

# Step up to the plate workshop



The optional PowerPoint for this workshop is at [cafod.org.uk/secondary](http://cafod.org.uk/secondary)

**For:** Secondary teachers and chaplains, CAFOD school volunteers, CAFOD young leaders.

**Length:** 45 minutes

**Learning objectives:**

- young people will understand some of the ways our global food system is broken and how these affect small food producers overseas
- they will have had an opportunity to respond by praying and by taking part in CAFOD's campaign.

**Structure:**

- Step into their shoes – experience some injustices of the food system
- Animation – find out the facts, what's going wrong and who is affected
- Case study discussion – a story of hope: meet Toma in her eco-village in Bangladesh
- Campaign action - with adaptable tem'plates'
- Prayer – pray for people affected by the broken global food system.

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## Step 1: Step into their shoes (5 mins)

This activity involves students making decisions about how food will be produced. They discover that what might seem wise choices can have unfortunate consequences.

**Aim:** Children and young people gain some experience of injustices in the global food system.

**Age:** KS2 - 5

**Duration:** 10 minutes including the debrief

**What you need:** A large space, hall/playground/large classroom with tables moved. (Alternatively, give students one point every time they say yes. Those with no points at the end are the winners).

**What to do:** Ask the participants to stand in a line, side by side, at one side of the room.

### SCRIPT

Each of you is from a different country. You will make decisions about how your country will grow food. You need to make good decisions about how to feed the people who live in our world. Countries who make the best decisions, will win (*insert an appropriate reward!*)  
I am going to ask you a question and you will have five seconds to decide what to do.

**Question 1** – You have the chance to buy special seeds that are promised to grow big, healthy crops. Do you say yes, or no? 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, stop! If your answer is yes, take two steps forward; if no, stay where you are.

*If time, after each question, ask one or two students why they chose to move forwards. But don't reveal whether you agree that it was a good choice.*

**Question 2** – A big company has asked your government to sell them land, so that they can grow soya beans to sell around the world. Do you say yes, or no? 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, stop! If your answer is yes, take two steps forward; if no, stay where you are.

**Question 3** – You have the chance to buy pesticides that will kill pests and protect your crops. Do you say yes, or no? 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, stop! If your answer is yes, take two steps forward; if no, stay where you are.

**Question 4** – You have been advised to buy fertilisers, to help your farms produce bigger harvests. Will you say yes, or no? 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, stop! If your answer is yes, take two steps forward; if no, stay where you are.

**Question 5** – A big company wants to buy lots of your land so that it can breed cattle to produce beef. Will you say yes, or no? 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, stop! If your answer is yes, take two steps forward; if no, stay where you are.

Thank you. People at the back, congratulations, your country has saved its land to grow a variety of healthy, sustainable crops that feed its people and have some left over to share. You are the winners!

*Ideally, this will result in some consternation and some of those who did not win might argue that they made better choices. Allow some objections to be voiced, then ask participants to return to their seats to watch the animation, then to debrief.*

## Step 2: Animation (5 mins)

Explore our *Step up to the plate* animation with your students to give them an understanding of six pieces of our global food system that are broken. The animation is at [cafod.org.uk/secondary](http://cafod.org.uk/secondary)



## Step 3: Step into their shoes - debrief (5 mins)

**Who bought the special seeds?** Your seeds had been altered so that the crops produced no seeds to plant the following year. So, your farmers had to buy seeds again and again. Your farmers got into debt and couldn't grow enough food to eat or to sell.

**Hands up if you decided to sell land to grow soya.** Growing soya for the world sounded a great idea. But soya is mostly used for chicken food. Yes, eventually people eat chicken, but land that is used to grow vegetables, fruit and grains, feeds far more people.

**Who said yes to pesticides?** They helped produce a big harvest the first year, but harvests became smaller each year. The chemicals in the pesticides poisoned the land, making it harder to grow food. What's more, they were so expensive that farmers in your country became poorer and hungrier.

**How many of you bought the fertilisers?** Unfortunately, fossil fuels were used to produce and transport them, making the climate crisis even worse. More storms, floods and droughts mean less food for everyone.

**Who sold land for raising beef?** That land was in the rainforest and the trees that were cut down had been protecting the world from climate change. Also, the land was being used by local people growing a variety of foods. They could no longer feed their families or local communities.

**Consider:**

- How did you feel when your country was offered these opportunities?
- Do you think real country leaders would react as you did? Why/why not?
- How do you think small-scale farmers feel when their land is taken from them, or when they have to buy seeds every year?
- The way the world produces and shares food is called the global food system. You have just experienced some of the problems of our broken food system. What were they? (Prompt: When you let foreign companies grow food in your country, what happened?) Our broken food system speeds up climate change, damages the soil, supports big companies while driving many small food producers into poverty, and causes hunger around the world. 1 person in 10 is hungry, even though our world has more than enough food for everyone
- If you were a world leader, what would you do to solve one of those problems?

CAFOD believes the broken food system can be fixed. More on this later.

First, let's meet some communities that are growing food in sustainable ways.

## **Step 4: Case study (15 mins)**

Give out copies of the Eco-villages case study. Read it together. As you do so, challenge students to identify whenever they spot a mention of one of the problems of the global food system (climate crisis, land, chemical fertilisers, seeds). They could do this by raising a hand, shouting out "Fix the food system!", or by underlining in the case study text. Then discuss the questions.

There are four images of Toma on the workshop PowerPoint.

## Eco-villages

Toma is 10 years old. She lives in southern Bangladesh, not far from the sea, with her parents, grandparents, older sister and five-year-old brother.

### Climate crisis

In Toma's area, the climate crisis is causing more and stronger tropical storms that flood the land with sea water and make the soil salty. This kills many plants and makes it hard to grow food.

### Eco-villages

Some of Toma's community received training from Bangladesh Association for Sustainable Development (BASD) in ways to grow food even where the land is salty. Everyone shared what they had learned and BASD supported the community to become an eco-village - a village where the community is committed to living sustainably.

### Permaculture

BASD train people to use "permaculture". This is a way to grow food and live sustainably, without wasting anything. Food scraps are used to make compost. No chemical fertilisers are used.

Toma said: "We use permaculture here—we make our own fertilisers at home—so it helps plants to grow."

Toma's house is surrounded by greenery. She enjoys helping her parents in the garden and has planted fruit trees like papaya and mango, as well as vegetables.

"The vegetables we eat come from our garden, like wax gourd, water gourd, pumpkins, and more. The stuff we grow is much tastier, and I've been told it's healthier too."

### Seed saving

In some parts of the world, a big company has bought legal rights so that it 'owns' some of the most popular seeds. Farmers must buy the seeds from the company, making them poorer.

But in Toma's community, people grow crops that produce seeds. They can save the seeds and plant them the next year. This is free, is more sustainable and means that people can swap and share seeds.

### Children's club

Toma attends a children's club set up by BASD. She says, "That's where I learnt all about the importance of planting trees and how to plant them. It was closed for a while during the pandemic, but I used to go before Covid too. There, I learnt that using organic fertiliser is good to help trees grow."

"The other thing I've learnt is that trees give us oxygen, and make our environment safe, because trees can protect us during storms by making the winds slow down."

### Local market

The children planted trees together at the school. Toma told us: "It wasn't something our teachers told us to do, we decided to do it ourselves. We planted lots of trees in our school, and flowers and vegetables too. Our teachers then helped us to sell them at the market, and then we donated the money to our school."

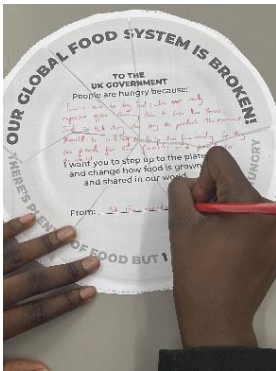


**Discussion questions:**

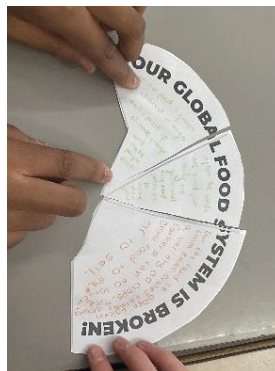
- Why is it difficult to grow food in Toma’s area?
- What is permaculture?
- What is good about the trees and vegetables that Toma’s family grows?
- Which problems in our food system are Toma’s community avoiding or solving? (Climate crisis, land, chemical fertilisers, seeds. Students may also spot that some produce is sold in a local market, rather than crops being grown for export.)
- What might the world learn from Toma’s community to help us grow food more fairly and responsibly?

**Step 5: Campaign action (10 mins)**

A downloadable template with instructions is on our website. This task is differentiated.



Either copy one of page 1 per student, to write scaffolded messages.



Or, for the more able, copy page 2 at A3 size and cut up to give one piece of blank plate to each student and allow them to write their own messages.

**REMEMBER to complete the form at [cafod.org.uk/secondary](http://cafod.org.uk/secondary), so that we can tell the UK Government how many young people are voicing concerns about the broken food system.**  
 Post photos of your plates tagging @CAFODSchools or email them to [schools@cafod.org.uk](mailto:schools@cafod.org.uk).

More details of what CAFOD is asking the UK Government to do on this issue are on our website.

**Step 6: Prayer (5 mins)**

Begin and end by making the Sign of the Cross. We suggest a moment of settling and silence before praying the prayer together, and an opportunity for students to make a simple, unspoken response, for example by placing their completed plates next to a candle, globe or other focal point. There is a slide with this prayer in the workshop PowerPoint.

Jesus, you understand what it is like to be hungry.  
 Teach us to have grateful and generous hearts.  
 Forgive us when we waste food or don't want to share.

You welcomed everyone to your table.  
 Remind us that all are invited to share the feast, as one family,  
 who share one common home.

You fed the hungry crowds.  
 Open our eyes to the needs of others  
 and help us to follow your example of love and service.

You come to us as bread and wine.  
 Fill us with your kindness.  
 Give us the appetite and strength to change our world for the better. Amen

## Menu of extras

If you have a justice group in school, or have Year Group retreats this term, why not do some food-themed extension activities? Here are some of our ideas, but we know how creative you are – so please do let us know what you've done, so that we can spread the word! [schools@cafod.org.uk](mailto:schools@cafod.org.uk) Thank you.

- Ceramics or art project – design plates that convey a message about the global food system, use broken plates to create mosaics, or investigate the Japanese art of *Kintsugi* which repairs smashed pottery using seams of gold.
- Music project – write a piece of music that conveys brokenness being made whole.
- Playlist – put together a playlist of food-based tracks to accompany your next school event.
- Writing - write an article for school and parish newsletters to explain what you have learnt and tell people how they can help by getting involved in the CAFOD campaign.
- Be creative - use Tik-Tok, Instagram or another social media platform to share how the food system is broken and how people can help.
- Home economics – design a menu that includes Fairtrade ingredients. Display your menus with information about how the food is grown fairly and the difference this makes to the farmers.
- Global justice meal - people receive a ticket as they enter. A mark on the reverse tells them whether they are assigned to the 'rich' table where they receive waiter service and a full meal, or the 'hungry' corner where they receive a bowl of plain rice and only water to drink. Encourage participants to reflect and share how they feel. Show the *Step up to the plate* animation.

