
Harvest Service Ideas

Friends of Cathedral Relief Service, UK



Introduction

The Cathedral Relief Service (CRS) works with some of the most disadvantaged communities in Kolkata seeking to bring basic care and hope for the future. It does this in three main ways:

- ❖ health care
- ❖ education
- ❖ women's empowerment

FILM

Trustees of Friends of CRS UK are pleased to share a film of the work of CRS. It was made as a resource for schools in the UK in mind but it will also work well in church. There are accompanying school resources which can be found [here](#). The film is 12 minutes long and introduces three children who have benefitted from the work of CRS. You can choose to show the film in full or in parts. The following ideas are for churches to use at harvest and are to accompany the film. There are readings, theological reflections, song suggestions, and suggested ways to respond through giving and praying.

READINGS

John 10:10 Fullness of Life

John 6: 1–12 Feeding the 5000

Thoughts to be used in discussion groups or in sermon preparation:

In John 6, the great crowd has followed Jesus to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee because they are captivated by his healing of the sick. When Jesus sees them coming, he recognises their physical hunger as well as their hunger for teaching and for signs and wonders. How do we respond to different needs? How might this story speak into our understanding of fullness of life?

Here are three thoughts for reflection:

Realising God's abundance

The story of the Feeding Of The 5000 highlights the reality of overwhelming need versus God' abundant provision. Like the disciples we can often feel helpless about the task before us.

Philip says (verse 7): "it would take more than half a year's wages to provide bread for each one to have a bite." (NIV). Not only do we feel helpless, but we can't even begin to dream about abundance. Yet in verse 11 we read that 'Jesus took the loaves and it was given to the people as much as they wanted.' There was food left over - it was more than just enough.

Even in this country food banks are increasingly struggling to meet the needs of those who are hungry. In places like Kolkata there are not the safety nets like food banks. People get trapped in the poverty cycle. However, there is enough food to feed everyone in the

world and to give them the basic things to enable them to live a full life. It doesn't have to be this way, as Jesus showed. Do we see God as a God who gives abundantly?

Participating in God's new creation

NT Wright links this miracle to the Genesis creation narrative, seeing it as, 'a *second creation* or new creation event where God's creative word continues to bring forth new life and substance.'

We can often see feeding others as just solving a problem. But what we are doing in responding to poverty and need is far more than problem solving. It is about participating in God's new creation, where everyone can be fed and have fullness of life. It is about participating in God's work by offering what we can (however small) rather than trying to fix the situation in our own strength. What could God do with what we offer? Is our vision big enough?

Nothing is lost

In this story, nothing is wasted. Nothing is lost. In verse 12 Jesus says: "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." It was a practical detail - stewardship of food resources is important. But it can be seen more symbolically as nothing being wasted in God's economy. Jesus talks about not losing anyone the Father gives him (Jn 17:12 & Jn 18:9). People are infinitely precious and their hopes, dreams and aspirations are, along with food and water, what add up to fullness of life. What does it mean for nothing (and no one) to be lost or wasted in God's creation?

SONG SUGGESTIONS

I have a voice - Martin Nicholls and Paul Field
Beauty for Brokenness, Graham Kendrick
Build your Kingdom Here, Rend Collective
Christ be our Light, Bernadette Farrell
God of Justice, Tim Hughes
The Kingdom of God is Justice and Peace (Taize)
Great is thy faithfulness, Thomas Chisholm
For the Healing of the Nations, Fred Kaan
The Servant Song, Richard Gillard
Tell out my soul, Timothy Dudley Smith
You Crown the Year, Hill Song



WAYS TO RESPOND

CRS is responding to the great need in Kolkata through health care, and as we saw on the film ,education and women's empowerment. But in order to do this work CRS needs our support.

Giving

What we give is never going to match the size of the need but we can trust Jesus to take it and use it. So, please do give to the work of CRS and help them in their work to transform the lives of some of the most disadvantaged people in Kolkata.

Visit <https://www.cathedralreliefservice.net/donate/uk/> to find various ways that you can make a donation or scan this QR code.



Praying

Our prayers are also part of what we offer. We may feel small and that our prayers are not effective but that's not the point. It is who we are praying to that matters and God's infinite love and power. So just like the boy who brought the seven items in his packed lunch to Jesus so we pray for seven aspects of the work of CRS:

- ❖ The director and staff of CRS
- ❖ Prayer for the pupils and teachers of CRS schools
- ❖ Health care provision
- ❖ Women's empowerment projects
- ❖ The Cathedral
- ❖ Friends and trustees of CRS worldwide
- ❖ Ourselves as supporters

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord of life, we pray for fullness of life. For ourselves.

For others.

For our world.

We resolve to live life in all its fullness.

We seek to enable others to live life in all its fullness too.

Amen

