

# Open the Door to Jesus

## Family Catechesis in Two Sessions for the Archdiocese of New York

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And Jesus said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey and I have nothing to offer him,' and he says in reply from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.'

I tell you, if he does not get up to give him the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence.

And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."



Session One: Open the Door to Jesus throughout the World (pages 2 -10)  
Session Two: Open the Door to Jesus in Your City (pages 11 -14)

## Session One: Open the Door to Jesus throughout the World

### Objective:

- Learn about Christ's call to answer the door to those in need throughout the world
- Learn about the work of the US Catholic Church through Catholic Relief Services
- Consider how you can help those in need throughout the world as a family

### Materials:

- Internet access and computer and projector to show two short YouTube videos: *Catholic Relief Services: 70 Years in a Heartbeat* and *How Thomas Awiapo found CRS*
- Pens and coloring materials (markers/crayons)
- Prayer space items: candle, cross, bible, etc.
- Paper for each family member
- Bible (one for each family if possible)
- Copies of Open the Door to Jesus Prayer for each participant (page 8)
- Copies of evaluation for each adult participant (page 12)

### Preparation:

Read through the facilitator's guide so that you are comfortable with the material ahead of time. Some sections are scripted to help you lead the session, but it is best if you have the chance to familiarize yourself with the session and share the concepts with the families in your own words. Visit [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org) for additional information on Catholic Relief Services' work.

### Session One Schedule:

25 minutes: Daily Doors Warm Up Activity

30 minutes: Opening Prayer: Gospel Reading and Reflection

30 minutes: Jesus Knocks throughout the World

10 minutes: Evaluations and Closing Prayer: Open the Door to Jesus

(Note: Does not include any time for hospitality and icebreakers. Please be sure to factor this into the timing if included.)

## Daily Doors Warm Up Activity

Materials: Distribute paper, pens, and coloring materials to each family member.

### Introduction

- Invite each family member to take a few moments to walk through their day by thinking about all the doors they went through.
- Ask:
  - Why did you go through each door?
  - Who did you meet on the other side?
  - Who were you most excited to see?

### Activity

- Invite family members to:
  - Draw 2-3 of the doors they went through.
  - Decorate each of those doors with pictures of the people they met and/or what they did through those doors.
- Invite each family member to share their door drawings with each other.
- Say in these or similar words:

*Every day we walk through many doors. We are excited to walk through some of these doors and afraid to walk through others. We don't always know who we'll meet on the other side. Jesus tells us that we are called to care for all those we meet on the other side of the door. Today we will have a chance to reflect more on our call to open the door to Jesus.*

## Opening Prayer: Gospel Reading and Reflection

Materials: Distribute bibles to each family (if you have enough). Make sure families still have their drawings and coloring materials handy. Prepare the prayer space.

### Introduction

- Tell family members that you are going to reflect on your call to open the door to Jesus through a reading from the Gospel of Luke. Invite someone to read the Gospel portion of the opening prayer (Luke 11:5-9). Invite him/her to pick up the bible and read the Gospel from the bible.

### Prayer

- Say in these or similar words:

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,  
Lord Jesus, In this reading, you tell us a story of a man who went and knocked on his friend's door in the middle of the night looking for food. Help us to listen to your words and hear how you are calling us to respond when someone knocks on our door.  
And so we listen to this reading from the Gospel of Luke. (Signal the reader to begin.)*
- Tell families you are going to listen to the reading again. Ask them to think about how they might tell this story to a friend as they listen for a second time. Invite the reader to re-read the reading.
- Ask:
  - What is taking place in this reading? Tell the story.
  - Who comes to the door? Why?
  - How does the man respond? Why?
  - What does Jesus say about this?

## Reflection

- Invite family members to think again about the doors that they talked about today in the context of this Gospel reading.
- Ask:
  - In this reading, Jesus says that a friend came to someone's door and asked for help. Was there a time today when anyone who you interacted with (as you went through the doors you mentioned) needed help? It doesn't have to be food—it could be someone asking to spend time with you, asking to borrow something, or who was sitting alone or bullied.
  - Was there a time when someone helped you?
- Invite family members to return to their drawing and to add another picture or symbol to the doors to show how they did or could have helped someone who needed to be cared for.
- Say in these or similar words:
  - *Jesus tells us in other parts of the bible that he is the one who is knocking at the door. He says that whatever we do to others, we do to him. Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:2). When we welcomed someone today, we welcomed Jesus. When someone cared for you, they cared for Jesus.*
  - *We believe that every human person is made in Christ's image. Even the people we don't like! Think of someone today who you met through one of your doors who you don't get along with or who has hurt your feelings at some point. Even this person should be welcomed if they knock on the door. The Catholic Church believes in the dignity of every human person, regardless of what they do, where they live, how popular they are, how rich or poor they are. This belief in the dignity of the human person is the foundation of our Catholic Social Teaching.*

## Jesus Knocks throughout the World

Materials: Load YouTube videos and set up computer/projector. Make sure each family member has pen and paper.

### Introduction

- Tell family members that the rest of the session will be devoted to learning how Jesus is asking us to answer his knock at the door throughout the world. Tell them you'll do this through video clips and reflection.
- Say in these or similar words:

*Jesus calls us to answer the door when our friends, family, and people in our daily life knock for help. But he also calls us to answer when people in need who may not know personally ask for help. We are called to recognize the dignity in each human person and answer the door when people ask for food and shelter both in our local communities and throughout the world.*
- *Our Catholic Church responds to Jesus' knocking at the door for food. In the United States, the Church does this through an organization called Catholic Charities. Throughout the rest of the world, the Church does this through an organization called Catholic Relief Services, the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. Today we will reflect a little bit about how Jesus calls us to answer the knock on the door for food throughout the world through Catholic Relief Services. In our next session, we will have the chance to answer this call by participating in service in our city.*

## Activity

- Tell families that you are going to watch two different videos about the Catholic Church's work through Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to help answer the door to those who are knocking for food and other help.

### VIDEO ONE: CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES: 70 YEARS IN A HEARTBEAT

- The first video is of different pictures, clips, and videos from CRS over the past 70 years. Invite family members to compete as they watch the video by writing down (or remembering) as many different images in the video as they can. (They might notice someone receiving food, a religious Sister, or even a World War II tank!)
- Play YouTube video: Catholic Relief Services: 70 Years in a Heartbeat



Catholic Relief Services: 70 Years in a Heartbeat

- Hyperlink:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VShiWdXoBqg>
- Or, Google: Catholic Relief Services: 70 Years in a Heartbeat YouTube
- Invite everyone to share what they saw. Make a running list of their answers.
    - Some things that might come up include:  
Agriculture/crops, building houses, camel, children, CRS Leaders (Ken Hackett, former CEO, and Carolyn Woo, current CEO), CRS logo (different through the years), Fair Trade coffee, food and supplies distribution, health clinic and AIDS relief efforts, hungry people, Mother Teresa, Mothers and children, people in the United States holding a "Turning our Faith into Action" poster, pictures of natural disasters (hurricane, tsunami, earthquake), religious Sisters and priests, CRS Rice Bowl, war images (black and white photos), water projects
  - Say in these or similar words:  
*The video shows ways that people are in need throughout the world (from hunger, poverty, natural disaster, war). CRS works in 91 different countries. CRS works with church partners in countries (you saw pictures of priests and nuns) and helps do things like help people grow their crops, rebuild their lives after natural disasters or war, get food and water, and access health care. CRS was started in 1943 to help World War II refugees who needed shelter, food, and clothing (you might have noticed the black and white pictures and the sign that said "War Relief Services," which was Catholic Relief Services' original name).*

### VIDEO TWO: CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES: HOW THOMAS AWIAPO FOUND CRS

- Remind families that you talked earlier about how Jesus calls us to answer when people in need who may not know personally ask for help. Say that we are called to recognize the dignity in each human person and answer the door when people ask for food and shelter throughout the world. Tell them that they'll have the chance to hear a story now of someone who works for Catholic Relief Services from Ghana, named Thomas Awiaipo, who actually went knocking for help!



How Thomas Awiaipo found CRS

- Play YouTube video: How Thomas Awiapo found CRS  
Hyperlink: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=So1T5cFzImU>  
Or, Google: How Thomas Awiapo found CRS YouTube
- After you show the video, ask:
  - What do you remember about Thomas' story?
  - What country is he from? (Try looking up Ghana on a map with families.)
  - What did the doors in this video look like? (Were there doors? How were they different from your doors?)
  - Why did Thomas knock on the door of the school?
  - What is the message that Thomas says he tries to leave with schools?
  - What is one way your family can answer Christ's call to serve those who are knocking for food and other assistance throughout the world?
  - Some ideas:
    - PRAY: Pray for people throughout the world, especially for those who helped make your food, at each family meal
    - LEARN: Commit to learning about a different country in need where CRS serves each month (Go to [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org) and click on the header "Where We Serve")
    - ACT: Buy Fair Trade (or products that paid a fair wage in the local context of the country where it was made) coffee for your home (Go to [www.crsfairtrade.org/coffee](http://www.crsfairtrade.org/coffee))
    - GIVE: Help sponsor a project, like building irrigation systems and teach farmers how to plant so they have food in the harshest conditions (Go to [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org) and click on the tab "Gift Catalog" under the header "Donate")
    - SEASONAL: Participate in CRS Rice Bowl during Lent by *praying* together; *learning* about our global community and the challenges of hunger and poverty around the; *acting* by giving things up, or fasting, in solidarity with those who hunger; and *giving* sacrificial donations to those in need. 25% of CRS Rice Bowl earnings go toward poverty and hunger alleviation in your own community and 75% support CRS' humanitarian relief worldwide. (Go to [www.crsricebowl.org](http://www.crsricebowl.org))

## Evaluation and Closing Prayer: Open the Door to Jesus

Materials: Pass out evaluations and copies of the Open the Door to Jesus prayer.

### Evaluation

- Ask adult participants to complete evaluations and return them to the facilitator.

### Introduction

- Invite each person in the family to take a couple of minutes to fill in the blanks in the prayer.
- Tell each family member that you will open the prayer and that then each person will have the chance to read their prayer aloud. (If you have a large group, consider dividing it into 2-3 smaller groups and asking parents to lead the prayer.)

Say: *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,*

Each participant reads their prayer.

After each person has shared, say: *We gather all these prayers together. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## Open the Door to Jesus Prayer

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Dear Jesus,

Today I went through many doors.

I saw people who I know and care about, like: \_\_\_\_\_  
(names of people you saw)

I saw people who could use a friend or needed help, like: \_\_\_\_\_  
(names of people you saw)

Today with my family I learned about how you are calling me to answer the door when people in need throughout the world. The story or picture that meant the most to me was:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(story/picture that meant the most to you from the videos)

Jesus, help my family serve you by serving those in need throughout the world. I pray that together we will:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(something you hope to do together as a family)

Help us open the door to you!

Ansel Watts, unlocks the front door of his new home in Georgetown, Guyana. After being deported from the Bahamas back to his native Guyana two years ago for overstaying his visa Watts found himself living on the streets. He was sleeping on a sheet of cardboard outside of the Bourda market when he turned to the CRS sponsored Juncata Juvant Friendly Society (Things joined together are helpful) an assistance center for repatriated Guyanese. The center helped land him a job and him into temporary shelter.

Sara A. Fajardo /CRS



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## Session Two: Open the Door to Jesus in Your City

### Objective:

- Learn about Christ’s call to act to respect human dignity in your own city
- Participate in service experience and reflect together in light of our faith
- Learn about the work of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York

### Materials:

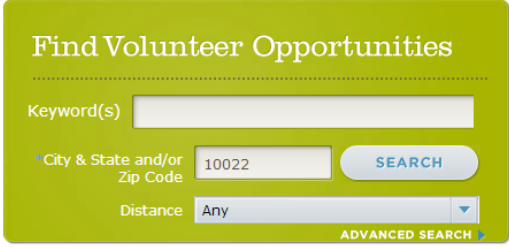
- Prayer space items: candle, cross, bible, etc.
- Paper for each family members
- Anything required for your particular service experience
- Copies of evaluation for each adult participant (page 12)

### Preparation:

- Try to schedule your service experience 4-6 weeks in advance. There are a variety of ways you can incorporate service into your family catechesis session. These include:
  - Service through Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York:
    - All of Catholic Charities’ volunteer opportunities are listed online by date, location, and type. To coordinate a volunteer opportunity for your group, please:

1. Visit the volunteer website: [www.catholiccharitiesnyvolunteer.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesnyvolunteer.org)

2. Search for a volunteer opportunity based on your needs by filling out the “Find Volunteer Opportunities” search function



\*Required

3. Click on the “express interest” button associated with that volunteer opportunity and wait for the volunteer coordinator to respond to your inquiry



Contact: [ccvolunteer@archny.org](mailto:ccvolunteer@archny.org) or (212) 371-1000 with questions

- With a local agency:
  - If your parish has a relationship with a local service organization.
- With your parish:
  - If your parish already takes part in some kind of on-site service (e.g. food packing or a parish food pantry), you could build this session around that service opportunity.



- Once you've scheduled the volunteer service, find out more about the service organization, including:
  - Dress code
  - Number of guests who can participate at any one time  
(Many organizations can only handle limited number of guests at a time. If this is the case, you might invite families to do this on their own or in groups and then gather all of them together at your parish for the reflection piece.)
  - Whether you can bring any food/item donation with you
  - Their mission and the specific needs of the community they serve
  - The pre and post-service prayer and reflection are simple and could all take place on-site at the service organization so that families can meet directly at the service site. Check in with the service site ahead of time to see if there is a space where it would be appropriate to pray and reflect on-site.
- Make sure to communicate all the requirements of the service organization to participating families several weeks in advance of the service, including that the experience will include a brief, post-service reflection.

For additional assistance, please contact Tom Dobbins, Justice & Peace Coordinator Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York.

Phone: (212) 371-1011, Ext. 2473 Email: [Thomas.dobbins@archny.org](mailto:Thomas.dobbins@archny.org)

**Session Two Schedule:**

5 minutes: Opening Prayer: Gospel Reading and Reflection

10 minutes: Preparation

1-3 hours: Service

20 minutes: Post-Service Reflection, Evaluations, and Closing Prayer

## Opening Prayer: Gospel Reading and Reflection

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Materials: Bible

### Introduction

- Invite a family member to re-read the Gospel passage from Luke 11:5-9 that was used for session one.

### Prayer and reflection

- Say in these or similar words:  
*In the name of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit, Christ Jesus, as we listen to this Gospel reading from Luke, help us to open our hearts to reflect on how you call us to see you knocking on the door during our service experience. (Signal the reader to begin).*

After the Gospel passage is read, say in these in similar words:

*Loving God, we pray for all those who we will connect with today in some way through our service experience—the people who run the service organization, those who receive the service offered, and all those who this service does not reach. Help us respond to our neighbors as you would like to be helped if your family were in need. May we meet others always with compassion and dignity. We ask this in your name, Amen.*

### Preparation

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Materials: Anything needed for your service experience.

### Reflection

- Remind families that we are called to care for the dignity of the human person in everyone we meet by answering the door to those who knock and that the US Church does this locally through Catholic Charities.
- Share Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York's mission statement:  
*Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York seeks to uphold the dignity of each person as made in the image of God by serving the basic needs of the poor, troubled, frail and oppressed of all religions. They collaborate with parishes, as well as non-Catholic and Catholic partners, to build a compassionate and just society. Through a network of administered, sponsored and affiliated agencies, Catholic Charities delivers, coordinates, and advocates for quality human services and programs touching almost every human need.*
- Ask:
  - Parents or guardians to take a moment to describe this mission into their own words to the children in their families. Re-read the mission statement if needed.
  - People to share their family's own expression of this mission with the large group.

[Note: This reflection on Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York's mission statement can be done even if the service experience is not with a Catholic Charities agency or program so that families learn about the work to serve the poor through the local Catholic Church.]

- Share with families about what they'll be doing in service and who they might meet.
- Share with your family and guidance about how to interact with guests and employees of the site.

## Service

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Materials: Anything identified by the service site, including appropriate attire.

## Activity

- Travel to the service site (if you do not do your reflection on-site) and spend time in compassionate service together.

## Post-Service Reflection, Evaluations, and Closing Prayer:

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Materials: Evaluations

### Reflection

- After your service experience, take some time to reflect together with families using some/all of these questions:
  - What did you notice about where we served?
  - Who did you meet?
  - What was your favorite part about what we did? What was most challenging?
  - How did you see Jesus knocking at the door?
  - What questions do you have?
  - How do you think we are called by God to continue to care for those in need as a family?

### Evaluation

- Ask adult participants to complete evaluations and return them to the facilitator

### Prayer

- Say in these or similar words:  
*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*  
*Dear Jesus, thank you for all of our blessings and for the gifts we receive from you who knock at our doors. We will take a moment now to voice any prayers we have of thanksgiving or of petition for our experience today and those we meet.*  
After people have a chance to voice these prayers...  
*We offer all these prayers and those we hold in our hearts through your name, Amen.*

## Evaluation by session participant

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Parish name: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the session(s) you participated in:

Open the Door to Jesus throughout the World

Open the Door to Jesus in your City

If you participated in service experience, please list what/where you volunteered:

\_\_\_\_\_

As a result of this session:

(Please write: Y (yes); N (no); S (somewhat))

My family learned that Christ calls us to serve those in need throughout the world

I have a better understanding of how the US Catholic Church serves the poor in need through Catholic Relief Services

I have a better understanding of how the Archdiocese of New York serves the poor in need through Catholic Charities

I learned how my family can get involved in the Church's work to serve the poor

Best part of the session(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Suggested improvement(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other topics you would like to learn about through family catechesis:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me about how I can get more involved in the work of Catholic Relief Services or Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Evaluation by session facilitator

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Parish name: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the session(s) you participated in:

Open the Door to Jesus throughout the World

Open the Door to Jesus in your City

If you participated in service experience, please list what/where you volunteered:

\_\_\_\_\_

This session:

(Please write: Y (yes); N (no); S (somewhat))

Was easy to use

Engaged families through the content

Engaged families through the format

Helped families learn about the US Catholic Church's work to serve the poor through CRS and Catholic Charities

Helped families understand that they are called by Christ to serve those in need throughout the world

Best part of the session(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Suggested improvement(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other topics you would like to learn about through family catechesis:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me about how I can get more involved in the work of Catholic Relief Services or Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send all completed evaluations to: CRS NEMA, 150 N. Radnor Chester Rd. Suite 120 F. Radnor, PA 19087.