

Global Reality Meal

Curriculum links:

Geography: Year 7, Year 9, Year 10

Civics and Citizenship: Year 9, Year 10

General Capability: Ethical Understanding,
Cross Curricular Priority: Sustainability

Religious Education themes categorized by Catholic Social Teaching principles:

- **Preferential Option for the Poor:** Exploring your current understandings of justice, Investigating God's dream for a just world, Charity and Justice, Living and acting out love and compassion, Sharing (fair share), What is poverty?
- **Stewardship of Creation:** Our world today, Culture of waste and consumerism, What can we do to 'be green'?, Sustainability.

What is it?

An effective dramatisation of the inequality of our world where participants can experience something of the global reality.

Why do it?

Bringing to life the inequalities in our world challenges us to do something about it. Few leave a Global Reality Meal with full stomachs, but all leave filled with a greater understanding of the problems of global hunger and poverty and motivated to take action.

Who do you need?

- Participants! The activity works best with large groups of about 100-120, but can work well with groups of 20-30 or anywhere in between!
- An MC.
- Waiters to pamper the rich and serve their meal.
- Facilitators – usually teachers – for the debriefing.

What do you need?

- A large enough venue.
- Microphone.
- Tickets marked on the back 'Rich/Poor', in the ratio 20/80 for the short version or 'Rich/Middle/Poor', in the ratio 15/30/55 for the long version.
- Food for the rich - more than enough food, such as chicken, burgers, pizza, fruit, chocolate, cream cakes, chips, soft drinks.
- Food for the poor – barely enough food – rice and water.
- (For Version 2 Middle group, add beans and, perhaps, fruit).
- Chairs, tables, cushions etc. for the rich.
- Facilities for PowerPoint presentation (optional).

What do you do?

Follow the instructions, and the facilitator's script. You can choose from two versions, whichever one suits your group best.

Short Version: 2 economic groups

Set up:

- Participants each pay a set amount e.g. \$3-4 for their meal.
- As each participant enters the venue, they receive a ticket. Tickets appear similar but on the back:
- 20% of tickets are marked 'rich' and 80% are marked 'poor'. Tickets must be randomly distributed.
- The rich 20% are led by the waiters to beautifully set table, chairs and cushions.
- The poor 80% are herded to the floor in what should be a rather overcrowded area.

MC SCRIPT: (may be shortened or simplified according to age of students/time available)

We are here today because 1 in eight people live on just \$1.90 a day– this is called extreme poverty. [Pause]

Nearly 800 million people regularly go to bed hungry. [Pause]

2 billion people are affected by lack of access to drinkable water. [Pause]

Between 2000 and 2014, 158 million children under 5 had stunted growth, while 41 million children in this same age group were overweight. [Pause]

(Sources: Statistics are from [The Sustainable Development Report 2016](#))

You may think hunger is about too many people and too little food. Not true. This rich and bountiful planet produces enough to feed every woman, man and child on earth. It's about power!

In fact, a relatively small proportion of the world's population (facing the rich group) - that's you - consumes most of the world's goods, represented in the food here today.

The roots of hunger lie in inequalities in access to education, resources and power. The results are illiteracy, poverty, war and the inability of families to grow or buy food.

Climate change presents the single biggest threat to development and its unprecedented effects impact the poorest and most vulnerable people. We witness this today in the food crisis in East Africa, where prolonged drought is worsened by conflict and unrest, leading millions of people to the brink of famine.

This Global Reality Meal is a metaphor for how food and other resources are unequally distributed in the world. One thing I would like you to remember is this: Everyone on earth has the same basic needs; (ask students to suggest what basic needs are). It is only our circumstances – where we live, and the culture we are born into - that differ. Each person's place is randomly determined.

As each of us walked in the door here today, we chose – at random – our lot. Look around, and you can see that equality and balance don't exist here.

It is important to note that no one section of this room represents a single country. Stark inequalities prevail, both worldwide and within countries, even in Australia.

I invite the rich to begin their meal. The poor may go to the back table and help themselves.

Go to page 6 for ending and discussion guide.

Long Version: 3 economic groups

Set up:

- Participants each pay a set amount e.g. \$3-4 for their meal.
- As each participant enters the venue, they receive a ticket. Tickets appear similar but on the back 15% are marked 'rich', 30% are marked 'middle' and 55% are marked 'poor'. Tickets must be randomly distributed.
- The 'Rich' 15% are led by the waiters to beautifully set table, chairs and cushions to be served an over-abundant and varied meal.
- The 'Middle' 30% are directed to very basic tables and chairs where they will eat a simple meal of rice and beans and, perhaps, fruit.
- The 'Poor' 55% are herded to the floor in what should be a rather overcrowded area from where they will be directed to queue for small portions of rice and water.

MC SCRIPT:

We are here today because 1 in eight people live on just \$1.90 a day– this is called extreme poverty. [Pause]

Nearly 800 million people regularly go to bed hungry. [Pause]

2 billion people are affected by lack of access to drinkable water. [Pause]

Between 2000 and 2014, 158 million children under 5 had stunted growth, while 41 million children in this same age group were overweight. [Pause]

(Sources: Statistics are from [The Sustainable Development Report 2016](#))

You may think hunger is about too many people and too little food. Not true. This rich and bountiful planet produces enough to feed every woman, man and child on earth. It's about power!

In fact, a relatively small proportion of the world's population (facing the rich group) -

that's you - consumes most of the world's goods, represented in the food here today.

The roots of hunger lie in inequalities in access to education, resources and power. The results are illiteracy, poverty, war and the inability of families to grow or buy food.

Climate change presents the single biggest threat to development and its unprecedented effects impact the poorest and most vulnerable people. We witness this today in the food crisis in East Africa, where prolonged drought is worsened by conflict and unrest, leading millions of people to the brink of famine.

This Global Reality Meal is a metaphor for how food and other resources are inequitably distributed in the world. One thing I would like you to remember is this: Everyone on earth has the same basic needs; (ask students to suggest what basic needs are). It is only our circumstances – where we live and the culture we are born into – that differ. Each person's place is randomly determined.

As each of us walked in the door here today, we chose, at random, our lot. Look around. Equality and balance don't exist here. It is important to note that no one section of this room represents a single country. Stark inequalities prevail, both worldwide and within countries, even in Australia. Now I would like to introduce you to the three segments of this world.

[Move near the rich group]

If you are sitting over here, you represent the proportion of the world's population who are fortunate enough to be able to afford a nutritious daily diet.

As a group, you consume most of all the grain grown in the world, most of it in the form of grain-fed meat. Since most of you exceed your daily requirement of calories, you face health problems such as heart disease and diabetes. But most of you don't have to worry about getting healthcare. You have access to the best medical care in the world.

Your children are born destined to go to school; the only uncertainty is how many

years they will study after high school. You and your family live in a comfortable and secure home. You own at least one car and probably two televisions. When you take your annual four-week vacation, you don't worry about your job disappearing.

It's a good life because YOU have access to everything you need and you have the security to enjoy it.

[Move near the middle group]

If you are sitting here, you roughly represent the proportion of the world's population that is somewhere in the middle. The levels of access and security you enjoy vary greatly. You are the people who live on the edge. For many, one crop lost due to drought or a serious illness, would throw you into poverty.

You probably own no land and may work as a day labourer, which pays a small amount, but it's better than nothing. Your small income allows for some use of electricity and a few years of schooling for your children – especially if they are boys. Alternatively, you may have left your family to go work in the city.

You hope that the money you earn from your less than minimum wage job as domestic help or worker in a sweat shop will eventually allow you to move back home and make a better life for your family. You work long hours performing back-breaking work but still cannot afford nutritious food for your children.

Through no fault of your own, you were born into this harsh life. You hope that your children will have the opportunity to do better. So, like everyone stuck in the middle, you feel squeezed, and you just hope that the bottom doesn't fall out of your world.

[Move near the poor group]

If you are sitting on the floor, you represent the majority of the world's population – You may earn about \$2 a day – although many of you earn much less. Most of you are from poor countries such as Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, El Salvador or Malawi.

Every day is a struggle to meet your family's basic needs. Finding food, water and shelter can consume your entire day. Many of you women have to walk five to ten kilometres every day to get water, spend several more hours working the fields, and of course take care of the children. Many of you are frequently hungry. It is quite likely that you don't get the minimum number of calories your hardworking life requires. Many of you are homeless or living in such flimsy houses that a hard rain or strong wind can cause a major catastrophe.

Even though education is the single most powerful weapon against poverty, school is a luxury few of your children will ever experience. Most girls don't even bother to dream about school. Adequate healthcare is out of the question for many of you in this group. For most of you, early death is all too familiar, with many mothers expecting to lose one or two children before they turn five.

If you are lucky enough to work, you are probably a tenant farmer who must give your landowner 75 percent of your harvest. Or perhaps you get occasional work as a day labourer at a large plantation producing crops such as bananas, sugar or coffee for export.

You reap few benefits from these crops; you'd prefer to grow food that your children can eat.

[Move up/down scenarios]

Now, I have some news that will affect several of you. As we've noted, no-one can choose the circumstances into which they are born. Some people have the good fortune to change their lives for the better, but for most the circumstances of life are determined by uncontrollable factors.

[Ask any six people from the poorest group to stand]

These six people live in Oecusse, an area of Timor-Leste, surrounded by Indonesian West Timor. Like many others in Timor-Leste, the people here lived from day to day, struggling to grow enough food for one meal a day. Many suffered from malnutrition and could not afford to send their children to school. But

recently, Caritas Australia joined in partnership with their community. By learning new farming techniques, learning how to make tofu and tempeh and getting a loan to buy a food-processing machine, these families now produce nourishing food. They even make enough tofu to sell at the market. They have their own savings and credit group and can afford to send their children to school. I invite you to make a place for yourselves in the middle group, but before you go...

[Ask any six people from the middle group to stand]

You come from South Sudan in the east of Africa. You are experiencing the impact of a drought made worse by climate change and ongoing conflict that has claimed many lives. Your crops have failed, you have nothing to sell and no money left to live on. Your families are among the thousands trying to walk to refugee camps to find food and water. I invite you to take the place of those six from the poor group.

[These two groups exchange places and sit. Now, turn to the rich group and ask any male to stand]

You are Jonathon Sledge, a middle manager at a large coffee company. The world market price of coffee has just been cut in half, and even though your company is paying less for the coffee, it is not going to lower the prices it charges consumers. Your company's profit margins are about to escalate, and you will receive a hefty bonus at the end of the year. Congratulations! Maybe you'll take a holiday at Noosa. While you are deciding how to spend your bonus, please remain standing while I introduce two people you wouldn't ordinarily get to meet.

[Turn to the middle group, ask any male to stand]

This is Joseph. Joseph has just been laid off from his job picking coffee beans, which allowed him to provide the basics for his family in Kenya. After the price of coffee dropped, Joseph's employer was forced to scale back its workforce because it could no

longer afford to pay everyone. Joseph, please move to the poorest group.

[Turn to the poorest group; ask any female to stand]

This is Lillian. Lillian lives in the same village as Joseph, and ekes out a living selling maize and other vegetables from her garden in the local market each day.

Lillian, because Joseph and many of your other customers have been laid off from the nearby coffee plantation, they are buying less from you, and you won't be able to afford enough corn for your family. You will receive only a half portion of rice today.

[Turn back to address the entire room]

This is just a small slice of life as it plays out each day around the globe. Now, we invite you to eat.

Those of you in the rich group will be served a gourmet meal [you may wish to mention the meal].

For those in the middle group, food [rice & beans, perhaps some fruit] is available on your tables.

People in the poorest group seated on the floor, you will find rice and water on the table at the back.

Go to page 6 for ending and discussion guide.

Ending for both short and long version

SHARING PERIOD

MC walks among audience members, asking people how they feel about being in whichever group they are in. MC can also challenge the students to think about what they can do to take concrete action on the knowledge they have gained.

CONCLUSION

Bring in a large rubbish bin. The waiters then dramatically scrape all the uneaten food from the rich table into the rubbish bin!

MC SCRIPT: *This is our global reality. We in the rich world waste a great deal. In fact, Australians are throwing away more than [4 million tonnes](#) of food a year, mostly because of over-shopping and waste at the table.*

We are called to care for our common home and consider the impact of environmental degradation not only for ourselves, but for people living in vulnerable and marginalised communities around the world.

Pope Francis teaches us to ‘remember the poor’. We are all connected by the economics and politics of food. We can take action on the personal, local, and global level and actions taken locally can together, and over time, make a big impact globally.

We live in a world where a few get a lot and most get very little indeed. Yet there is plenty of reason for hope. In 2015 the world was able to celebrate the successes of Millennium Development Goals that saw the proportion of people living below the extreme poverty line drop by half between 2002 and 2012. Global cooperation has had an impact on reduced extreme poverty. In 2015, 193 countries committed to the Sustainable Development Goals. This is a set of 16 goals for everyone, everywhere, that aim to see an end to poverty, fight injustice and tackle climate change. Together, we can do those things and more.

With your support, Caritas Australia has helped thousands of people work their way out of poverty through self-help initiatives in 29 countries, including Indigenous Australia. By supporting Caritas Australia, you are helping people to transform their own lives, restoring their dignity by promoting solutions that empower them to take control of their lives.

Script adapted from: www.hungerbanquet.org and www.oxfam.org

DEBRIEFING

Debriefing is a crucial part of a Global Reality Meal. Participants commonly experience feelings of discomfort, anger, sadness and guilt. That’s OK! That is the way the activities are designed. What is important is that the facilitators help students to explore their feelings and their meanings and help them to see that they have the power to enable change.

- Be familiar with relevant information, e.g. statistics
- Be aware that students are sharing thoughts and feelings – there is no right or wrong when it comes to feelings!
- Be aware of the desired educational outcomes.

PRAY:

Choose to use the Caritas Australia [‘Food for All’ prayer PowerPoint](#) or the [‘East Africa Food Crisis Prayer’ PowerPoint](#).

Alternatively, you may wish to use the following reflection “Our Daily Bread” (on page 7) accompanied by music and photographs of Caritas Australia’s food related programs.

It may be appropriate to have Project Compassion collection boxes at the exit doors.

Reflection: “Our Daily Bread”

Reader 1: ‘The Catholic community is a Eucharistic community. The celebration of Jesus’ last supper is central to our liturgical and spiritual lives. In Matthew 25:35 Jesus identified himself completely with the hungry, and the symbols of bread and wine for his body and blood put food and hunger before us.

Reader 2: As human beings and as a Eucharistic community, we must be involved in ensuring that people have enough to eat. It’s us the Lord is speaking to today: “You give them something to eat”, and he knows we have the wherewithal to do so!

Reader 3: He says to us: You who are my disciples, don’t abandon them to their fate. Do something. Stretch your imagination and be creative. Work ceaselessly and share what you have.

Reader 4: We are energised and empowered by the Eucharist to go out and fulfil our mission of sharing our bread with the hungry, and recognising Christ in those without food.

Reader 5: Fight selfishness and don’t waste anything. Protest so that the exploitation of the most vulnerable comes to an end. Demand that a stop be put to the monopolisation of land by the rich.

Reader 6: Cardinal Rodriguez Maradiaga says, ‘Lack of food for the poor is the most un-Eucharistic situation on earth’.

ALL: Let our participation in the Eucharist continually deepen in us, a hunger for justice.

Sources: ‘Our daily bread’ Caritas New Zealand and Cardinal Oscar Andrés Maradiaga, former president of Caritas Internationalis.

Other resources that might be useful at a Global Reality Meal or Hunger focused event:

- Caritas Australia’s [Food Quiz PowerPoint](#).
- [Vinsen’s story](#) demonstrates the importance of climate and predictable weather patterns to farmers and their food sources in Indonesia (Featured in Project Compassion 2015).
- [‘IF the G8 were kids \(part 3\)’](#) film clip (Produced by CAFOD Caritas England and Wales).

Other Caritas Australia resources for the classroom:

- [Interactive ‘Food for All’ cartoon](#)
- [Food for All Unit](#)
- [East Africa Food Crisis resources](#)