agricultural practices like the extensive use of fertilizers, making it one of the most food-insecure countries in the hemisphere. “He who knows has an obligation to act,” says Edwin Carlos, who now knows how to use water properly so that it is not wasted, and organic manure and other resources to provide nutrients to the soil to produce more—and healthier—crops.

Thanks to this school program, CRS’ Raíces Ahuachapán, Edwin Carlos has also learned how to grow vegetables at home—knowledge that was extremely important during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the days of the confinement, nearly 1,200 families started home vegetable gardens to grow nutritious foods like onions, tomatoes, cucumbers and squash. They can eat what they harvest or sell the produce at their church or the local market for additional income.



Photo by Oscar Lera/Silverlight for CRS

Pope Francis reminds us that “young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis.” Thanks to programs like CRS’ Raíces Ahuachapán, young people are becoming active agents of that change.

FACTS TO CONSIDER

- El Salvador is the smallest and most densely populated country in Central America. With more than 6 million people living there, it is also considered the most industrialized country in Central America. However, its people continue to face serious challenges.
- An estimated 1 in 5 Salvadorans have left the country due to lack of sufficient income to support their families, high levels of violence and insecurity, issues that affect El Salvador’s society in profound ways.
- Environmental degradation and global climate change make the country highly at risk to natural disasters. The country is the second most deforested in the Western Hemisphere.



For downloadable photos, visit crsricebowl.org/photos and watch the video from Week 3 at crsricebowl.org/stories.

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY: GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY

45 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE

Through the story of farmers in El Salvador, students will learn about the corporal work of mercy giving drink to the thirsty.

MATERIALS

- Facts to Consider
- Week 3 story or video
(available at crsricebowl.org/stories)
- Week 3 Activity Sheet: Grades 4-6
(available in this guide and at crsricebowl.org/1-8)

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Read the Facts to Consider.
2. Read or watch the story from Week 3.
3. Reflect:
 - Why is it difficult to be a farmer in El Salvador?
 - How do Edwin Carlos and other farmers depend on the environment?
 - *Raíces* is a word in Spanish that means “roots.” Why do you think the program is called that?
 - How did the vegetable gardens help families in El Salvador during the COVID-19 pandemic?

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Explain the corporal work of mercy giving drink to the thirsty. Many of our sisters and brothers in Christ do not have access to clean water and suffer from the lack of this basic necessity. It is our responsibility to support the efforts of the people who help make sure more communities can access water.
2. Have students complete the Week 3 Activity Sheet: Grades 4-6.
3. If time permits, ask the students to share their answers to the questions.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Loving Creator of all things,

You have given us a beautiful home and have asked us to care for it. Help us to remember that we are the earth's caretakers. May we always be respectful and loving to all your creation. We ask this in your name.

Amen

AT HOME

1. Share your activity sheet with your family.
2. As a family, read today's reflection found in your **CRS Rice Bowl Lenten Calendar**.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE



1. Read or watch the Week 3 story.
2. Lead Discussion step 3.

Name: _____



What are some things that can happen if you don't drink enough water?

Water is necessary for many things in the world. List as many as you can:

Name: _____



In El Salvador, artisans make wooden crosses and paint characters and other elements with bright colors on it to tell a story or to depict daily life in which Jesus is the center. Add elements to the cross pictured below so that it shows the life of farmers and their families. You can draw mountains, houses, farming tools, the sky, corn, etc. Be imaginative, and make sure to color it!

