

WEEK 4

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY: FEED THE HUNGRY

Feeding the hungry is the first corporal work of mercy mentioned by Jesus: “For I was hungry and you gave me food” (Matthew 25:35). In Timor-Leste, communities are growing the food they need to thrive with the help of tools and training from CRS.

A STORY OF HOPE FROM TIMOR-LESTE

Timor-Leste is a small Asian country, slightly larger than the state of Connecticut. It’s on the other side of the world near Australia, and it’s one of the world’s newest countries—only 18 years old. In comparison, the United States will be 245 years old this year!

Many families in Timor-Leste live in rural areas and work as farmers. But challenges like changing weather patterns make it difficult to grow enough food. They depend on rice as a main part of their meals, and hunger and malnutrition are big problems. More than one-third of people in Timor-Leste don’t have reliable access to enough nutritious food. This especially affects children and their ability to develop to their full potential.

With training from CRS, families are starting home gardens to grow different vegetables, beans and other foods that are rich in nutrients like vitamin A and iron. The gardens are built to withstand droughts and flooding, and the families add the food they grow—such as spinach, cabbage, peanuts, carrots and tomatoes—to their daily rice staple, providing more nourishing meals that help children grow and stay healthy.

Parents attend nutrition groups in their communities where they learn how to build and improve their gardens. They also learn new recipes that incorporate the produce they grow—and they sometimes have cooking competitions to see who can prepare the tastiest meal!

Eliza and her husband Paulino have six children. After participating in her community’s nutrition group, she and Paulino started a home garden and began growing different crops based on the rainy and dry seasons. They also started



Photo by Amy Djafove / CRS

raising chickens, which provide additional protein to their meals and income from selling the eggs. Eliza wants her children to be healthy and says, “I know the vegetables provide essential vitamins for them.”

FACTS TO CONSIDER:

- Timor-Leste gained independence from Indonesia in 2002, making it the first new nation of the millennium. As a new country, it experienced conflict and other obstacles that have impacted its development and the wellbeing of the Timorese people.
- Most families in Timor-Leste live in rural communities, and more than 80% make their living as subsistence farmers. Frequent natural and man-made disasters make it difficult for families to grow enough food to survive. As a result, the country has one of the world’s worst nutrition rates.
- CRS has been providing aid to the Timorese people since 1979 and works with partners and farming communities to improve farming and storage techniques, to become resilient to disasters such as landslides and flooding, and to improve nutrition within families.



For downloadable photos, visit crsricebowl.org/photos and watch the video from Week 4 at crsricebowl.org/photos.

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY: FEED THE HUNGRY

45 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE

Through the story of families in Timor-Leste who are fighting malnutrition with innovative home gardens, students will reflect on the corporal work of mercy feeding the hungry.

MATERIALS

- Week 4 story or video (available at crsricebowl.org/stories)
- Lima Bean Plant Instructions sheet (available in this guide and at crsricebowl.org/1-8)
- Lima bean plant materials
 - 1 clear, clean jar (plastic or glass) for each student (*Ask students to each bring in a plastic cup or jar.*)
 - 3-4 Lima beans per student
 - Paper towels
 - Water

DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Ask students if they remember where Timor-Leste is. Locate it on the map. What is one thing you already know about Timor-Leste?
2. Read or watch the story from Week 4.
3. Reflect:
 - What challenges do the families in Timor-Leste face?
 - How is the corporal work of mercy feeding the hungry demonstrated in this story?
 - How can you help to feed the hungry?

ACTIVITY (25 MINUTES)

1. Explain the corporal work of mercy feeding the hungry. There are millions of people around the world who experience chronic hunger and malnutrition, even though there is enough food in the world to feed everyone. Every person has the right to life, including what is necessary to sustain a life with dignity. We need nutritious food to live and thrive, and it is our responsibility as Christians to help those who don't have enough food to eat.
2. Have students complete the Week 4 Activity. Please refer to the Lima Bean Plant Instructions page of this guide for this activity.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Jesus,

There are many people in the world who do not have enough food to eat. We see your face in them, and we pray for the courage to respond to their need so that each person may have enough nutritious food to lead healthy lives.

Amen

AT HOME

1. Bring home your Lima bean plant and show your family. Don't forget to water it every day!
2. As a family, read the daily reflection found in your **CRS Rice Bowl Lenten Calendar**.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE



1. Read or watch the Week 4 story.
2. Lead Discussion step 3.



Families in Timor-Leste have learned to plant drought-resistant gardens to provide nutritious food that helps fight hunger and malnutrition. Help your students plant Lima beans, which are nutritious and resilient to climate changes.

1. Ask students to bring in a clean, clear cup or jar.
2. Insert a dry paper towel into the jar.
3. Place 3-4 Lima bean seeds in the jar. Spread them throughout the jar so there is space in between each seed.
4. Spray the paper towel with water. Avoid soaking the paper towel. To retain moisture in the jar, you can slightly cover the top of the jar with plastic wrap.
5. Place the jar in a sunny area but avoid excessive heat or cold.
6. Water your plant every day!

Lima bean plants typically sprout in about 14 days.