



Watch Arsad's film

Please watch this film prior to showing students, to ensure its suitability for your class. Note the term open defecation is used in the film but not in the written story.

Can you imagine not having a toilet? For Arsad, an Indonesian farmer, the idea of having a flushing toilet and running water at home was a dream. With no toilet in his house, Arsad and his family had to walk into the forest, to go to the toilet in a field. When he realised that no toilet was making his family and community sick, he needed to do something.



Arsad, 46, lives in the Pandeglang region of Indonesia's westernmost Banten province. He lives with his parents, his wife and three children, aged 4, 17 and his 20-year old daughter, her husband and their four-month-old son.

Arsad is a rice farmer who also grows vegetables to feed his family.

"Costs for cultivating and transporting rice are high and the selling price too low," Arsad says. "It's hard to find another job to fulfil daily needs."

With no toilet in his house, Arsad and his family had to walk a long distance into the forest to go to the toilet. It was worse at night.

"We thought it was normal, even though we have to face our fear every time," says Kasniti, Arsad's wife. "When it was raining or we were sick, it became very troublesome."

Around 45 million of Indonesia's rural population, have to go to the toilet outdoors. Many are not aware that it can cause health problems and spread diseases, like cholera and dysentery. It can also cause diarrhoea, increasing the risk of malnutrition for children.

When Arsad heard about hygiene and sanitation training run by Caritas Australia's partner agency, Laz Harfa, he was keen to get involved. The Economic and Community-based Health Development Project encourages community members to save money to build their own toilets and to work together in the process. He learnt finance skills and became the leader of a local group. The Caritas-supported project resulted in around 280 toilets.

"Most people at first did not understand about health. Now, they're willing to listen and they have an easy way to build toilets," Arsad says. "We help each other."

Now, Arsad and his family are healthy. The community no longer has to go to the toilet in the field and has become happier. Arsad's part in helping has resulted in him being hailed a 'neighbourhood hero'.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Caritas Australia, with Laz Harfa, shared lifesaving messages on preventing the spread of coronavirus and distributed soap, masks and hygiene kits. They also set up a public rice barn where people could donate rice to share with other community members.

"Arsad set a good example and then slowly encouraged his neighbours to change for the better," said Imam Hidayat, Laz Harfa's Program Manager.

Arsad aspired to 'Be More' and in doing so, inspired his family and community to follow in his footsteps.

"Thank you so much, Caritas Australia," Arsad says. "I pray for the best for the Australians who have helped this program so there is progress in my community."



Task 1: Discuss

- What were the challenges that Arsad and his family faced?
- How did they work to overcome them?
- What did the community learn?
- How did Caritas Australia help?
- What are the main problems associated with no toilet?
- What skills did Arsad learn?
- Why was it important for Arsad and his community to learn how to build toilets?
- How might have Arsad's community have looked if they didn't build toilets?
- How did the skills Arsad learnt help during COVID?
- What surprised you about Arsad's story?

Curriculum: English Year 5: ACELY1703 Year 6: ACELY1713, HASS Year 6: ACHASSK141

Task 2: Deep Dive

- Count how many toilets there are in your house. Add the number of toilets in each person's house together, to get the total number of toilets for your class.
- Use your class as an average and multiple this number by the number of classes in the school.
- Count how many toilets there are in your school.
- Add all of these together.
- Think about how many people use these toilets.
- How many toilets were originally in Arsad's village? How many people might be in the village?
- How many toilets are in his village now?
- What happens when people have no toilet in their home?
- What are some of the health problems that might occur as a result of this?
- What other problems might occur?
- How does this make you feel?
- Write a short reflection about this.

Task 3: World Toilet Day

World Toilet Day raises awareness of the 4.2 billion people in the world who lack basic sanitation practices. Why do you think there are so many people in the world who don't have access to toilets, safe handwashing methods and clean drinking water? Goal 6 of the Sustainable

Development Goals, set to be achieved by 2030 is clean water and sanitation. Do you think this is achievable? Why? Why not? Has COVID impacted this goal?

Invite students to investigate World Toilet Day and create a visual aid explaining this often untold story.

Task 4: Gratitude Wall

Arsad and his community are thrilled to now have toilets in their homes. They are proud of their achievements and feel safer. Together they have worked to provide a better future for all. Spend 10 minutes reflecting upon what you have learned and on all the blessings in your life. Using post-it notes, record 5 – 10 things you are grateful for and display them on the classroom wall near your prayer space. Spend some time throughout the week, looking at all the things you and your classmates are grateful for.

Task 5: Catholic Social Teaching

Read about the [Catholic Social Teachings](#).

- Which Catholic Social Teachings do you see in Arsad's story?
- How could you show solidarity with Arsad's community?

Task 6: RE Link

Learning new skills takes courage. Arsad learnt many new skills and then had the courage to share them with others. We read in the bible, God says "Do not be afraid." Arsad was not afraid to share what he had learnt.

How can we learn to trust God and not be afraid like Arsad?