



resources for short-term,
international mission
and immersion trips

Developed by Catholic Relief Services

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INTRODUCTION

As the humanitarian relief agency of the Catholic community in the United States, Catholic Relief Services accompanies poor and marginalized communities in more than 100 countries worldwide. We do this work in the name of Catholics in the United States as a witness to our faith in Jesus Christ who responded to people who were poor and marginalized and inspires us still to proclaim the Good News to those who suffer.

We frequently receive requests from Catholic institutions to visit our programs, provide volunteer experiences or accommodate short-term mission programs. Because our in-country staff are focused on our international humanitarian work, we are rarely able to host or sponsor trips or volunteers.

At the same time, with more than 70 years of experience working with poor communities overseas to create sustainable change, we can be a resource for international immersion trips and provide valuable insight about ways to address some of today's pressing global needs. This resource is an effort to do that by helping trip facilitators think through how to work with overseas partners so they experience inclusion, empowerment and optimism for the future through their encounter with trip participants—whether short-term or long-term—from the United States.

The narrative used to prepare participants for these experiences determines, to a great degree, its outcome—both for participants and host communities. For that reason, we have provided a foundational narrative document for reflection, based on the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-21).

This resource is also guided by the Pastoral Circle methodology first developed by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot in "Social Analysis" (Orbis Books, 1983). The methodology focuses on pastoral planning, including the following four elements:

INSERTION

Understanding the experience of the communities and individuals we seek to serve.

SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Analyzing the political, historical, cultural and spiritual realities that led to the contemporary situation of the community.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Seeking to understand the experience through the lens of faith, Scripture, Catholic social teaching and Church tradition.

PASTORAL RESPONSE

Asking, "In light of these factors, what is an appropriate response for us and for the community we wish to serve?"

This methodology assumes the relationship with the host community continues after participants return from their overseas experience. The first three elements are not only central to preparation for a mission trip, they are useful during the trip itself. Both the pre-immersion materials and reflections to be used during the trip included here incorporate an introduction to the context, social analysis of the context and theological reflection. The fourth element—pastoral planning—takes place after participants return home. Post-immersion materials to help with this planning are included here as well. The Appendix offers a list of additional resources.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

“There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. (Luke 16:19–21)

Each year, more than 1.6 million Christians in the United States pack up their passports and bug spray, and board planes to go on short-term service trips overseas. Many of these trip participants might describe their motivation this way: “I have so much, and there are others who have so little. I am going on a mission trip to give back and serve the poor.” The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus offers us a metaphor for their motivation. The parable paints a stark divide between the world's rich and poor, warning of eternal anguish for those who do not respond compassionately to the poor at their doors.

Mission trips frequently engage participants in construction and other types of service projects. After they return home, many participants would like to make a meaningful difference beyond their experience, yet are not sure how to do it. Facing extreme poverty up close, especially for the first time, can be overwhelming. It tosses us out of our comfort zones and leads us into a spiritual and vocational journey we may not be prepared for. We may prefer to place our experiences in a box, on a high shelf, or in a back closet. And we prefer to leave it there, like old love letters or clothing that no longer fits. We don't know what to do with the experience. We leave the United States to serve the poor overseas, but after a week or so we come home and resume our lives. The poor remain poor, and we remain divided.

The Lazarus parable teaches us that this division does not reflect God's vision for humanity. Each of us—rich and poor—is created in God's image to love and serve one another as one Body of Christ. Jesus was a healer during his public ministry. But he needed the healing love and presence of his companions as he suffered on the cross. Similarly, Lazarus was in need of healing—in the form of food and attention—but he was also a healer. His presence alone was healing: It manifested injustice and provided the rich man a lens to reflect on his own contribution to this injustice, and to change his life.

The Lazarus parable points to a humanity divided and in need. Yet we are all healers in need of healing. Each member of the human family has spiritual and material gifts to offer, and each of us needs these gifts as well. The Christian sojourner, in humility and vulnerability, encounters others in their giftedness and their neediness. She offers the same of herself. And she seeks to heal the divisions that distort the oneness of the Body of Christ.

This neediness and giftedness in everyone invites a new model for reflection upon mission experiences. Rather than focusing on what participants can give (service, action, time, donations), we reflect upon the giftedness of host communities and the neediness of participants—and ask how we can overcome divisions between the two. This requires a relationship-based approach that forges bonds between sending and receiving communities and leads participants to address the disease of poverty when they return home. The experience then becomes more than a short trip overseas. It is a first step in the larger Christian mission to heal divisions.

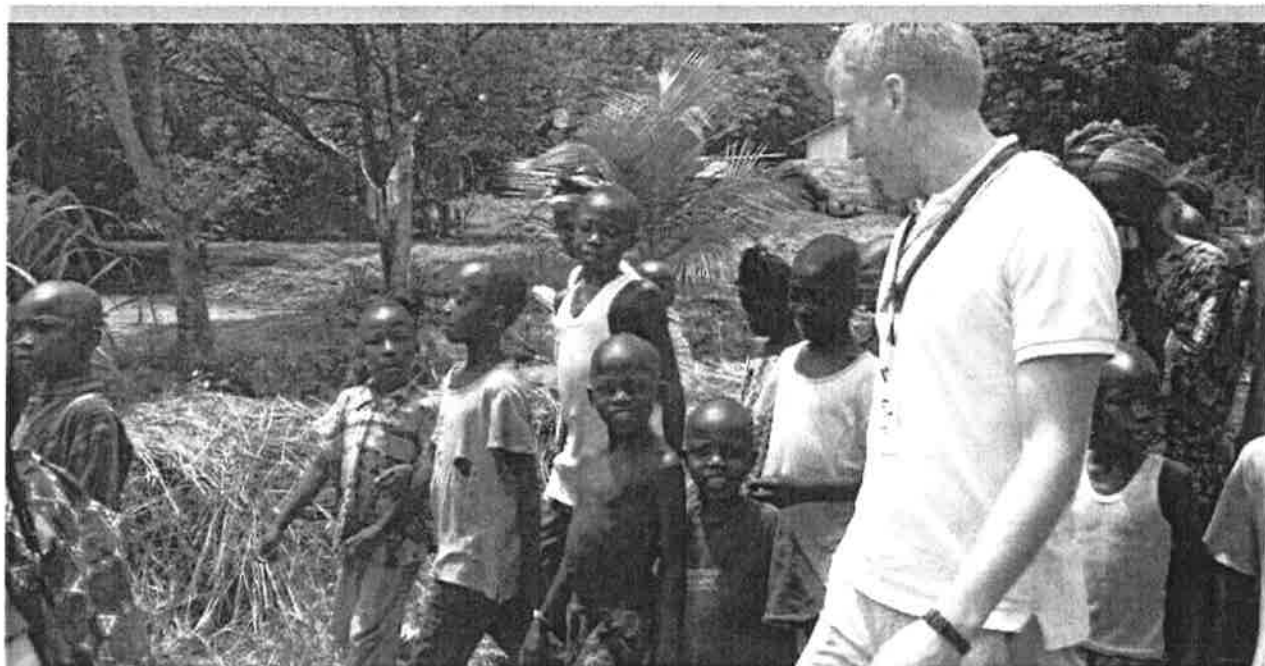


Photo by Mikaele Sansone/CRS

What does a relationship-based approach look like? CRS—with more than 70 years of encountering Christ in people who are poor—has developed guidelines, based in Catholic teaching, for working in partnership with local communities. These principles, which focus on relationship-based service grounded in mutuality, can help groups frame their trip as one of mutual healing.

■ **A RELATIONSHIP-BASED APPROACH MEANS working with the host community to plan the trip.**

In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Lazarus voices his need—but the rich man does not hear. Even though we may be trying to help, we must resist the urge to identify a community's needs for its people. If a work project is included, it should be designed according to the needs the local community articulates and it should be sustainable after the group leaves.

■ **A RELATIONSHIP-BASED APPROACH IS ABOUT more than building and bringing “stuff.”**

If the exchange is based solely on resources, then those with few material resources are excluded from full and mutual participation. When the relationship itself is highly valued, it allows for mutual participation and transformation. We all have the ability to love, pray and be present to one another.

■ **A RELATIONSHIP-BASED APPROACH DEEPENS OUR FAITH BY inviting us to experience the universality of the Catholic Church.**

We grow in a deeper recognition of our unity in Christ when we pray and worship with our host community. As we come to know brothers and sisters of faith from other cultures, we understand Scripture in new ways and see new models of parish communities. We concretely experience our oneness in Christ and are encouraged to enlarge our tent, expanding our sense of shared humanity with all God's people.

❏ A RELATIONSHIP-BASED APPROACH ASKS questions about the injustices facing the host community and our part in those injustices.

Immersion trips can provide participants with a first glance at the challenges that people in a community face. It is important to pay attention to these issues and to analyze their causes. We should also reflect on how our daily decisions, including how we vote and what we buy, affect communities like our host community.

❏ A RELATIONSHIP-BASED APPROACH MEANS we reflect on and pray about our experience.

Sometimes the last thing we want to do after a tiring day or trip is to gather together to talk and pray about it. Groups should set aside time before, during and after a trip to reflect intentionally on how to contextualize their experience within our Scripture and Tradition, and on how it invites our personal healing as well as the healing of divisions within the Body of Christ.

❏ A RELATIONSHIP-BASED APPROACH MEANS the trip is only the beginning of the relationship.

If you choose to enter into relationship with others during your immersion trip, something unusual will happen to you when you leave. The stories you hear and share will forever shape how you care for other people around the world, even those you will never meet.

St. John Paul II wrote, “[Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.” (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, no. 38)

Many people return from international service immersion with a passion that eventually fades into a vague compassion and shallow distress for the masses. Although the initial passion is great, the challenge is deepening it into a real and lifelong love for Christ, who is present in everyone, especially in those who are most vulnerable.

When we enter into relationship with people who suffer beyond what we can imagine, our hearts open. The divide between Lazarus and the rich man begins to close. And we can no longer turn away when we hear about something that seems removed from our own lives, because we realize that our own woundedness and healing are bound up with the woundedness and healing of all members of the Body of Christ.

PRE-IMMERSION

PRE-IMMERSION SESSION ONE

Length: 2 hours

who are we and why are we here?

OBJECTIVES

- Allow participants to get to know one another.
- Reflect on your framework for approaching the trip, and the role of relationships.

MATERIALS

- Bible opened to Luke 16:19-31
- Music and lyrics or audio file of “Break My Heart” (Jennifer Martin, Spirit & Song)
- Music player
- Name tags
- Participant manuals (see preparation section for more info)
- Pens
- Reflective music

PREPARATION

- Prepare participant manuals.
- Participant manuals can be found in the “Prayers and Reflections for the Journey” document. Manuals include reflection questions, prayers and space to journal for the pre-immersion, during-immersion and post-immersion reflections.
- Assemble the manuals as you wish: in binders or a document protector, for example. Print one for each participant.
- Encourage participants to bring their manuals to each preparation meeting and on the trip.
- Cue reflective music.
- Ask two people to read the Scripture passage for the opening prayer.
- Review logistical information to communicate to the group.
- Prepare someone to lead “Break My Heart” or cue it for the closing prayer.

SESSION OVERVIEW

- Welcome (5 minutes)
- Introductions (15 minutes)
- Opening prayer (15 minutes)
- Reflection: Why are you here? (25 minutes)
- Reflection: The Rich Man and Lazarus (30 minutes)
- Housekeeping, logistics and final announcements (25 minutes)
- Closing prayer (5 minutes)

welcome (5 minutes)

- Welcome all participants. Invite them to wear name tags.
- Explain that this meeting is to get to know each other and to reflect about how they are approaching the trip.
- Distribute and describe the participant manuals.
- Encourage participants to use the manuals before, during and after their trip, and ask them to bring them to all meetings.

introductions (15 minutes)

Invite each person to introduce themselves, share the meaning of their name and why it was chosen, and tell how they like to spend their free time.

opening prayer (15 minutes)

- Explain that you are participating in this trip as people of faith. Christ invites us to see him in what Blessed Teresa of Calcutta calls the “most distressing disguise of the poorest of the poor.”
- Explain that you will use the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus to reflect on how you will approach the trip.
- Begin with an adapted “Lectio Divina.”
- Explain that “Lectio Divina” is a Benedictine practice of meditating with Scripture. It typically includes reading a Scripture multiple times and reflecting on it in different ways. In your adapted version of “Lectio Divina,” you will read and reflect on the Scripture passage twice.
- Invite a person to read Luke 16:19–31. (Begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.)
- After he or she reads the passage, pause for a period of silence and then ask: What word or phrase resonates with you?
- Invite a second reader to read the same passage. After they finish, pause for another period of silence and ask participants to talk about what resonated with or challenged them.
- Close with a prayer and the sign of the cross.

reflection: why are you here? (25 minutes)

- Have participants turn to the “Why are you here?” page in the pre-immersion section of their participant manuals.
- Give them 5–10 minutes to silently reflect on what motivated them to participate in this journey.

DISCUSSION

- Ask them to share their responses in groups of two or three.
- If time allows, close the sharing with a large-group discussion.

reflection: the Rich man and Lazarus (30 minutes)

- Explain that how we approach our trip affects us and the community we will visit.
- Invite participants to keep in mind that the trip is not about this one week but about our lives as disciples. We are called by our Baptism to be Christ's disciples and to live out his mission in the world. The way each participant approaches the trip will determine how it affects their lives immediately and in the longer term.
- Explain that this time is set aside to reflect more deeply on the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, and that you will use the story to consider how we are invited into a relationship with those who suffer, and what that relationship gives to—and asks of—us.
- Tell participants that the reflection and its implications for relationship were developed by Catholic Relief Services, the official international humanitarian and development agency of the Catholic Church in the United States. CRS has worked with poor and vulnerable people around the world for more than 70 years.
- Invite participants to read the Rich Man and Lazarus reflection in their participant manuals.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What resonated with you from the reading? What challenged you?
- Do you really believe that those who are poor have as much to offer you as you have to offer them? Why or why not?
- What gifts do you think our host community might offer us?
- How might you need to shift your perspective in order to take a relationship-based approach?

CLOSING

After discussing the questions, note that throughout your trip you will participate in similar reflection opportunities at the end of each day, focusing on the experience and how it connects with our faith. Explain that this theological reflection is crucial to the service experience, and will place your experience within the context of your faith. Explain that participants will continue to use their manuals throughout the trip for journaling and reflection.

housekeeping, logistics and final announcements (25 minutes)

- Use this time to share logistical information with your group. The following suggestions are not an exhaustive list:
 - Articulate expectations of participants before, during and after the trip. Make sure participants are committed to attending post-service immersion trip meetings, and schedule those dates as soon as possible.
 - Provide a list of needed immunizations. Check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov) website for additional information. Explain where they can get them—and the deadline for getting immunized.
 - Provide information about passports and visas, and explain how to get them.
 - Confirm the departure and return dates. If participants have to book their own flights, provide some options and what they need to book them.

- Field questions.
- Announce the time and date of your next meetings, noting that each meeting will last about 2 hours.

closing prayer (5 minutes)

Invite participants to turn to the prayer section of the participant manual and pray together “The Tears of Solidarity”:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ...

God of Compassion,

*The Holy Father Pope Francis challenges us to learn how to cry
To brave that pain, and so enter into true solidarity
with your people.*

For those who face hunger

For those who face war

For those who face exploitation

For those who face displacement

I stand in solidarity.

For those who face unjust discrimination

For those who face indifference

For those who face a lack of opportunity

For those who face a lack of health care

I stand in solidarity.

But in truth, I stand a little reluctantly

And I stand a little far off

Detached and apart from the great human drama,

*Lingering in the orchestra, even as you call me to the center
stage.*

Lord, help me to look again at

what has been done to your people

To their lives and to their dignity

So that slowly, and then more strongly,

I will allow myself to cry

For it is only in those tears that we truly become one

My trepidations fall away

And I step forward and stand anew.

Teach me to cry.

Amen

Play or sing together: “Break My Heart”

why ARE YOU HERE?

■ What motivated you to sign up for this trip?

■ What do you hope to gain from this experience?

■ What about this experience do you feel nervous or unsure about?

■ What does taking this trip have to do with your faith?

called to solidarity

OBJECTIVES

- Learn about underlying social justice issues that face communities around the world, including the country you will visit.
- Reflect on how Christ invites us to respond to injustices by living in solidarity with those in need.

MATERIALS

- Candle, cloth and other items for a prayer space
- Handout with demographic data about the country you are visiting
- Music and lyrics or audio file of “We Are One Body” (Dana Scallon, Spirit & Song)
- Music player
- Name tags
- Participant manuals
- Pens
- Reflective music
- Optional: Materials for Crossroads of the World activity (best for youth or young adult participants)
 - Large meeting space
 - Tape
 - 30 8½ × 11 sheets of colored paper, numbered 1 to 30
 - Copies of:
 - The country resource for each country. Each one printed on a different color of paper.
Note: If you have a small group, consider choosing only 1 to 2 of these resources to limit the time needed to set up and complete the activity.
 - Young person introductions, enough for each participant.
Note: The country resources—one for Zimbabwe, The Holy Land, India and Haiti, should you choose to use all four—and the young person introductions can be found at crs.org/crossroads. The other documents listed there are not needed for this activity. They are included within this resource.
 - 1 red paper clip
 - 3 silver paper clips
 - 1 small box with a lid (Cut a hole in the lid, large enough so a person can reach their arm in the box without removing the lid.)
 - 2 garbage cans
 - 2 wood blocks
 - Crumpled paper

PREPARATION

- This session assumes that the facilitator has a working knowledge of Catholic social teaching and social justice. If you are unfamiliar with or need a review of these topics, search the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' website (usccb.org) for "Catholic social teaching" or "Two Feet of Love in Action" for helpful background information.
- Research and print information about the country you are visiting for participants. The following are possible sources:
 - CIA World Factbook: cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/
 - The World Bank: worldbank.org/en/country
 - Culture Grams: culturegrams.com, a subscription service that provides country information
 - Ask your country or project host for information about some of the issues particular to the part of the country you're visiting. They might be able to talk about their community and country in a video conference with your group.
 - Contact CRS at 866-608-5978. We may have a representative available to share information about the country and the Church's work there.
- Prepare someone to lead the song or cue "We Are One Body" for the closing song.
- Prepare the Crossroads of the World activity: (**Note:** this activity is optional and best for youth or young adult participants. It requires about an hour of preparation.)
 - In a large room or hallway, tape the 30 numbered 8½ × 11 sheets of paper to the wall. Tape the country resources pages, which are also numbered, under the blank sheets. If a country resource has a Part II sheet, temporarily set it aside. When you are finished, you will have some areas with multiple pages taped to the wall and other areas where only one page is taped to the wall. The numbers on each of the country resource pages are intentionally out of sequence. Do not change the numbers.
 - Additional setup for country resources with Part II pages:
 - #26—Place the 4 paper clips in the box. Label the outside of the box "Zimbabwe #26." Make sure the box has a lid so participants can't see what color paper clip they choose. Next to the box, place the country resource Zimbabwe #26 Part II face down, and write Zimbabwe #26 on the back.
 - #1—Place a wooden block in each trash can. Tape a copy of the Haiti #1 Part II country resource. Place the crumpled paper on top of the wood blocks.
- Cue reflective music to play during the Crossroads of the World activity.

SESSION OVERVIEW

- Welcome and introduction (20 minutes)
- Opening prayer (5 minutes)
- Choose *one* of the following activities (45 minutes each):
 - Crossroads of the World (appropriate for youth/young adults)
 - Social Justice Issues Facing Host Country/Community (appropriate for adults)
- Called to solidarity (30 minutes)
- Housekeeping, logistics and final announcements (15 minutes)
- Closing prayer (5 minutes)

welcome and introduction (20 minutes)

- Welcome all participants, and ask them to wear name tags.
- Invite everyone to reintroduce themselves (if necessary) and to share one thing in their life that has brought them joy since you last met.
- Explain that the purpose of the meeting will be to learn about some of the social justice issues facing communities around the world, including the country that you will visit, and to reflect on how Christ invites us to respond to injustices in solidarity with those in need.

opening prayer (5 minutes)

Invite participants to turn to the prayer section of the participant manual and to pray together, "Because We Are Yours."

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...

"But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, Jacob, and formed you, Israel:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name: you are mine." (Isaiah 43:1)

Loving God,

I did not know you

But I was yours.

And they do not know me

And I do not know them

But they are mine

And I am theirs.

Let no chasm, no river, no drought or storm,

No war, no exodus, no border, natural or constructed,

No device of man nor devil

Come between us

Or halt the love that burns within me,

The grace that flows from you.

Let me think on no man unless

I think joyful thoughts of brotherhood,

Let me think on no woman unless

I think tender thoughts of sisterhood,

Friend and stranger,

Ally and enemy,

Brothers,

Sisters.

They are mine

And I am theirs,

Because we are yours

Amen

crossroads of the world (45 minutes)

INTRODUCTION

- Explain that this activity is an interactive learning opportunity highlighting the plight of poor young people around the world.
- The activity will invite participants to put themselves in the shoes of someone from Zimbabwe, the Holy Land, India or Haiti.
- By making decisions and learning about their consequences, participants will have a better understanding of the realities that young people overseas live with each day.
- Explain that participants will be asked to make a decision and that their decision will set them on a path they will follow throughout the activity.
- Distribute young person introductions to participants. Note that participants may do the activity multiple times if they choose.
- Ask them to choose the story of a person from one country.
- Explain that each country is printed on a different color of paper.
- Have them go to the indicated number and read the directions that correspond to the character in the country they've been assigned.

DISCUSSION

After the activity, reconvene and discuss:

- What struck you most about your character's life?
- What challenges—either because of their personal situation or society—did your character face?
- What decisions were you forced to make? Why did you make those decisions?
- How much freedom did you have in this activity? How did that freedom compare with the freedom you have in your life?
- Share that people in many countries around the world deal with challenges like the characters in the Crossroads of the World activity. They have limited freedom, face violence and oppression, must help support their families rather than go to school, and lack access to food, water, medical care, sufficient shelter and other basic necessities.
- Explain that the societies people live in often affect the choices they make.
- Share that during your trip, as you become more familiar with the realities facing your host community, you will take time to do social analysis and ask why people are living in such conditions.
- Take time to provide demographic data about the country you will visit, and be sure to note some of the social justice issues that affect the people living there.
(**Note:** You could also use this time to invite someone from the host community, or a CRS representative, to phone or hold a video call with your group.)

social justice issues facing host country/community (45 minutes)

INTRODUCTION

- Explain that poverty has many causes.
- Many people have limited freedom, face violence and oppression, are forced to help support their families rather than go to school, and lack access to food, water, medical care, sufficient shelter and other basic necessities.
- Explain that the societies people live in often affect the choices they make.
- Share that during your trip, as you become more familiar with the realities facing your host community, you will take time to do social analysis—and to ask why people are living in such conditions.



Photo by Sam Tarling for CRS

DISCUSSION

- Invite participants to review the Global Poverty Overview in their manuals, along with demographic data about your country. (**Note:** You could also use this time to invite someone from the host community, or a CRS representative, to phone or hold a video call with your group.)
 - Reflection questions:
 - What surprised or challenged you?
 - What are some of the underlying causes of poverty facing the country we are visiting?
 - What questions did this information raise for you? What would you like to learn more about?
 - How did you understand CRS' integral human development approach—and why do you think it might be successful?

called to solidarity (30 minutes)

INTRODUCTION

- Share that part of the reason communities of faith take immersion trips is because we believe that the suffering of others deeply affects us.
- Explain that the Catholic Church has developed a body of teaching, called Catholic social teaching, that outlines how we live our faith in the world. One of the themes of Catholic social teaching is solidarity, or that “we are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world.” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching)
- Explain that we are a part of the Body of Christ and can't live disconnected from people who suffer.
- Say that this trip will remind us that our call to solidarity is not just about the time that we are away, but about how we live our faith, even during times when we are not directly encountering the reality of the suffering of those around the world on a daily basis.

REFLECTION

- Ask participants to review the “What is Solidarity?” page in their participant manuals.
- Invite them to reflect on what solidarity means and develop their own definition. Encourage them to be creative.
- If time allows, invite them to share their definitions.

housekeeping, logistics and final announcements (15 minutes)

- Announce your next meeting date, time and other necessary information.
- Share the final flight arrangements.
- Discuss the packing list.
- Review your in-country itinerary, if applicable.

closing prayer (5 minutes)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...

Heavenly Father,

*Help us live our faith by serving our brothers and sisters
around the world who are tested and troubled by life's
cruellest circumstances.*

*Grant us the will and means to feed, clothe, shelter,
heal and comfort those who suffer immensely.*

*Through your many blessings may we share and receive
hope and love in abundance.*

Amen

Close by singing or listening to the song “We Are One Body”

WHAT IS **solidarity**?

"[Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all."

Saint John Paul II, "Sollicitudo Rei Socialis," No. 38

"If one member of Christ's body suffers, all suffer. If one member is honored, all rejoice."

1 Corinthians 12:12-26

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

Matthew 25:35-40

"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

Solidarity in your own words

Create your own definition of solidarity in 30 words or fewer.

"The solidarity which binds all [people] together as members of a common family makes it impossible for wealthy nations to look with indifference upon the hunger, misery and poverty of other nations whose citizens are unable to enjoy even elementary human rights. The nations of the world are becoming more and more dependent on one another and it will not be possible to preserve a lasting peace so long as glaring economic and social imbalances persist."

Saint John XXIII, "Mater et Magistra," No. 157

"Who is responsible for the blood of these brothers and sisters of ours? Nobody! That is our answer: It isn't me; I don't have anything to do with it; it must be someone else, but certainly not me. Yet God is asking each of us: 'Where is the blood of your brother which cries out to me?' Today no one in our world feels responsible; we have lost a sense of responsibility for our brothers and sisters. We have fallen into the hypocrisy of the priest and the Levite whom Jesus described in the parable of the Good Samaritan: we see our brother half dead on the side of the road, and perhaps we say to ourselves: 'poor soul ... !' and then go on our way. It's not our responsibility, and with that we feel reassured, assuaged."

Visit to Lampedusa, Homily of Holy Father Pope Francis, July 8, 2013

global poverty OVERVIEW

ACCORDING TO THE WORLD BANK, IN 2011, 2.2 BILLION PEOPLE LIVED ON LESS THAN \$2 A DAY. The number had decreased only slightly in 30 years: it was 2.59 billion in 1981. In some countries, there is also a widening gap between rich and poor, leading to even greater disparity between those who can and cannot access good schools, health care, safe water, electricity and other critical services. Natural disasters, economic shocks (such as the Great Recession), climate change and lack of food undermine progress.

CAUSES OF POVERTY

There are many underlying causes of poverty. Climate change, for example, is expected to hit developing countries the hardest. Higher temperatures and changes in precipitation patterns will lead to rising sea levels and more frequent weather-related disasters, posing risks for agriculture, food and water supplies. Natural disasters push already vulnerable people into poverty and make the poor even poorer. The world needs to produce at least 50 percent more food to feed a projected 9 billion people by 2050. But climate change could cut crop yields by more than 25 percent. Poverty is also linked to violence. Many places affected by poverty are either on the edge of or recovering from

violent conflict or war. Thus, addressing poverty also involves understanding and addressing the underlying causes of war, and seeking reconciliation in societies divided by race, ethnic origin or economic opportunity.

Disparity in economic opportunity—based on race, ethnic origin, social class or gender—is another cause of poverty. Economic opportunity ensures adequate livelihoods so that education, health care and basic necessities like food and shelter are available to all. Creating economic opportunity includes raising wages, increasing access to quality education and providing training in the skills needed for today's job market.

RESPONSES TO POVERTY

Poverty is a complex problem that must be addressed at all levels. CRS carries out the commitment of the bishops of the United States to assist the poor and vulnerable overseas. We seek to promote human development by responding to major emergencies, fighting disease and poverty, and nurturing peaceful and just societies. CRS also strives to support and strengthen the work of Catholic overseas service and volunteer programs, with a goal to work collaboratively and reduce the number of poor and vulnerable worldwide.

CRS has developed a framework, integral human development, or IHD, which is based in Catholic teaching and designed to address poverty holistically. It promotes the good of every person and the whole person—cultural, economic, social, political and spiritual. The basic approach is to build resilience among poor and vulnerable people so they are less vulnerable to crises, to improve livelihoods so families can become self-sustaining, and to work to mitigate the effects of climate change and natural disasters. This can only happen when people work collaboratively across all sectors of civil society. IHD is a poverty-alleviation strategy that works.

CRS responds to emergencies around the world—providing food, water, shelter and clothing to people in desperate need immediately following a disaster. CRS continues to support communities in the long run by improving livelihoods and strengthening civil society so communities can better respond to future disasters. From the very beginning of a disaster, CRS works with affected communities with the ultimate goal of moving from relief through reconstruction. CRS also helps communities worldwide prevent future disasters through peacebuilding and disaster preparation.

The work of solidarity is not limited to large organizations like CRS or the World Bank. As members of one human family, each of us is touched by the suffering of others and we long to respond. Traveling to a country deeply affected by poverty will bring these statistics and programs to life. Later reflections will encourage you to commit to building solidarity and working for the common good.

SOURCES

[Catholic Relief Services](#)

[The World Bank](http://www.worldbank.org) (worldbank.org)

"[Poverty Overview](#)"

"[Poverty Reduction in Practice: How and Where We Work](#)"

"[Food Security Overview](#)"

Lamberty, Kim, "[The Art of Accompaniment](#)," *Missiology: An International Review* (2014).

sent on mission



Photo by Jim Stipe/CRS

OBJECTIVES

- Think collectively about your objectives for the trip.
- Participate in a commissioning ritual as you prepare for your trip.
- Spend time in fellowship over a shared meal.

MATERIALS

- Bible opened to Matthew 19:16–30
- Crosses (or a symbolic item from the country you are visiting) for each participant to use in the commissioning
- Flip chart paper
- Items needed for a shared meal
- Markers
- Music and lyrics or audio file of “Walk Together Children” (ValLimar Jansen and Frank Jansen, Spirit & Song)
- Music player
- Participant manuals
- Pens
- Sign-up sheet for volunteers to lead a prayer on one or more nights of your trip

PREPARATION

- Make any arrangements needed for the shared meal. If you are having a potluck meal, ask participants in advance to bring different parts of the meal. If you are going to a restaurant, make sure participants know in advance the reservation, cost and payment details.
- Purchase crosses (or other symbolic item) for the commissioning in advance. You might consider purchasing items from CRS' fair trade partner SERRV. Go to serrv.org/crs and search for "gifts of faith"
- Ask four readers to read the opening prayer.
- Prepare someone to lead the song or cue "Walk Together Children."
- Write expectations and tips for a successful journey on the flip chart. (See the session outline for details.)
- Prepare a prayer space for the commissioning prayer, including a Bible and the crosses or symbolic items for the commissioning.
- Ask a reader to read Matthew 19:16-30.
- Invite a participant to lead a prayer before the meal.
Note: Consider inviting participants' families and friends to the commissioning or have the commissioning in front of a parish or other community you belong to. Or, see if you can receive a blessing in front of the community before the end of a Mass.

SESSION OVERVIEW

- Welcome and introduction (10 minutes)
- Opening prayer (5 minutes)
- Setting a group vision (15 minutes)
- Anticipating the journey (20 minutes)
- Trip expectations (10 minutes)
- Housekeeping, logistics and final announcements (5 minutes)
- Commissioning (10 minutes)
- Shared meal (45 minutes)

welcome and introduction (10 minutes)

- Welcome participants.
- Invite them to share any news since you last met.
- Explain that the purpose of today's meeting is to think collectively about objectives for the trip, to be commissioned for the journey and to spend time in fellowship.

opening prayer (5 minutes)

Invite participants to turn to the prayer section of the participant manual and to pray together, "Seeing Lazarus."

LEADER

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...

Christ Jesus,

As we reflect on with the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-25), may your words echo in our own lives.

READER ONE

There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day.

Lord, help us remember our relative riches compared with many around the world. We are grateful for the opportunity to take this trip, which is a privilege that many people will never have.

READER TWO

And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores.

Help us to not only recognize Lazarus lying on our doorstep, but to not be afraid to look at, hold and befriend him—especially when it is inconvenient or uncomfortable.

READER THREE

When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

May we remember that the poor have a special place in your dwelling place, and that we will be judged at the end of our lives by how we treat the poorest and most vulnerable people.

READER FOUR

And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.' Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented.

Generous God, you offered the rich man the chance to care for Lazarus—a chance for salvation and for the Rich Man's own healing and freedom. We ask that you help us always be mindful of what the poor offer us instead of focusing only on what we can give.

LEADER

We ask all of this in Jesus' name.

Amen

Close by singing or listening to "Walk Together Children."

setting a group vision (15 minutes)

INTRODUCTION

- Share that you are taking this trip as a community. Each person is taking the journey with their own hopes and goal in mind—but these also shape the group's hopes.
- Explain that this exercise will allow the group to share their own hopes for the journey and agree on a group vision for the trip.

REFLECTION

- Ask the group to silently call to mind their hopes for the upcoming journey. (Encourage them to look back at the "Why are you here?" reflection in their participant manuals from session one.)

DISCUSSION

- Ask participants to share their hopes with the group. Take notes on the flip chart paper.
- After everyone has shared, begin as a group to combine similar themes. Narrow these to 2 to 3 points.
- Explain that these will create your group's vision. Once the group has determined their group vision, remind them that it will help guide them throughout the journey. Invite them to write the vision in their participant manuals.
- Share that to fulfill the group vision, all participants will need to take an active part in the journey. Each person (or maybe more than one, depending on the size of your group) will be invited to lead a prayer to open your nightly reflections during the trip. Pass around the sign-up sheet. (Alternative: Consider having people sign up to prepare a prayer that corresponds to the theme of each daily reflection. See the daily reflections in the "Immersion" section for themes.)



Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS

anticipating the journey (20 minutes)

INTRODUCTION

- This is a chance for participants to share sources of anxiety and support before the trip.
- Discussing participants' anxieties may help you better understand where participants are coming from and help them realize that others may also be nervous about the trip.

REFLECTION

- Direct participants to the "Group Vision" page in their participant manuals and give them a few moments to reflect on these two questions:
 - Is there anything about this trip that you're anxious or unsure about? If so, what?
 - Who or what do you think will be a source of support for you on this journey?

DISCUSSION

- After participants have had a few minutes to reflect on these questions, give them 5-10 minutes to discuss their answers in groups of two to three.
- Ask participants to share their answers with the larger group. Write their responses on the flip chart as a reminder that participants have similar concerns.
- Try to address their anxieties by providing information about the trip that can help diminish their nervousness.

trip expectations (10 minutes)

- Take some time to provide the group with your expectations, including ground rules.
- Please see a sample list of expectations and tips below. These are only suggestions and *not an exhaustive list*. Please edit them so they are appropriate for your group. In addition to the list of suggested expectations below, consider:
 - Providing information on photography policies (check with the host community about their policy ahead of time.)
 - Providing the participants with your policy on electronics (phone, iPads, etc.)
 - Helping participants prepare to encounter people asking for money. Emphasize that for safety reasons, participants should not give money to beggars or unintentionally flaunt their money. If participants would like to give a gift to the host community, make sure to consult your hosts before doing so.
- Share expectations with participants. Ask them if there are any other expectations they think should be added to the list.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Stay open to the Spirit.
2. Seek Christ in all the people you meet.
3. Be aware of the itinerary at all times.
4. Participate in all activities.
5. Respect all ideas and group input.
6. Be mindful of and open to cultural lessons.
7. Be flexible.
8. Stay with the group.
9. Participate fully in group reflection and prayer every day.
10. Be on time.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL AND HEALTHY JOURNEY

DO

- Ask questions
- Listen
- Learn a lot
- Drink bottled water only
- Tell a group leader if you get sick
- Have fun

DON'T

- Eat from street vendors
- Give money to beggars
- Drink tap water (including ice) or use it to brush your teeth
- Eat salad, fruit or veggies that aren't cooked or can't be peeled

housekeeping, logistics and final announcements (5 minutes)

- Go over additional logistical information.
- Field questions about packing, departure information, etc.

commissioning (10 minutes)

LEADER

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...

We entrust ourselves to the hands of the Lord, no matter where he calls us. We pray that we will recognize God's goodness in the hospitality we receive, that we will bring the Good News to all we meet and be ready to receive it, that we will be courteous toward all, and that we will greet the poor and afflicted with kindness and love.

As we prepare to take this journey, let us listen together to a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

READER ONE

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

Now someone approached him and said, "Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?" He answered him, "Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." He asked him, "Which ones?" And Jesus replied,

"You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

The young man said to him, "All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to [the] poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Amen, I say to you, it will be hard for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and said, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings this is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

Then Peter said to him in reply, "We have given up everything and followed you. What will there be for us?" Jesus said to them, "Amen, I say to you that you who have followed me, in the new age, when the Son of Man is seated on his throne of glory, will yourselves sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life.

But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

LEADER

Lord, the young man said he had observed all the commandments and asked, “What do I still lack?” As we prepare to embark on our journey, help us embrace your invitation to be open to doing what we still lack. You told the young man to abandon all he had to follow you. But the young man was unable to take the extra step. We pray that you give us the courage to be free of all the comfort we cling to. Transform us and help us give ourselves over to you—and in the service of others—more freely. Amen

DISTRIBUTION OF CROSSES

These crosses [or other symbolic objects] are a sign of our commitment to following Christ on the journey of discipleship and our commitment to enter as fully as we can into relationship with each other and those we meet.

Invite participants forward to receive a cross (or symbolic object).

LEADER

May the Lord remain constantly at our side and in his mercy guide our journey in ways that are pleasing to him.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

shared meal (45 minutes)

- Enjoy a meal together. Invite a participant to lead a prayer before the meal.



Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS

GROUP **vision**

■ Is there anything about this trip that you're anxious or unsure about? If so, what?

■ Who or what do you think will be a source of support for you on this journey?

IMMERSION

tips for reflection during the trip

This manual includes 7 sample reflections that can be used in any order during your trip, a 45-minute session about storytelling—and a commissioning service—for the last evening of your trip, preparing participants for their return. Each of the 7 reflections is based on a different theme and is structured to include:

- An opening prayer provided and led by a trip participant
- A daily ritual inspired by the Ignatian model of “Examen,” which invites participants to quietly reflect back through their day
- A reading from Scripture or the Christian tradition
- Questions for discussion
- Closing prayer

Choose the reflections most relevant for your group’s experience. Note that these are also included in the participant manual.

Taking time each day for prayer and reflection is an important part of any immersion trip. Yet it can often be a struggle because the group is tired, the schedule precludes it or other activities take priority. In light of these practical obstacles, here are some tips that you may find helpful to ensure that daily reflection becomes an integral part of the experience:

- Let the group know before the trip that reflection each night is an essential—and not optional—part of the experience.
- Before you take your trip, invite each participant to sign up to bring and lead an opening prayer for a particular day. (*Note: Opening prayers are not included in the daily reflections and should also be provided and led by trip participants.*)
- Start strong: Begin reflections on the first night of your trip, even if it was only a travel day (consider the “Accompaniment” reflection), to set the tone and begin a routine.
- Work with your host or your trip’s onsite coordinator to ensure that the schedule includes time for reflection at the end of each day. If your group tends to turn in early or is tired by the end of the day, try to fit the reflection in before dinner.
- Be flexible! If time appears to be getting away from you, have reflection on the bus or over dinner. You could ask, simply, “What are you most grateful for?” and “What experience surprised or challenged you and why?”
- Keep in mind that each reflection is intended to take shape within the context of your service or immersion experience and the particular makeup of your group. Try to choose the reflection that best fits your activities for a given day or where your group is emotionally and spiritually. Make changes as necessary to meet the needs of your group.
- If extenuating circumstances prevent reflections on one or two evenings, try to spend time together in the morning before leaving for the day.

SEEKING GOD IN THE POOR

opening prayer

Provided and led by a trip participant.

reflect back on the day silently by first contemplating these questions, and then sharing:

- 1 What specific experience are you grateful for?
- 1 What experience surprised or challenged you, and why?

reading

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta invites us to seek God in everything and everyone all the time: "Seeking the face of God in everything, everyone, all the time, and his hand in every happening; this is what it means to be contemplative in the heart of the world. Seeing and adoring the presence of Jesus, especially in the lowly appearance of bread, and in the distressing disguise of the poor." (Mother Teresa of Calcutta, *In the Heart of the World: Thoughts, Stories and Prayers*)

Reverend Matt Malone, SJ, the editor of *America: The National Catholic Review*, reflected in a column: "People will tell me, for example: 'I find God in all things. Like in nature. I find God in the sunset.' Well, that is a beautiful thought, and I find God there too. The truth though is that just about anybody can find God in a sunset. It's not that hard. You want hard? Try finding God in an execution, or in cancer, or in AIDS, or war. Now that's hard. You want to find God in nature? Try finding God in a tsunami or a crop failure. That's hard."

Take a moment to silently reflect on the reading and the questions below.

discuss together

- 1 In what people, places and situations have you found it easy to find God today?
- 1 How does Father Malone's quote resonate with or challenge you? When or where have you found it difficult to find God today? Why?
- 1 What do you think it means to see Jesus in the "distressing disguise of the poor"? Have you experienced this at all on your trip? If so, when?
- 1 Where might you be called to seek God in your everyday life back home?

closing prayer

*God who is always with us,
We pray that we will seek your face in all good things:
in the people we love
in the beauty of creation
in daily surprises that fill us with joy.
And may we seek you even more when you are harder to find—
in the devastation of war or disaster
in broken homes and communities
in the distressing disguise of the poor.
We ask that you make us contemplatives in the heart of the world:
in the heart of all beauty, and in the heart of all suffering. Amen*

ACCOMPANIMENT

opening prayer

Provided and led by a trip participant.

reflect on the day silently by contemplating these questions, and then share responses:

- What specific experience are you grateful for?
- What experience surprised or challenged you, and why?

reading

"As they continued their journey [Jesus] entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary [who] sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me.' The Lord said to her in reply, 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.'" (Luke 10:38-42)

Take a moment to silently reflect on the reading and the questions below.

for discussion

- Think of moments today when you felt like you weren't accomplishing anything or felt unable to help. How did you feel in those moments? Why do you think you felt that way?
- Do you feel more comfortable when you are doing something (like building a house) or spending time being with people (like talking or playing)? Why?
- What do you think it means that "Mary has chosen the better part"? What might Jesus' words mean for you on this trip?

closing prayer

Christ Jesus,

We pray that you help us be present to you

by being present to others

especially those who are most in need.

In moments when we want to feel useful

when we can't accept that being with is doing enough

when we're anxious and worried about many things –

Help us remember

there is only need of one thing;

to love you

as we love each other.

In your name we pray.

Amen

ENCOUNTER WITH OTHERS

opening prayer

Provided and led by a trip participant.

reflect on the day silently by contemplating these questions, and then share responses:

- What specific experience are you grateful for?
- What experience surprised or challenged you, and why?

reading

"The Church must step outside herself. To go where? To the outskirts of existence, whatever they may be, but she must step out. Jesus tells us: 'Go into all the world! Go! Preach! Bear witness to the Gospel!' (cf. Mk 16:15) ... In this 'stepping out' it is important to be ready for encounter. For me this word is very important. Encounter with others. Why? Because faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others ... with our faith we must create a 'culture of encounter,' a culture of friendship, a culture in which we find brothers and sisters, in which we can also speak with those who think differently, as well as those who hold other beliefs, who do not have the same faith. They all have something in common with us: they are images of God, they are children of God. Going out to meet everyone, without losing sight of our own position." (Pope Francis, Address of the Holy Father on the Vigil of Pentecost with Ecclesial Movements, May 18, 2013)

Take a moment to silently reflect on the reading and the questions below.

for discussion

- Who did you encounter today? Share a little bit about them.
- Were you at all hesitant to encounter others? If so, why? Did you overcome this?
- What obstacles to living a culture of encounter did you notice in this community? What obstacles exist in your own home community? Why do you think such obstacles exist?
- What do you think Pope Francis means by building a "culture of encounter"? And what does this have to do with our faith?
- How do you see yourself building a culture of encounter in your own community?

closing prayer

Loving God,

You invite us to go out to all the world—and in so doing to be ready for encounter with others in every moment.

We remember all those who we encountered today and we offer a prayer for them now:

Share the name of someone you encountered today and offer a prayer for him/her.

We offer all these prayers and those we hold in our hearts. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

MERCY

opening prayer

Provided and led by a trip participant.

reflect on the day silently by contemplating these questions, and then share responses:

- » What specific experience are you grateful for?
- » What experience surprised or challenged you, and why?

reading

"[A scholar of the law] said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Jesus replied, 'A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.'" Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?' He answered, 'The one who treated him with mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'" (Luke 10:29-37)

Take a moment to silently reflect on the reading and the questions below.

for discussion

- » Based on the parable of the Good Samaritan, what do you think mercy means?
- » When is it most difficult for you to show mercy in this sense? How might God be calling you to step out of your comfort zone on this trip to show mercy?
- » How did you see someone in the community you visited or in your group of travel companions perform a work of mercy today?

closing prayer

Merciful God,

We pray the words of Pope Francis:

"Let us be renewed by God's mercy ... and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish."

(Holy Father Pope Francis, Message for Easter Sunday, 2013)

We pause now in a moment of silence to reflect on how you are inviting us, O Lord, to be agents of your mercy while we're on this trip and beyond.

Pause for a moment of silent prayer.

In your name we pray.

Amen

SOLIDARITY

opening prayer

Provided and led by a trip participant.

reflect on the day silently by contemplating these questions, and then share responses:

- ✦ What specific experience are you grateful for?
- ✦ What experience surprised or challenged you, and why?

reading

"[Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all." (Saint John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 38)

Take a moment to silently reflect on the reading and the questions below.

for discussion

- ✦ How did you experience solidarity today?
- ✦ How is being in solidarity with someone different from being the same as them? How can you be in solidarity with people whose experience you will never truly share?
- ✦ Review the definition of solidarity you wrote before you left. Rewrite it based on your experience so far. How is your definition different? Why is it different?
- ✦ Do you think it's possible to live in solidarity with people you may never meet or may meet once but never see again? If so, how?

closing prayer

Loving God,

Turn my eyes to the other, that I may see each as you see me—with dignity that transcends appearances, circumstances, class, and all earthly status.

Turn my ears to the other, that I may hear their voice as you hear mine—with compassion, presence and tenderness in the midst of suffering.

Turn my mind to the other, that I may come to understand them as you understand me—struggling to find meaning in a world that's fragmented, and your light in a world that's dimmed.

Turn my feet to the other, that I may approach them across the gaps that divide us—gaps too often widened by illusions of family, tribe, creed, race ... even otherness itself.

Turn my hands to the other, that I may serve them as you serve me—with a humble touch that cleanses, that heals, that feeds, and that reassures.

Turn my heart to the other, that I may love them as you love me—steadfast, forgiving, ever merciful, with patience, seeing my joy in theirs.

Turn my life to the other, that I may live in solidarity with them, and thus with you, forever.

Amen

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

opening prayer

Provided and led by a trip participant.

reflect on the day silently by contemplating these questions, and then share responses:

- What specific experience are you grateful for?
- What experience surprised or challenged you, and why?

reading

"There was a time when our grandparents were very careful not to throw away any left over food. Consumerism has induced us to be accustomed to excess and to the daily waste of food, whose value, which goes far beyond mere financial parameters, we are no longer able to judge correctly. Let us remember well, however, that whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor, from the hungry! I ask everyone to reflect on the problem of the loss and waste of food, to identify ways and approaches which, by seriously dealing with this problem, convey solidarity and sharing with the underprivileged." (Pope Francis, General Audience, June 5, 2013)

Take a moment to silently reflect on the reading and the questions below.

for discussion

- How have your eating habits on this trip been different from what you're used to? What have you enjoyed and what has been challenging?
- How are people you've met directly affected by, or dependent on, creation?
- How does this experience invite you to evaluate your own relationship with creation? What created things do you take for granted?

closing prayer

*God of all living things,
On the third day, you brought forth vegetation:
Every plant that bears seed
Every tree that bears fruit.
You saw that it was good
And it pleased you.
Make us worthy of this earth:
in what we sow and what we reap,
in what we plant and what we prune.
So that when that last harvest comes,
When we are called to stand before you,
It may once more be said of this people: "He saw that it was good."
Amen*

JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE

opening prayer

Provided and led by a trip participant.

reflect on the day silently by contemplating these questions, and then share responses:

- What specific experience are you grateful for?
- What experience surprised or challenged you, and why?

reading

“The great need today is for Christians who are active and critical, who don’t accept situations without analyzing them inwardly and deeply. We no longer want masses of people like those who have been trifled with for so long. We want persons like fruitful fig trees, who can say yes to justice and no to injustice and can make use of the precious gift of life, regardless of the circumstances.” (Blessed Oscar Romero, March 9, 1980)

Take a moment to silently reflect on the reading and the questions below.

for discussion

- How do the people you have met “say yes to justice and no to injustice”?
- Blessed Oscar Romero challenges us to ask questions that analyze why situations of injustice are the way they are. What questions do you have about the situations of poverty you’ve glimpsed?
- Which witnesses of faith inspire you to be an active and critical Christian?
- How can you say “no” to injustice within your own community?

closing prayer

Christ Jesus,

*We ask that like Blessed Oscar Romero we will not be afraid to risk
all that we have to follow you,
to stand with the poor and oppressed.*

*May you grant us the same courage you gave Blessed Oscar Romero:
That we will feel what we are afraid to feel*

*That we will not be overwhelmed by all that needs to be done—
but that we will follow you,*

*And trust that you will walk with us on our journey of discipleship,
wherever it may lead.*

May our walk be one of true solidarity

As Blessed Oscar Romero’s was,

And in life and death

May we bear much fruit.

Amen

preparing to return: sharing your experience

Carve out time on the last day of your trip (and before your final commissioning prayer) to help participants begin thinking about how they will share their stories once they return.

introduction

- Explain that sometimes it's difficult to process an experience that is so different from our norm that we don't know how to talk about or integrate it into our daily lives.
- Share that part of our task is to figure out how to share this experience with others and make sense of what it means for our own lives.
- Explain that one way to live in solidarity with others is by sharing their stories in a way that honors their dignity.
- Review the "tips for sharing your story" and ask if anyone else has any to add.
- Tips for sharing your story:
 - Pick 1-2 of your favorite stories or encounters from the trip.
 - Don't try to share every detail about your experience. It can be hard for others to fully understand your experience since they were not physically present. Sometimes they may even tune you out.
 - Be descriptive (explain who you met, what you saw, smelled, touched, etc.)
 - Explain why this particular encounter or story is important to you.

Add other tips.

reflection

- Give participants 5-10 minutes to reflect on a powerful moment of their trip and how they might recount it to someone else in 3 minutes or less. Invite them to choose the experience and then think about:
 - What happened: who, what, where, when, how
 - What it meant to them or what they learned from it

activity

- Ask participants to practice sharing their stories with each other.
- Invite them to partner up (you can participate if there is an odd number of people) and to take no more than 3 minutes to share their stories.
- After one person shares a story, the listener will have 30 seconds to repeat what was most compelling or interesting. (The listener should not comment during the story telling.) Have the partners switch roles. Repeat the activity until all participants have shared and listened.

commissioning

Note: The participant manuals do not include a copy of the commissioning.

materials

Items to create a prayer space: candle, Bible, cloth, flowers, symbols from the community you visited, etc.

opening prayer

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...

A reading from the Gospel of Luke:

"There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham.

The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.'

Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.'

He said, 'Then I beg you, father, send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.' But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.' He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'" (Luke 16: 19–31)

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: Take a moment to share a word, phrase or insight from this passage after the experience of this week. What does it mean to you now?

Allow participants to share responses.

Leader: The Lazarus story reminds us that Lazarus was in need of healing—in the form of food and attention—but he was also a healer. His presence alone was healing: It manifested the injustice that existed in society and provided the rich man a lens to reflect on his own contribution to this injustice and to change his life.

This week, we have had the opportunity to encounter people and communities that overflow with grace and giftedness. When we set out to take this trip, we may have thought that we came to help or fix. But the experience of this week helps us recognize what the rich man couldn't: that the poor have much to offer us, and that we, too, are in need of help and healing.

We will now reflect on what this reading means for our own lives as we prepare to return home.

Invite each person to consider the questions:

- What gift did you receive from a person or community you visited this week?
- What is one specific way God is calling you to change your life when you return home?

For the first question, invite each person to think of a gesture that symbolizes the gift they received. For example, if someone received the gift of living in the present moment, they might touch their watch. Give people a few moments to think of their gesture and about their answer to the second question (no gesture needed). Then, begin the reflection.

closing prayer

Leader: *Invite all to stand.*

Loving God,

Help us to recognize this trip as the beginning, and not the end, of a journey. We pray that we will carry the names and stories of the people we met and the memories we shared together with us forever and that we will always remember the gifts of this week. We pray in thanksgiving now for the gifts we received.

Invite people to go around and repeat the gift they received and the corresponding gesture.

We ask God to give us courage and grace so we may leave this trip committed to stand with the poor, reach out to the oppressed and embrace those cast aside by society. And so as Christ's disciples, we call upon the saints and holy ones who have gone before us on this path of justice. May they be in solidarity with us today as we prepare for the next stage of our journey.

To these invocations, we respond: "presente." "Presente" has historically been used in Latin America to pray for those who were killed or lost their lives in the pursuit of justice. Today we will say "presente" during a litany of saints and ask the holy men and women who have gone before us to pray for us. We will also say "presente" as we share the names of those we met this week and pray that they will continue to be present in our hearts and minds as we leave this place and return to our home communities.

St. Lawrence of Rome, who declared the poor, the sick, the widow and the orphan to be the true treasure of the Church, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, who looked upon a world of exploitation and indifference and rejected it, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

St. Damien of Molokai, whose solidarity with the leper ran so deep that he ultimately lived and died as one of them, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

St. Frances Cabrini, who tenderly loved the forgotten immigrant, reaching out as a mother from the slums of New York to the dark mines of Colorado, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

St. Maximilian Kolbe, who protected our Jewish brothers and sisters during World War II and died in a concentration camp so they might live, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, who drove her sisters to comfort and affirm the dignity of those cast aside, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

Dorothy Day, servant of God, who challenged society to reach out to the stranger, to offer the best seat at the table to the poor and broken, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

Archbishop Oscar Romero, and those in El Salvador who spoke out against the atrocities visited upon the poor of El Salvador and upon the body of Christ, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

And those people who we met this week, whose stories we will carry home with us:

(Allow participants to share the name of someone they met, and invite everyone else to respond, "presente.")

All of us gathered here, who have experienced this trip together, that we will hold each other accountable to all we have seen and heard, we call on each other in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

Invite people to offer one another a sign of peace.

POST-IMMERSION

what now?

OBJECTIVES

- Help participants integrate their service immersion experience into their daily lives by:
 - Providing formation about charity and social justice to give them a framework they can use for reflection and to make change.
 - Brainstorming practical ways they can live in solidarity with people around the world through the choices they make now that they are back at home.

MATERIALS

- Bible opened to Mark 6:7-11
- Flip chart paper
- Internet access
- Items for a prayer space: cloth, candle, cross, etc.
- Laptop and projector
- Marker
- Music player
- Participant manuals
- Reflective music
- Sheet of paper
- Small table
- Sticky notes
- Videos:
 - [“CRS Fair Trade: Be a Fan!”](#) video from CRS’ YouTube channel
 - [“CCGP: This Is What Solidarity Looks Like”](#) video from CRS’ YouTube channel
 - Optional, for college/university groups: [“Become a CRS Student Ambassador”](#) video from CRS’ YouTube channel

PREPARATION

This session includes an overview of charity and social justice as the “Two Feet of Love in Action.” If you are not familiar with this framework or would like to brush up on it, visit usccb.org and search for “Two Feet of Love in Action.”

- Invite participants ahead of time to bring a symbol of their experience on the trip. It could be a photo, an object or even a word written on a slip of paper.
- Set up a table for the prayer space with a cloth, candle, etc.
- Divide the flip chart into two columns labeled “Charity” and “Social Justice.”

- Test the video links and make sure the audiovisual equipment works.
- Cue reflective music.
- Prepare a list of prayer partners. (If you have an odd number, make one group of three.)
- Invite two readers to read Mark 6:7-11 for the closing prayer.

Note to facilitator: *This session is designed to help participants think about how they can live in solidarity with people in need overseas after returning home. It focuses on fair trade and legislative advocacy as two key ways participants can make a difference in the lives of people around the world through daily decision making. To learn more about CRS' work with fair trade and legislative advocacy in preparation for this meeting, visit crsfairtrade.org and confrontglobalpoverty.org. CRS also provides networks for colleges, high schools and parishes to practice global solidarity. These networks train and equip participants to be lifelong leaders and advocates for the poor. Before this session begins, peruse the information and websites below and consider how participants from your service immersion trip can, as members of a particular institution, collaborate with CRS in our global humanitarian work.*

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS: Motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the CRS Global High School program provides opportunities for Catholic secondary schools to join CRS in educating students about Catholic social teaching and advocate for solidarity with the global poor. ghs.crs.org

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: CRS University engages students, faculty and staff in acts of solidarity to build a more just and peaceful world. The CRS Student Ambassador program engages chapters of CRS Student Ambassadors in mobilizing their campus communities to act on global emergencies and injustices. university.crs.org

PARISHES: CRS Parish Ambassadors are active parishioners with a passion for global solidarity. They inspire their parish to become global disciples and respond to concerns facing our most vulnerable brothers and sisters around the world. crs.org/parishambassador

SESSION OVERVIEW

- Welcome (15 minutes)
- Opening prayer (5 minutes)
- What now? (30 minutes)
- Solidarity pledge (25 minutes)
- Housekeeping, logistics and final announcements (5 minutes)
- Closing prayer (10 minutes)

welcome (15 minutes)

- Welcome participants back.
- Invite them to share a symbol of their trip and why they chose it. Ask them to put their symbol on the table or prayer space.
- Share that this session will focus on beginning the real work of solidarity at home. Explain that you will reflect on what you can do in the United States to support people in need around the world.

opening prayer (5 minutes)

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...

Loving God,

*We pray in thanksgiving for all of our blessings.
And we thank you, especially, for the community
gathered and for everyone we met on our trip.*

*We ask that we will not allow the experience we had—
the stories of those we encountered and a deeper understanding
of the poverty that many people face—to fade with our memories
of the experience.*

*Transform us, so that we are forever changed by our experience,
and will bring it with us wherever we go.*

*Make us witnesses to your Gospel message to care for the poor
and oppressed. Fill us with the strength to be faithful to this
message even in the small things.*

We ask all this in Jesus' name.

Amen

what now? (30 minutes)

REFLECTION

- Explain that it can be difficult to process an experience that is so different from our norm: We don't know how to talk about it or integrate it into our daily life.
- Discuss together:
 - How has the return to your "normal" life been?
 - How have you shared your story? (You might ask here about the pros and cons of posting photos on social media if it doesn't come up naturally.)
 - What has been challenging about sharing your story with family and friends?

INTRODUCTION

- Share that many people return from international service immersion with a strong passion that eventually fades into a vague compassion. What can you do to keep the experience alive now that you're back? Some ideas:
 - Praying daily for those you met during your trip
 - Living more simply
 - Sharing your stories through a presentation at your parish, school or university
- Explain that as Catholics, we are invited to respond to those in need through charitable works and social justice. We call this the "Two Feet of Love in Action" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Two Feet of Love in Action.)
- Explain that one foot is charity and one foot, social justice. We need to walk on both feet to follow Christ on the journey of discipleship. **Charity** involves being in direct service to those in need. **Social justice** works to remove the root causes and address the structures that cause poverty.
- Invite people to voice general examples of living out charity and/or social justice.

DISCUSSION

- Explain that when you were on the trip, you practiced solidarity through charity. You spent time directly serving those in need.
- Discuss together and write responses to the following question on the "charitable works" side of the flip chart paper:
 - What are some ways you can continue to practice solidarity through charity?

SUGGESTIONS: CHARITABLE WORKS

- Connect to existing service opportunities in your community or explore new opportunities inspired by your experience on the trip.
- Share that Catholic Relief Services, the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States, serves poor and vulnerable people worldwide in more than 100 countries and does this in the name of Catholics in the United States. CRS offers a number of ways for Catholics in the United States to live their faith in solidarity with their brothers and sisters overseas:
 - Help lead (or launch) CRS Rice Bowl (crsricebowl.org) in your community to encourage people to pray, fast and give to those in need during Lent.
(Note: While 75 percent of Rice Bowl donations help people overseas, 25 percent of the money stays in your diocese, supporting local community efforts.)
 - Hold a Helping Hands food packing and hunger awareness event (helpinghands.crs.org).
 - Support a CRS faithACTS project overseas (faithacts.crs.org). You can choose a specific project to pray for, support and get updates about.

- Say that you also have the opportunity as Catholics in the United States to make a difference through social justice.
- Discuss together and write responses to the following question on the “social justice” side of the flip chart:
 - What are some ways you can continue to be in solidarity with those in need overseas through working for social justice?

SUGGESTIONS: WORKING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Consider how working to change local structures and systems, like working for immigration reform, can have global impact.
- Add “fair trade” and “legislative advocacy” to the “social justice” side of the flip chart.
- Share that participants have power as consumers and citizens to directly impact people’s lives overseas.
- Explain that fair trade and legislative advocacy are two ways you can continue to work for social justice in solidarity with those you encountered.

FAIR TRADE

- Share that what you buy has a direct impact on people around the world. Invite participants to think about people you met who had difficulty finding work or who were not paid well. Explain that fair trade is a relationship between consumers, and farmers and artisans. The goal of fair trade is ensuring that farmers and artisans receive a fair wage and work in safe conditions.
- Show the video: [“CRS Fair Trade: Be a Fan!”](#)
- Invite participants to act on what they learned from their trip by buying fair trade. Explain that fair trade includes items people consume daily—like coffee, tea and olive oil—as well as crafts and home goods suitable for gifts. Invite them to consider making a larger impact by asking those in authority at their school, parish or university to commit to using fair trade products whenever possible.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

- Explain that participants can practice social justice through legislative advocacy. Our policies can have a huge impact on the poor overseas. Through advocacy, we can ask our legislators to support policies that help the poor with sustainable solutions.
- Explain that CRS and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have a joint action network called Catholics Confront Global Poverty, or CCGP. CCGP represents the official voice of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States on policy issues related to improving the lives of the poor and vulnerable worldwide.
- Show the video: [“CCGP: This is What Solidarity Looks Like”](#)
- Note that updated information is available on the CCGP website, confrontglobalpoverty.org.

- Explain that through CCGP, you can also get text updates about how you can advocate for the poor overseas on current and emerging issues. Invite people to sign up for these action alerts by texting “CCGP” to 30644. They will get a text response asking for their email address and ZIP code. This information will help CCGP identify their congressional representatives and those who are connected to key issues.
- Share information (see Preparation section) about how organizations like colleges, universities and Catholic high schools, as well as students and parishioners, can live in global solidarity with others.

If you are working with a college or university group, show the video “[Become a CRS Student Ambassador](#)” and encourage students to visit [university.crs.org/students](#) to sign up.

solidarity pledge (25 minutes)

INTRODUCTION

- Reiterate that we can continue to live in solidarity with those we met on our trip—and people in need overseas who we will never meet—by performing acts of charity and working for social justice.
- Give participants a few minutes to make a solidarity pledge to do something specific between now and the time you meet again.

REFLECTION

- Give participants 15 minutes to think about the discussion you’ve had and the reflection questions in their participant manuals. Ask them to write their solidarity pledges in their participant manuals. Play reflective music.
- After participants have had a chance to reflect and write their solidarity pledges, bring the group back together.
- Explain that we are not on the journey alone, and that Christ, our community of faith and those gathered here will walk with us.
- Explain that everyone will have a prayer partner—someone to pray for and check in with between now and your next meeting—regarding their transition and progress with their solidarity pledge.
- Introduce participants to their prayer partners.
- Invite them to pair up and spend a few minutes sharing their solidarity pledges.
- Ask them to schedule to meet or talk by phone between now and your next meeting.

housekeeping, logistics and final announcements (5 minutes)

- Announce the date and time of your next session (2 to 3 months in the future.)
- Share other logistical information.

closing prayer (10 minutes)

- Give each person a sticky note. Ask them to write their solidarity commitment on it.
- Tell participants that you are sent on mission as Christ's disciples. As prayer partners, you will journey two by two, but you will also travel together, holding each other in prayer. You will close by reflecting on a Scripture passage describing how Jesus sends his disciples on mission, and you will have a moment to share how you will live out your mission in the coming months.
- Say that you'll reflect on the passage through "Lectio Divina." Explain that "Lectio Divina" is a Benedictine practice of meditating with Scripture. It typically includes reading a Scripture multiple times and reflecting with them in different ways. In your adapted version of "Lectio Divina," you will read and reflect on the Scripture passage twice.
- After the first reading of the Scripture, you will invite people to share a word or a phrase that resonates with them. There's no need to offer an explanation—they can simply share the word.
- After the passage is read a second time, you will invite them to offer a few words about how they plan to live as Christ's disciples in the coming months.
- Invite two people to read Mark 6:7-11.
- Begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- Signal a reader to read the passage the first time.
- After a period of silence, ask: What word or phrase resonates with you?
- Allow each person to share a word or phrase.
- Signal the second reader to read the passage a second time.
- After a period of silence, ask: How are you going to live out Christ's mission in the coming months? Ask participants to place their sticky on the table (prayer space) after they share.
- After everyone shares, close with a spontaneous prayer and the sign of the cross.

Note: Save the sticky notes on a piece of paper for your second follow-up session.

SOLIDARITY **pledge**

■ What are some of your gifts and talents? How do you think you can offer them for charity and social justice?

■ Which of the ideas mentioned do you feel most passionate about?

■ Based on these reflections, list a few actions you can take in the coming months to live in solidarity with the poor overseas:

SOME IDEAS:

AS A CONSUMER, you can make a difference by purchasing items that help workers in other countries earn fair wages. Buying fair trade items helps skilled artisans and farmers maintain their craft and improve their families' lives. CRS Fair Trade offers items you use on a regular basis—like coffee, tea and olive oil—and gifts for special occasions. crsfairtrade.org

THROUGH LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY, you can contact your member of Congress and invite him or her to support policies that will protect the poor everywhere. Help confront the causes of global poverty—like hunger, disease, conflict and injustice—through Catholics Confront Global Poverty, or CCGP. CCGP, an initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and CRS, provides email updates about policy issues that affect poor and vulnerable people worldwide. confrontglobalpoverty.org

DURING LENT, you can enrich your family's 40-day journey—and turn your fast into a feast for others. Prayerfully walk through the 40 days of Lent and learn about the lives of our poorest brothers and sisters through daily reflections, stories of hope and classic devotions. Simple, meatless recipes bring the flavors of distant countries into your kitchen each Friday—and invite you to put the money you save by eating simply into your CRS Rice Bowl. crsricebowl.org

Get involved as members of a high school, college or university, or parish!

Catholic high schools: ghs.crs.org or education.crs.org

Youth ministry: foodfast.org

Colleges and universities: university.crs.org

Parishes: crs.org/parishambassador

back to normal?

OBJECTIVES

- Provide an opportunity for participants to check in about their lives since returning from the trip and to process how they have integrated the experience into their lives.
- Spend time in fellowship over a shared meal.

MATERIALS

- Bible opened to Luke 16:19-31
- Participants will need their manuals
- Sticky notes from first post-immersion session

PREPARATION

- This session should be held 2 to 3 months after your return.
(See post-immersion session one.)
- Make arrangements for the shared meal. If you are having a potluck, ask participants in advance to bring different parts of the meal. If you choose to go to a restaurant together, make a reservation and make sure participants know they will need to pay for their own meals.

SESSION OVERVIEW

- Welcome (15 minutes)
- Opening prayer (5 minutes)
- Seeing Lazarus (20 minutes)
- Solidarity pledge (30 minutes)
- Housekeeping, logistics and final announcements (5 minutes)
- Shared meal (50 minutes)

welcome (15 minutes)

Welcome participants

Share that today's session is a chance to check in about how things have been going since the trip and to share a meal in fellowship.

Ask everyone to share something that has surprised or challenged them since they got back.

opening prayer (5 minutes)

Invite participants to turn to the prayer section of the participant manual and to pray together, "Use Us for Your Work."

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ...

God the Father,

We give you thanks for all the marvels you have created.

*We praise you and we bless you for the inestimable
grace of life that you give to us.*

Transform us, make us better Christians,

living testimonies of your mercy and of your power.

Strip us, Lord, of all roots of bitterness,

of false pride and haughtiness of heart.

Make us meek and humble of heart

as was our Lord Jesus Christ,

and never let us wound with our words or actions

the dignity of any person.

Put in our hearts the ardent desire

to work earnestly for those who are poor and in need.

Show us the garment with which you clothed us

the day we received you as Lord and savior of our lives.

May we wear those garments at the service

of our neighbors and this community.

Use us Lord, for your work.

Amen

Adapted from Ligia de Milla, El Salvador, *Prayer Without Borders*

seeing Lazarus (20 minutes)

INTRODUCTION

Explain that you will read the parable of the Rich Man and reflect on how this reading resonates with you now that you are back to the rhythm of your normal lives.

DISCUSSION

- Discuss together:
 - How has the service immersion trip affected your faith journey? What has changed in your life? What has remained the same that you would like to change?
- Read Luke 16:19–31
- Discuss together:
 - How does this reading resonate with or challenge you, now that you are back in your normal routine?

solidarity pledge (30 minutes)

INTRODUCTION

- Share that you will take some time to discuss the pledges participants made in the previous session and the successes and challenges of trying to live those commitments.
- Read the words on the sticky notes. They represent where each member was several months ago, immediately after the trip.

DISCUSSION

- Invite participants to pair up with their prayer partners for about 10 minutes to discuss successes and challenges in their efforts to fulfill their solidarity pledges.
- Bring the group back together. Discuss:
 - What came up in your small group discussions?
 - What do you think you need to make your commitment to solidarity a part of your daily life?

housekeeping, logistics and final announcements (5 minutes)

- Share that this will be your last formal meeting together. Thank everyone for their participation throughout the journey.
- Share any other logistical information.

shared meal (50 minutes)

- Enjoy a shared meal. Invite a participant to lead a prayer before the meal.

APPENDIX

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

ARTICLES

- Gable, Mike. "[Seven Steps for Transforming Your Next Mission Trip.](#)" *U.S. Catholic* (April 2015).
- Lamberty, Kim. "[A Tool Kit for Short-Term Missions.](#)" *New Theology Review* (2009).
- Lamberty, Kim. "[Mission as Prophetic Dialogue: A Case Study from Columbia.](#)" *Missiology* (July 2014).
- Martin, SJ, Jim. "[Meeting the Victim, Loving the Poor.](#)" *America Magazine* (October, 2011).
- Priest, Robert J., and Brian M. Howell. "[Introduction: Theme Issue on Short-Term Missions.](#)" *Missiology: An International Review* (April 2013).
- Probasco, LiErin. "[Giving Time, Not Money: Long-term Impacts of Short-term Mission Trips.](#)" *Missiology: An International Review* (April 2013).
- Van Engen, JoAnn. "[The Cost of Short Term Missions.](#)" *The Other Side* (January/February 2000).

BOOKS

- Campbell, Sally. *People, Places and Partnerships: A Workbook for Your Mission Trip Abroad.* Worldwide Ministries Division the Presbyterian Church (USA), 1996.
- Danasco, Lenore. *Planning a Youth Service Week.* Twenty-Third Publications, 2001.
- Forward, David C. *The Essential Guide to the Short Term Mission Trip.* Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1998.
- Howell, Brian M. *Short-Term Mission: An Ethnography of Christian Travel Narrative and Experience.* InterVarsity Press: 2012.
- Priest, Robert J. *Effective Engagement in Short Term Missions: Doing It Right!* William Carey Library, 2012.

GUIDES

- [Advocacy Guide for Mission Teams.](#) Bread for the World
- [Transformed by Eucharist. Sent On Mission: A Service Learning Retreat Experience.](#) United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services
- [Re-entry and short term mission publications.](#) From Mission to Mission: A Resource for Mission and Transition.

