

Clean Water and the Right to Thrive

Objective:

Students will examine the role of water access as it relates to human well-being and education, understand environmental injustice in rural Haiti, and connect clean water access to racial and social equity.

Materials Needed:

- Program description and photos provided below, to demonstrate how collecting rainwater helps Haitians prosper.
- [Infographic](#) Water Use Around the World
- World map
- Student reflection journals

Lesson Plan (40 min)

1. Opening Question (5 min)

Ask: “How many times did you use water today?”

Then: “What if clean water wasn’t available—how would that affect your day?”

Introduce the idea: water access is both a human right and a justice issue.

2. Slideshow (10 min)

Use the images and corresponding story provided below to explain the process on how families in Gros Morne, Haiti, use the rainwater they collect from rooftops into 500- to 2,000-gallon ferrocement cisterns.

- How water access improved health, hygiene, or agriculture
- Impacts on school attendance and daily life

3. Small Group or Class Discussion: Water & Injustice (10 min)

Share the infographic showing unequal water access worldwide. Students in small groups discuss:

- Who has access to clean water? Who doesn’t?
- What role does race, geography, or poverty play?
- What are the long-term consequences of limited water access?

5. Reflection & Wrap-Up (10 min)

Students journal in response to: “How does caring for the Earth also mean standing up for justice for people (like Haitians)?”

Exit Ticket (5 min):

Write one action you could take to support clean water access globally or locally.

MFOH's Rainwater Harvesting Program description with corresponding images

Mercy Focus on Haiti trained local masons in Gros Morne, Haiti, to build ferrocement cisterns next to homes, schools, farms, and churches. These cisterns collect and store rainwater from the adjacent rooftops, providing families with a local source of water.

Families who receive a cistern, help by carrying locally purchased building materials to the construction site. This "sweat equity" gives them a sense of ownership and pride. Each family also agree to care for the cistern and to share the collected rainwater with their neighbors. The stored rainwater is used for washing, cooking, and growing food in their yard gardens and/or the neighborhood farm. They use an additional household filter or boil the water to make it potable for drinking.

If the families grow more food than they need, they can sell the extra produce at the market. The income helps them buy other necessities for the family and pay for their children's education. Families also share seeds and seedlings so more people in the community can grow food.

This program provides a local source of water so mothers and children no longer have to walk miles to the river or nearest well, but it also creates jobs and improves food security.









