

# solidarity

## COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

### LESSON PLANS GRADES 1-8



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Photo by Jean Paul Cigulube/CRS



# background information for session leaders



## SOLIDARITY

Solidarity is one of the seven principles of Catholic social teaching (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) and means that all people are part of one human family. We call God “Our Father,” acknowledging that we are all brothers and sisters before him. As one human family, we are deeply connected to people around the world—wherever they may be. And because we are one, we are affected by the joy and suffering of all. “If one member of Christ’s body suffers, all suffer. If one member is honored, all rejoice.” (1 Corinthians 12:12–26) Living in solidarity means we take action to make sure that every member of our human family is living in conditions that honor human dignity. “We are all really responsible for all.” (St. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 38)



CRS is helping farmers in the Democratic Republic of Congo grow strong, healthy crops so they can earn a living and feed their families. Photo by Lane Hartill/CRS

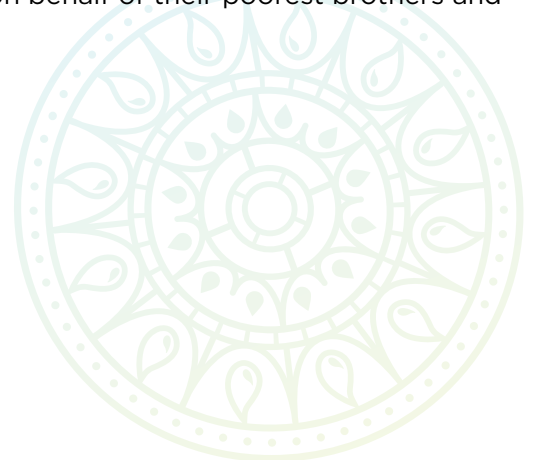
## CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. We are motivated by the example of Jesus Christ to assist poor and suffering people in more than 100 countries on the basis of need, without regard to race, religion or nationality. Founded in 1943, CRS reaches 85 million of the

world’s poorest people each year with innovative solutions to poverty, hunger, drought, disease and emergencies. CRS works in close partnership with the Catholic Church around the world, and with local, national and international organizations that share our commitment to finding ways to meet immediate needs while empowering communities for the long term.

## SOLIDARITY AND CRS

CRS lives out the Catholic social teaching principle of solidarity in different ways. We help communities around the world come together to support each other. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, farmers were losing banana crops to banana wilt disease. We showed them how to get rid of the disease and encouraged them to work together to clean the disease off their trees. In the United States, we invite Catholics to live their faith in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in need overseas. Catholics in the United States can do this through CRS by praying, learning, acting and giving on behalf of their poorest brothers and sisters overseas.



# Hamuli's story



Top: CRS showed Hamuli Kahati how to fight banana wilt disease. Above left: The Democratic Republic of Congo, a landlocked country with abundant mineral resources, has struggled with infighting, instability and humanitarian crises for decades. Photo by Jean Paul Cigulube/CRS. Map credit: OCHA.

When his banana trees died, **Hamuli Kahati** had nothing to sell. And his family had nothing to eat. That's why it's so important for farmers like Hamuli, who lives in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to be able to care for their crops.

Sometimes, though, the trees get sick with banana wilt disease. The disease destroyed the trees on Hamuli's farm, and his income dropped from \$150 a month to only \$7. He struggled to give his three daughters even one meal per day.

Catholic Relief Services helped bring farmers like Hamuli together to learn different ways of fighting banana wilt disease and to work together as a team. The farmers visited each other's fields and helped clean the disease off the trees. By coming together as a family, they were able to help each other get rid of the disease.

Now Hamuli's trees are thriving. With the money he earns each month from selling his bananas, his family is eating two to three meals a day. He is even able to send his girls to school. Because he and the other farmers came together and supported each other in a time of need, they are all doing better.

## SOLIDARITY

Jesus tells us to love our neighbors, even though they may be different from us. That means our neighbors who live next door and those who live on the other side of the planet. Jesus reminds us that we are all part of God's great family.

### OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle of Solidarity (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching) through the story of Hamuli Kahati, a banana farmer in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

### MATERIALS

- Bible
- Coloring supplies
- **Hamuli's Story**
- Scissors
- **Solidarity Activity Sheets, Grades 1-3**
- Tape
- Whiteboard and marker
- World map

### DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Explain that today you will reflect on the Catholic social teaching principle of Solidarity by learning about Hamuli, who lives in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
2. Share what solidarity means.
3. Locate the Democratic Republic of Congo on a map and read **Hamuli's Story**.
4. Ask: How did Hamuli and the farmers help one another?
5. Ask the students to brainstorm a list of jobs that you might have on a farm. Would it take a long time for one person to do all those things? What if everyone in the community helped?

### ACTIVITY\* (20 MINUTES)

1. Draw a church on the white board. Ask students what we do at church and write responses inside the church. Ask students who they meet at church and write the responses inside the church.
2. Draw a circle around the church and explain that this represents the world. Instruct students to name some problems that affect the world. Write their responses in the area inside the circle.
3. Point out that the picture of the church is inside the picture of the circle. Discuss how the Church exists within the world. Draw a heart around the circle and discuss how the heart represents the love that God has for the world and that solidarity invites us to imitate his love for all people.
4. Distribute the **Solidarity Activity Sheets, Grades 1-3**, and coloring supplies and give students time to complete them. Have students cut out the hearts.

\*Adapted from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

### CLOSING PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

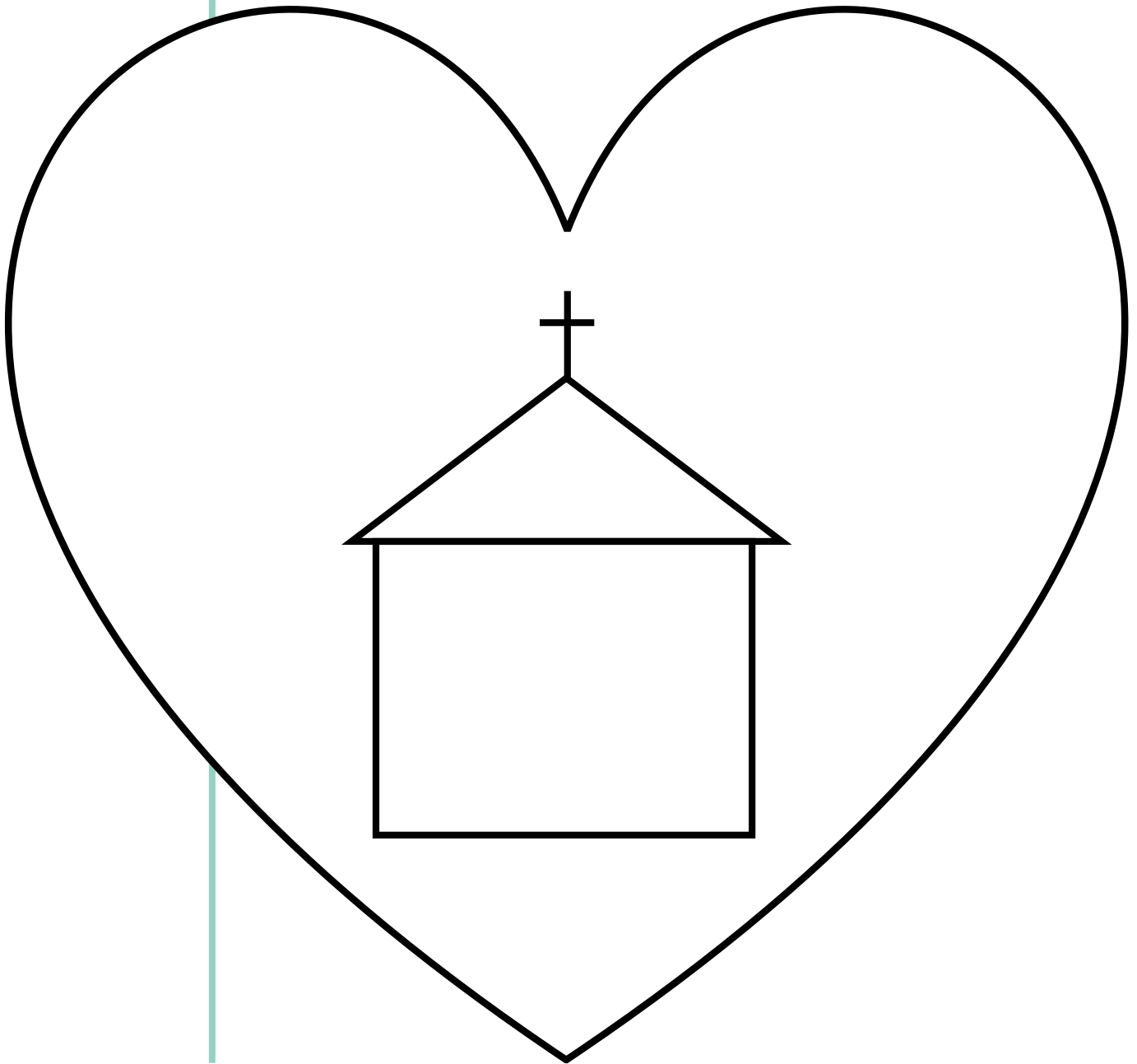
*Loving God, we pray that we will always imitate your love for all people, especially those who suffer most in our world. Amen*

### TAKING IT HOME

Invite students to take the heart pictures home to share with their families.



1. Draw a picture of your Church community in the building.
2. Color the heart to represent God's loving grace.  
Write a prayer intention in the heart.



#### OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle of Solidarity (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching) through the story of Hamuli Kahati, a banana farmer in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

#### MATERIALS

- Bible
- Blindfolds, one for each group
- **Hamuli's Story**
- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- **Solidarity Activity Sheets, Grades 4-6**, one for each group
- Tape
- World map

#### DISCUSSION (20 MINUTES)

1. Explain that today you will reflect on the Catholic social teaching principle of Solidarity by learning about Hamuli, who lives in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
2. Share what solidarity means.
3. Locate the Democratic Republic of Congo on a map and read **Hamuli's Story**.
4. Ask: How did Hamuli and his community work together? How do we as Christians work together to help others?
5. Read Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47. Discuss: What does this reading tell us about what it means to live in solidarity? Do the communities we belong to look similar to or different from the community depicted in the reading? What about Hamuli's community?

#### ACTIVITY (20 MINUTES)

1. Divide your class into groups and give each group one **Solidarity Activity Sheet, Grades 4-6** and tape. Ask the group to hang the sheet on the wall.
2. Blindfold one student in each group. Give the student a piece of tape. Spin him/her around. Tell him/her to attach the piece of tape to the circle on the activity sheet without removing the blindfold or interacting with his/her group. Tell members of the group not to help.
3. Discuss as a large group: Why was this difficult? What would make it easier?
4. Repeat the activity. Instruct the group members to verbally guide the blindfolded students.
5. Discuss as a large group: What made it easier this time? Make the connection to solidarity.

#### CLOSING PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Distribute paper. Ask students to write a prayer for someone in need and share it with the class.

#### TAKING IT HOME

Invite students to take the prayer home and pray it with their family at dinner or before bed.



### OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the Catholic social teaching principle of Solidarity (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching) through the story of Hamuli Kahati, a banana farmer in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

### MATERIALS

- Bibles for each student
- **Hamuli's Story**
- Pens or pencils
- **Solidarity Activity Sheets, Grades 7-8**, one for each group
- Whiteboard and marker

### DISCUSSION (20 MINUTES)

1. Explain that today you will reflect on the Catholic social teaching principle of Solidarity by learning about Hamuli, who lives in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
2. Share what solidarity means. Ask each student to read 1 Corinthians 12:26 to themselves. Then, ask: In your own words, what does it mean to be one body in Christ? What do you think it means that "if [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy."? Have you ever experienced this in your own life?
3. Locate the Democratic Republic of Congo on a map and read **Hamuli's Story**.
4. Ask: How does Hamuli's community live out the Catholic social teaching principle of Solidarity?

### ACTIVITY (20 MINUTES)

1. Divide your class into groups and give one **Solidarity Activity Sheet, Grades 7-8**, to each group. Give them enough time to complete the activity as a group.
2. Invite each group to share the countries they listed. Write these on the white board.
3. Share that one way we are connected with other people around the world is through the products we buy and use. It might seem impossible to live in solidarity with communities like Hamuli's that are so far away, but buying products made in conditions that are fair to workers is one way to ease the suffering of the body of Christ and recognize our solidarity with others. Explain that such products are called "fair trade," and that people who produce fair trade products are paid fairly and work in safe conditions.

### CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

*Father of all people, we ask you to help us remember that we are all a part of one human family. We pray especially for those members of our family who suffer most. Amen*

### TAKING IT HOME

Ask students to talk to their families about buying fair trade groceries.



#### HOW IS YOUR COMMUNITY CONNECTED TO COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD?



[crsfairtrade.org](http://crsfairtrade.org)

Put a dot on every country that comes up in one of your answers below. Try to come up with as many different countries as you can.

1. Where was one group member's cell phone made?
2. Where were three group members' shoes made?
3. Where were two group members' shirts made?
4. Does anyone in your group have a banana in their lunch? If so, where is it from? (Check the label.)
5. Where are two group members' ancestors' from?

This activity shows us that we are connected with other people around the world through the food, clothes and other items we buy and use every day. Many people who help make these products work in unfair conditions. Fair trade is a trading partnership that ensures farmers and artisans receive fair wages. By purchasing fair trade items, we can help ease the suffering of the body of Christ and recognize our solidarity with others.