

# JUST EATING?

## *Practicing Our Faith at the Table*

MIDDLE SCHOOL VERSION



### **PROGRAM PARTNERS**

Advocate Health Care  
Church World Service  
Presbyterian Hunger Program,  
PC(USA)



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## ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Rev Neddy Astudillo**, Latino Ministry,  
First Presbyterian Church of Beloit

**Rev. Tracy Heilman**, Director,  
Religious Education, Community  
UCC, Champaign, IL

**Rev. James Kenady**, Lead Community  
Liaison, Chicago Consortium to  
Lower Obesity in Chicago's Children  
(CLOCC)

**Yun Hui Kim**, PhD, Student in Eco-  
feminist Theology

**Cheryl Magrini**, Minister of Christian  
Education, First United Methodist  
Church

**Rev. Mike Mulberry**, Pastor,  
Community UCC, Champaign, IL

**Rev. Dr. James Roghair**, Interim  
Pastor, First Presbyterian Church,  
Chicago, IL

**Deb Shamlin**, Director of Christian  
Education, First Congregational  
Church, Evanston, IL

**Mary Emily Wells**, Student, Yale  
University

**Deborah Gilbert White**, PhD,  
Associate for Cultural Proficiency,  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

## STAFF

**Andrew Kang Bartlett**, Associate  
for National Hunger Concerns,  
Presbyterian Hunger Program,  
PC(USA)

**Tom Hampson**, Associate for  
Development Resources, Church  
World Service

**Julia Jones**, Assistant Regional  
Director, Church World Service

**Rev. Kirsten Peachey**, Director,  
Congregational Health Partnerships,  
Advocate Health Care

**Janet Young**, Regional Director,  
Church World Service

## PILOT CHURCHES

*Community United Church of Christ*,  
Champaign, IL

*First Congregational Church*, Evanston, IL

*First United Methodist Church*,  
Modesto, CA

*Primera Iglesia Congregacional/First  
Congregational Church*, Chicago, IL

## WRITERS

**Holly Johnson** is the writer for the *Just Eating?* Middle School Version. Most recently, Holly served as the Assistant Director of Campus Ministry and Service at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. She has directed numerous youth ministry programs and has written curricula and articles for the web-based Akaloo discipleship program, national ELCA initiatives, and Holden Village. For seven years, Holly coordinated a weekend-long Justice Training for high school youth called *Let Justice Roll*. She has also led Lutheran Peace Fellowship Trainings for young people and adults and workshops with youth directors and pastors on Service Learning with youth groups. Holly is currently a seminarian at the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in California.

**Jennifer Halteman Schrock**, M.Div., wrote the original *Just Eating?* curriculum. She is a freelance writer and active lay member of the Mennonite Church U.S.A.

## PHOTO CREDITS

**Cover:** David Young, Paul Jeffrey/Action by  
Churches Together, Andrew Kang Bartlett

**Session 1 divider:**  
David Abazs, Andrew Kang Bartlett

**Session 2 divider:**  
Faith in Place [www.faithinplace.org](http://www.faithinplace.org)

**Session 3 divider:** Andrew Kang Bartlett

**Session 4 divider:**  
Faith in Place [www.faithinplace.org](http://www.faithinplace.org)

**Session 5 divider:** Andrew Kang Bartlett

## ARTISTS

**Artwork:** Eunice Cudzewicz, MMS  
**Design/Production:** Terri Gilmore

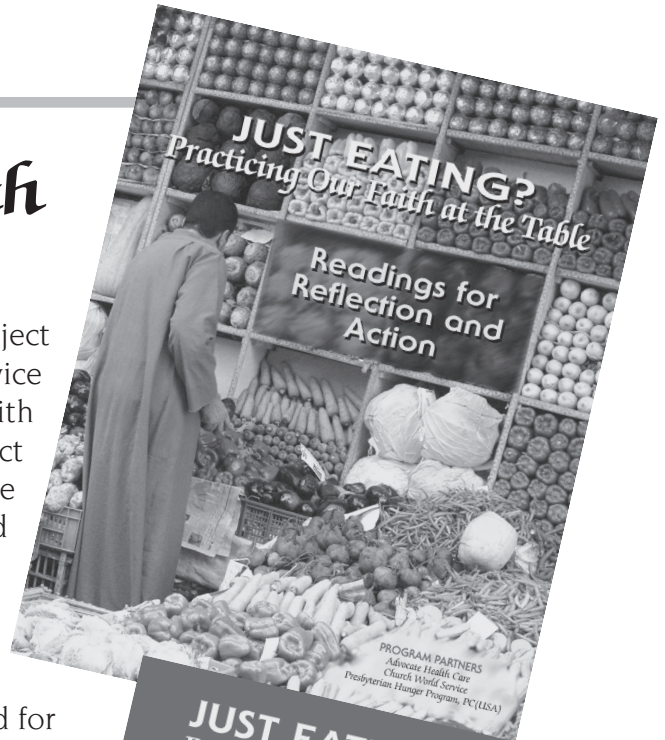
# JUST EATING?

## Practicing Our Faith at the Table

is a curriculum series developed as a joint project of Advocate Health Care, Church World Service and the Presbyterian Hunger Program with funding support from The Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith and the Genesis Fund of the United Church of Christ.

The curriculum explores how practicing our faith is foundational to meaningful and healthy living, for ourselves, for the earth and for others in the world. In particular, the program asks us to consider how eating—one of the most basic human activities—is an invitation to experience God and to journey with others in the world.

Since **Just Eating?** was published in 2005, congregations and people of faith around the country have used it to build awareness and lay the groundwork for ministries around food, faith and justice. In 2007, we successfully submitted another grant to the Valparaiso Project to adapt the curriculum for middle school children. This population seemed like a pivotal group to address since youth at this age are beginning to form ideas and practices that will carry them into adulthood. We also hoped that having a curriculum available to this age group would allow congregations to take up the **Just Eating?** study series as an intergenerational activity and inspire conversation among youth and adults about what it means to eat as a practice of faith, both individually and corporately.



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## PROGRAM PARTNERS

### ***Advocate Health Care***

Advocate Health Care is a faith-based health system serving the metropolitan Chicago area. Affiliated with the United Church of Christ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Advocate has nine hospitals with 3,500 beds and over 200 sites of care. Advocate's mission is to serve the health needs of individuals, families and communities through a wholistic philosophy rooted in our fundamental understanding of human beings as created in the image of God.



Because Advocate is a faith-based organization, its relationship with congregations is an important part of its identity and service. These relationships are nurtured primarily through the Office for Mission and Spiritual Care, Parish Nurse Ministry and the Congregational Health Partnerships (CHP) program. CHP works with faith communities to develop and support ministries of healing for the congregation and community.

### ***Church World Service***

Church World Service is a cooperative ministry of 35 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations, providing sustainable self-help and development, disaster relief, and refugee assistance around the world.



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE**

Within the United States, Church World Service assists communities in responding to disasters, resettles refugees, promotes fair national and international policies, provides educational resources, and offers opportunities to join a people-to-people network of local and global caring through participation in CROP Hunger Walks as well as the Blankets+ and the CWS Kit Programs.

### ***Presbyterian Hunger Program, PC(USA)***

The Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP), a ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), works to alleviate hunger and eliminate its causes, responding with compassion and justice to poor and hungry people in local communities, in the United States, and throughout the world. PHP provides grants for direct food relief, development assistance, public policy advocacy, hunger education, and lifestyle integrity. PHP's Joining Hands program offers an innovative strategy for holistic international hunger ministry; Enough for Everyone provides concrete ways for congregations to act as faithful disciples in the global economy; the Food & Faith initiative brings awareness about the need to build food systems that are socially just and sustain the integrity of God's creation.





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This session will remind us that God's love for us includes our bodies and that what we put into our bodies can have a positive or negative impact on our health.

<b>Session 2: Are You Starving . . . . .</b>	<b>pages 27-41</b>
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This session will help your group understand hunger and its root causes—and how each person can be a part of the solution.

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This session will look at the environmental impact of some of our current food practices, and offer solutions for caring for the earth through the food choices

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This session will highlight how sharing food is sacred, and how eating creates community and gives us opportunities to learn and grow together.

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This session will help your group make the links between all of the sessions, and also ask: Now that you've studied this stuff, what kind of difference might it make for how you live?

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# JUST EATING?

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## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

**Just Eating?** While the phrase could mean only eating, the word **just** also means “being honorable and fair in one’s dealings.” This play on words captures a paradox that this curriculum will help you address with young people. Eating can be something you “just do” or it can be part of practicing our faith.

**What does it mean to practice our faith at the table?** The **Just Eating?** curriculum will help young people better understand the relationship between our faith and our food. Drawing on Jesus’ story and the rituals of the Christian faith, this curriculum will look at four interconnected aspects of our lives with food:

- How food choices affect our health
- How our choices affect the earth
- How our choices affect others
- How we use food to create friend and family bonds with others

Through activities, Bible stories and illustrations in story, song and screen, your group will be challenged to think about each of these areas, to see how they relate to each other, and to consider what our choices have to do with our faith. Your group will try new foods and new faith practices related to food, and consider what changes you might make individually and as a group as a result of what you have learned about the connection of food and faith.



# Objectives of this Curriculum

- To find out what our food choices have to do with our faith
- To explore our day-to-day eating habits, and their connection to the needs of the broader world
- To learn to be intentional and aware in the choices we make every day related to food and justice
- To support each other in taking personal and group actions that reach beyond this five week curriculum

## Your role as the leader

- Help your group get acquainted and bond as a group
- Prepare for each group session. Some activities will need advance planning.
- Lead group sessions
- Provide participants with daily activities throughout the week (this could be done through a website, e-mail, or handouts)

## Format

This curriculum includes a leader's guide outlining group sessions for each of the five group sessions. It is geared towards once a week meetings for five weeks, but could also be extended. The curriculum could also be used as part of a week-long service trip, or in a weekend retreat.

In most cases, each session has much more than you can do in one hour. This curriculum gives you lots of activities to choose from in order to tailor your experience to your group's needs and experiences. In some sessions there are enough ideas for two or three sessions. For example, during the hunger week, you could have one week that focused on domestic or local hunger, and one week that looked at global hunger, followed by a week where you serve an agency that addresses hunger, and/or a week when you use one of the activities to educate others in your congregation. Ideas for how to adapt for those circumstances will be listed at the end of each session.

Each session includes:

1. Key ideas behind each session
2. Ideas for Openers, Learning Activities, Bible Ties, and Closers
3. Short activities for group members to do at home each day of the week
4. Ideas for if you have more time, or if you are on a trip
5. Resources and links for more information
6. Faith in Action next steps: Now that you know what you know, what will you do?

Many of the resources are things you can find on the web or print off of the web. Be sure you go through these before class to make sure that the resource is still active and to mark the page for easy access when you are with the group.

## Notes about the Daily Activities for your group

***At the end of the session are ideas for daily activities:***

**Monday's Memory** will have young people thinking and journaling or listing something from their past.

**Tuesday's Test** will be a short quiz or assignment that deals with what you talked about for the week. Some of these are from resources online.

**Wednesday's Word** is a short quote that deals with the theme for the week. Ask your group to ponder these words and write a paragraph or a few thoughts answering one of these questions:

- What do you think the quote means?
- What does this have to do with what we talked about last week?
- What do these words make you think about?
- Do you agree with the quote?

**Thursday's Tune** will connect them to a song that has something to do with that week's theme. (They'll likely need a computer for this.)

**Friday's Food** asks participants to eat a new food, try a certain kind of meal, or learn to cook something. If cooking is not convenient for Friday, feel free to switch the days around.

**Saturday's Scene** will direct people to a scene, often on YouTube, which will highlight something from the week. (Please see note below about YouTube.)

**Sunday's Site** will have participants learning more about the week's theme from an organization or educational site.

Distribute the material with each week's theme in whatever way works best for you. Here are a couple of ideas:

- Print the daily activities on one side of a sheet of paper, with the "prayer for the week" for them to use at home on the other side.
- Each day, e-mail the group about what their daily activity is. This may seem laborious, but you could enter in all of your participants into a "group" and then write the short e-mail with that day's activity and save it into your "drafts" folder. Then it is ready to go when you get to the right day of the week. The advantage of doing this is that on days when they need to go to a webpage, participants can just click on the link provided, rather than entering it by hand.

- Put the information on a website. (Again, this will make it easy for participants to click on a link.)

**\*Notes on the internet:** As with the world, the internet includes lots of things we wish young people wouldn't be exposed to. The internet is here though—all around us, and young people are using it. Just like television, music, and videos, it's not going to go away. This curriculum asks young people to use the internet in positive ways—toward good content on the internet that will engage them in learning about the world and the need to care for it—on their own terms.

Please use your own discretion on this issue. If your particular community or the age group of your group does not have access to the internet, or you are uncomfortable with directing your young people to a particular site, then you can leave out those daily activities. Just like with the rest of the curriculum, you have choices about what will work with your group and what won't.

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## Reflection Questions for the Cover and Divider Photographs

The curriculum cover and section divider photographs can provide a starting point for conversation about that section's topic. You can use the questions below to guide discussion, or feel free to change them or make up questions of your own. There are no right or wrong answers and students should be encouraged to share their immediate impressions, thoughts and feelings.

As you look at this photograph:

- How does the picture make you feel?
- What is one of the first things that you notice?
- What do you think is happening here?
- What do you think happened before the picture was taken? After?
- Does this remind you of some experience you've had?
- Is there something about the photo that is different from your experiences?
- Is there anything in this photo that you are curious about?
- What would you like to ask the person(s) you're looking at?
- Today we are talking about \_\_\_\_\_ (topic)\_\_\_\_\_. Do you see anything in this photo that might tell you something about \_\_\_\_\_(topic)\_\_\_\_\_?



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# The Five Themes

## ***Session One: Take care of yourself!***

This session will remind us that God's love for us includes our bodies and that what we put into our bodies can have a positive or negative impact on our health.

## ***Session Two: Are you starving?***

This session will help your group understand hunger and its root causes—and how each person can be a part of the solution.

## ***Session Three: “Earth to people, hello? Are you there?”***

This session will look at the environmental impact of some of our current food practices, and offer solutions for caring for the earth through the food choices we make.

## ***Session Four: Feast and Celebration!***

This session will highlight how sharing food is sacred, and how eating creates community and gives us opportunities to learn and grow together.

## ***Session Five: So What? Now What?***

This session will help your group make the links between all of the sessions, and also ask: Now that you've studied this stuff, what kind of difference might it make for how you live?

# S E S S I O N 1

## *Take Care of Yourself!*





# SESSION 1

## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF



*T*hese activities will help your group think about the food choices they make, and the impact food has on our bodies. Does God care about how we treat our bodies? You will discover what the Bible says about that and look at what people in the Bible ate. See the **Key Ideas** for more information about this session.

### Bible Ties



Pick an opener, a couple of learning activities, close with the faith practice and a prayer, and send your group home with more learning experiences all week long.

### Closers



- Faith Practice
- Prayer for the Week



### Openers

- Eat a Rainbow!
- What's in a Strawberry Shake?

### Learning Activities



- Can You Give Me a Definition, Please?
- Pop—the Question
- Health in Jeopardy Game
- The Story of the Edible Schoolyard

*If you have more time/If you're on a service trip/retreat*

*Take Care All Week Long!*

*For More Information*

*Now that you know what you know, what can you do?  
(Faith in Action Steps)*

# SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

### Key Ideas

- God's love for us includes our bodies.
- Unsaturated fats, whole grains, vegetable sources of protein, and plenty of fruits and vegetables are the keys to a healthy diet.
- We are not alone in our decisions about food.
- We live in a society that discourages healthy eating.

### Openers



### Eat a Rainbow!

For a snack today, bring in a platter of fruits and/or vegetables that come from every color of the rainbow. Each color gives us different nutrients and antioxidants, so it

is important to eat from the rainbow! We have provided a chart for your own information that shows the different advantages of each color, along with some fruits and vegetables in each color. You could also assign a color to people the week before and have them bring a fruit or vegetable to share with the group.

Have each person take one piece of food from each of the colors, and ask them to wait until everyone is ready. Go through each color and ask them to take one bite, and as they chew, read why that color is important to our diets.

### Sample Script

Take a bite of red food. This color of food contains phytonutrients, one of which is called lycopenes. Lycopenes help prevent prostate cancer and protect against heart disease.

Take a bite of orange fruit. This color of food has vitamin C, beta-carotene and limonoids; they are

good for your eyes and good for your lungs, and help fight germs. When you start to feel like you are getting a cold, you should eat more vitamin C! Take a bite of yellow food. Yellow food has many of the same things that orange food has, and some of them have potassium, which helps your muscles work right and not get too tired. If you have muscle cramps, you probably need more potassium.

Take a bite of green food. Green food has lots of good stuff in it—two things are protein and calcium. Eating dark green food can help you get protein and calcium from a low fat, non-animal food.

Take a bite of blue food. Blue food is brain food—it helps keep your memory sharp. It also has lots of vitamins in it.

Take a bite of purple food. Some purple foods have anti-inflammatory agents in them. Inflammation, or swelling, causes a range of problems, from heart disease to infections, to headaches, to knee swelling, to red zits! Anti-inflammatory agents help reduce the swelling.

### Questions:

1. What color food do you like the best?
2. What color is hardest for us to get here?
3. What color of food grows around here, and when?
4. How could you eat more food in the rainbow—what creative ways can you think of eating fruits and vegetables?

### What's in a Strawberry Shake?

#### To Prepare

Supplies needed: Triple Thick Strawberry Shake from McDonalds or some other fast-food restaurant in your area, blender, ice cream, strawberries, honey, and vanilla.

#### To Play

This is a taste test. You will make a strawberry shake, and put it up against a Triple Thick Shake from McDonalds or a shake from a fast-food restaurant in your area. Try blind samples (pour



them into similar cups) with these questions in mind:

1. Can you tell the difference between the two?
2. Which one do you like better?
3. What is in each of them?

Pass out the list of ingredients (see Leader Resources section for copy-ready versions of both milk shake recipes). While we have supplied a list of ingredients in a Triple Thick Strawberry Shake from McDonald's, you can probably find nutrition information and ingredients for whatever chain is in your area.

4. Should you eat something that has so many ingredients that aren't actually food?

### **Recipe for a homemade strawberry shake**

(Make enough for your group.)

- ½ cup cream
- ½ cup milk
- 1 tbsp. vanilla
- 1 tbsp. honey
- 1 cup strawberries
- crushed ice

Put all ingredients in a blender and blend until thick.

### **Recipe for a McDonald's shake:**

From [www.mcdonalds.com](http://www.mcdonalds.com): **Strawberry Triple Thick® Shake:**

Vanilla reduced fat ice cream: Milk, sugar, cream, nonfat milk solids, corn syrup solids, mono- and diglycerides, guar gum, dextrose, sodium citrate, artificial vanilla flavor, sodium phosphate, carrageenan, disodium phosphate, cellulose gum, vitamin A palmitate. Strawberry syrup: Sugar, water, corn syrup, strawberries, high fructose corn syrup, natural (botanical source) and artificial flavors, pectin, citric acid, xanthan gum, potassium sorbate (preservative), caramel color, calcium chloride, red 40.

(The artificial flavoring contains the following chemicals): amyl acetate, amyl butyrate, amyl valerate, anethol, anisyl formate, benzyl acetate, benzyl isobutyrate, butyric acid, cinnamyl isobutyrate, cinnamyl valerate, cognac essential oil, diacetyl, dipropyl ketone, ethyl butyrate, ethyl cinnamate, ethyl heptanoate, ethyl heptylate, ethyl lactate, ethyl methylphenylglycidate, ethyl nitrate, ethyl propionate, ethyl valerate, heliotropin,

hydroxyphenyl- 2-butanone (10% solution in alcohol), ionone, isobutyl anthranilate, isobutyl butyrate, lemon essential oil, maltol, 4-methylacetophenone, methyl anthranilate, methyl benzoate, methyl cinnamate, methyl heptine carbonate, methyl naphthyl ketone, methyl salicylate, mint essential oil, neroli essential oil, nerolin, neryl isobutyrate, orris butter, phenethyl alcohol, rose, rum ether, γ-undecalactone, vanilla and solvent. (from *Chew on This*, Schlosser and Wilson, p. 114)

## **Learning Activities**



### **Can You Give Me a Definition, Please?**

This word-matching activity will help your group learn the words that are important to know about healthy food and unhealthy food.

#### **To Prepare**

- See the Leader Resources section for preprinted words and definitions. Separate the words from the answers by cutting them apart. You can also use Powerpoint or an overhead projector to project the words on a screen for the class.
- Put the words on index cards. You can cut the words out from the Leader Resources list and glue them to the cards, or you can rewrite them.

#### **To Play**

1. Split your group in two.
2. Flip a coin to see which group goes first. The winner gets to choose whether they go first or second.
3. The starting team gets first guess at the question.
4. With index cards in hand, fanned out, have the first group pick a card.
5. When they see the word, have them guess which definition fits the word. If they get the answer wrong, the other team gets to guess, with each question being worth a point.
6. The winner of the question gets first guess at the next question.

## Words and Definitions

Vitamins	Nutrients the body needs in small amounts to grow and stay strong. Examples are vitamins A, C, and E. Fruits and vegetables are good sources of these!
Antioxidants	Molecules that help stop oxidation by free radicals. Oxidation is when molecules that are missing an electron steal electrons from other molecules. Free radical activity can damage cells in your body. Found in many fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, meat and fish.
Calcium	A mineral that keeps your bones strong. This is why you should drink milk!
Whole grains	Foods made from the entire grain seed. Examples: whole wheat bread or brown rice
Carbohydrates	A good source of energy! Find these in foods like bread, pasta, and rice.
Protein	Helps your body grow and repair itself and gives you energy. You can find this in meat, nuts, cheese, and eggs.
Cholesterol	A waxy substance in your blood. If you eat too much (especially from factory-farmed meat or fat sources*) it can cause heart disease.
Saturated fats	A type of fat that can be harmful if you eat too much. They are solid at room temperature—like cheese and butter.
Calories	A way we measure energy found in food. Young females should have about 2,200 a day, young males about 2,500.
Starch	A complex carbohydrate that won't dissolve in water. This is found in some vegetables like corn and potatoes.

*\* Unlike grain-fed livestock, pasture-raised/grass-fed animal meat and dairy products have ample good cholesterol and fats that your body requires for healthy development.*

## Pop—the Question

### To Prepare

Supplies needed: 12-ounce glass, sugar, can of regular soda, teaspoon.

### To Play

Do this demonstration together: Spoon 10 teaspoons of sugar into the glass to demonstrate the average amount of sugar in a can of soda. Now, read off the rest of the ingredients. Today the average American drinks about 54 gallons of soda a year, or about 575 cans a year (from *Chew On This*, Schlosser and Wilson, p. 143).

### Questions:

1. Figure out, if you had one 12-ounce soda a day, how much sugar would that be in a year? Try to find a visual aid that would

demonstrate that amount of sugar (e.g., would it make a pile as big as a refrigerator? As a semitruck? As a bread basket?).

2. Is it worth it to consume that much of something that has no nutrients?
3. Ask if anyone knows what sugar does in the body. Here are four things to talk about:
  - Steals vitamins and minerals from your body to help it get processed in the body
  - Gets stored as fat if it's not quickly burned off through exercise
  - Can cause hyperactivity and depression, especially in kids
  - Can cause tooth decay

(There are many other effects. You can print out a list at [ezinearticles.com/?Why-is-Refined-Sugar---Known-As-White-Sugar---Bad-for-You?&id=119462](http://ezinearticles.com/?Why-is-Refined-Sugar---Known-As-White-Sugar---Bad-for-You?&id=119462).)

## Health in Jeopardy Game

### To Prepare

Make up a *Health in Jeopardy* board big enough for your class to see. (See a sample in the Leader Resources section.) Also find something that will work as a buzzer or bell for each person (or each pair).

### To Play

There are five categories: Wholly Grains, It's Fruity, Veg Out, Protein Power, Everything But the Kitchen Sink. Below are the questions for each category. Have people guess a number to see who will go first. That person selects a category and a dollar amount. Read the question until someone buzzes in with an answer. If they get the answer right, they pick the next question. If they get the answer wrong, go to the next person who buzzed.

You may want to have an assistant keep track of the score and help determine which person buzzed in first. Remember, as in the television show *Jeopardy*, *Health in Jeopardy* answers are worded as a question.

### Sample question and answer:

**Question:** This is a main ingredient in traditional spaghetti sauce:

**Answer:** What are tomatoes?

## Questions and Answers

### Wholly Grains

100: This grain product makes good sandwiches:

Answer: What is **bread**?

200: Grains give us this for energy:

Answer: What are **carbohydrates**?



- 300: This grain is eaten at almost every meal in Asian countries, and some others:  
Answer: What is **rice**?
- 500: Parts of the grain, such as the bran, that help facilitate healthy elimination:  
Answer: What is **fiber**?
- 1000: A grain that has not been refined, and still has bran, wheat germ and all the original minerals, protein and vitamins in it:  
Answer: What is **whole grain**?

## It's Fruity

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- 100: An old saying says that one of these a day is said to keep the doctor away  
Answer: What is an **apple**?
- 200: Grapes turn into this snack food when you dry them:  
Answer: What are **raisins**?
- 300: This class of fruits, including oranges, lemons, limes, and grapefruits, are a good source of vitamin C:  
Answer: What is **citrus**?
- 500: This "fruit" is often misnamed a vegetable:  
Answer: What is a **tomato or avocado**?
- 1000: This fruit is one of the only foods of its color and one of the highest in antioxidants:  
Answer: What are **blueberries**?

## Protein Power

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- 100: Chicken, pork, and turkey are known as this kind of meat and are usually lower in fat than red meat:  
Answer: What is **white meat**?
- 200: Red meat can be bad because it has lots of saturated fat in it, but can be good because it contains this mineral that we need for healthy blood:  
Answer: What is **iron**?
- 300: Vegetarians need to find other ways, like through whole grains, of getting this nutrient, which is usually found in meat and eggs:  
Answer: What is **protein**?
- 500: This product is rich in protein, like meat, but it is made of soy milk. You often find it in Asian foods:  
Answer: What is **tofu**?
- 1000: This source of protein is rich in omega 3 fatty acids:  
Answer: What is **fish**?

## Everything But the Kitchen Sink

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100: A substance needed for survival that is cheap and safe from the tap; expensive and less regulated by the FDA from the bottle: OR People are told they are supposed to drink eight glasses of this a day; more if you exercise:

Answer: What is **water**?

200: You need this to build strong bones, and you can find it in dark green vegetables and milk:

Answer: What is **calcium**?

300: The average person should have about this many calories in a day:

Answer: What is **2,000 – 2,500**?

500: This McDonald's sandwich has the highest calories, at 740 (or more than 1/3 of the recommended daily intake of calories):

Answer: What is a **double quarter pounder with cheese**?

1000: According to ancient wisdom, this herb ensures long life and wisdom:

Answer: What is **sage**?

## Veg Out

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100: According to the food pyramid, you should eat at least this many servings of fruit and vegetables a day:

Answer: What is **five**?

200: They call this the vegetable that helps give you good eyesight:

Answer: What are **carrots** (vitamin A)?

300: Potatoes, carrots, yams, and onions are called this kind of vegetable, because we eat what grows underground instead of what is on the plant:

Answer: What are **root vegetables**?

500: This chemical element is found in potatoes and starts with the same three letters. It helps with muscle contraction and nerve impulses. If you don't get enough, you are likely to get muscle cramps. You can also find it in bananas and other fruits and vegetables:

Answer: What is **potassium**?

1000: This vitamin is in milk and some vegetables, and your body manufactures it when your skin is exposed to the sun. It helps your body get calcium to your bones:

Answer: What is **vitamin D**?

# The Story of the Edible Schoolyard

**Read the story aloud yourself or have students each take a paragraph.  
Discuss the questions listed below. There is a copy of the story in the Leader  
Resources section if you want to copy it and hand it out.**

## ***A Chef Named Alice***

In 1971 Alice Waters opened a restaurant in Berkeley, California—Chez Panisse. At the restaurant she offered food that was simple and fresh, food that mainly got its taste not from fancy sauces and seasonings but from the quality of the basic ingredients. Alice always sought out the best-tasting tomatoes, the best peaches, the best plums. When she couldn't buy them at the market, she found people to grow them for her. She formed close ties with local farmers and ranchers, refusing to buy food that was out of season or that had been transported thousands of miles. The food she bought had to be organic, locally produced, and delicious.

## ***A Neglected School***

Every day, while driving to Chez Panisse in the morning and driving home late at night, Alice passed Martin Luther King Middle School. It seemed like a sad place, with graffiti on the windows and burned-out grass on the lawn. Although students still attended classes there, the school looked neglected.

During a visit to the school Alice became less concerned about how the place looked—and much more concerned about what the kids were being fed there. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School had been built in the 1920s to educate 500 children. Now it had twice that many students. The cafeteria was too small to feed that many kids. It had been shut down for years and was being used for storage. There was still nasty old leftover food in the ovens. Lunch was reheated frozen hamburgers, chicken nuggets, and fries served at a snack bar on the edge of the playground. The sight of the abandoned cafeteria and the cheap fast food made her realize that something had to be done right away to change the way these kids thought about food. And she decided to do it.

## ***How They Changed***

Twelve years later the school had the most innovative and remarkable food program in the United States. Called the Edible Schoolyard, it doesn't just provide healthy, nutritious meals. It gives kids a firsthand education in the role that food plays in society. It teaches skills they can use for the rest of their lives. A huge garden replaced the asphalt schoolyard. Today this school garden produces strawberries, potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce, herbs, beans, corn, pumpkins, asparagus, broccoli, beets, carrots, garlic, cucumbers, peppers, cabbage, and brussels sprouts, among other things. There's a chicken coop where hens can wander freely and lay eggs. There's a wood-burning outdoor oven for cooking pizza and baking bread. The place looks like a small farm in the heart of a lovely town.

## ***A Typical Day***

The sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders at Martin Luther King Jr. come from a wide variety of backgrounds. About 20 different languages are spoken at students' homes. Roughly one-third of the kids are African-American, one-third are white, and the rest are mainly Asian or Latino. All of them have to work in the garden, planting, tending and harvesting food. And all of them have to work in the school's new kitchen, learning how to prepare food, how to serve it, and how to clean up after everybody's eaten it. Ester Cook, the chef-teacher at the Edible Schoolyard, has thought up many ingenious ways to combine cooking and gardening with learning. In the classroom, food-related subjects are used to help teach science, history and ecology. A science project might involve earthworms in the garden; a history project might unfold in the kitchen, with samples of what European serfs ate during the Middle Ages. Teachers work with their students in the garden and the kitchen. At Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School food isn't something you scarf down quickly and then forget about. It's an integral part of daily life.



On a recent day in the kitchen 32 sixth-graders got ready to make up a simple fruit salad. They were new to the school. They washed their hands, put on green aprons, and grabbed sharp knives. Ester Cook, the school chef, told them to keep the knives at their sides, pointed downward. She didn't want anyone getting stabbed. The kids sat at three big tables. A few seemed afraid of the knives. "You guys can handle it," Ester said. "They're not toys, but you can handle it." The kids started peeling, slicing and dicing the fruit. Large steel tubs were soon filled with pieces of kiwi, orange, and pepino dulce (a pear-shaped fruit with greenish flesh that tastes like honeydew melon or cantaloupe). Napkins and plaid tablecloths were brought out, the tables were set, the food was served, and everyone started to eat. For some students, long accustomed to eating microwave dinners in front of the TV, those school meals were the first ones they'd ever made from scratch.

### **Questions:**

1. What does your school cafeteria serve? Is it healthy? Do you like it?
2. Would you like to go to a school that had an "edible schoolyard" where part of your learning took place in the garden and the kitchen?
3. Do you think schools have a responsibility to teach kids about nutrition? Should they feed people healthy food?
4. What would be the challenges in starting an edible schoolyard at your school? How would you go about trying to do it?
5. Do you think people of faith should care about food, and what kids eat? Why?

*Adapted from Chew On This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food by Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 2006, pages 246-253.*

## Bible Ties

Part 1: See what the Bible has to say about food and what people in the Bible ate. Have pairs of people look at each of the following texts to see what it says about what people ate back in Biblical days.



Numbers 11: 4–9

(remembering food in Egypt, fish, cucumbers, leeks)

Mark 6:35–42 (fish and bread)

Exodus 12:3–8 (the Passover meal)

Mark 1: 6 (locusts and honey)

Part 2: Look in these verses to find the reasons for why we should care about our bodies!

Psalms 139:13–15 (We are fearfully and wonderfully made)

Isaiah 55: 1–2 (God asks why we fill ourselves with food that is not good for us)

Romans 12: 1–2 (We are to be a living sacrifice)

Genesis 1: 26–27 (God created us in God's image)

## Closers



### Faith Practice

Bring a long mirror with you to your group meeting (or take everyone into a room that has a mirror). On the surface of the mirror, write with a dry-erase marker, "You were made in the image of God." Have everyone (as a group, or individu-

ally) read the mirror while looking at their image. Tell the group they can use this practice daily to remind themselves why it is important to take care of themselves: They are made in the image of God! Each day when they wake up and brush their teeth, and before they go to bed they can look in the mirror and say to themselves: "You were made in the image of God."

## Prayer for the Week

Close with the prayer of the week. Be sure to make copies of the prayer for each group member to take home, and remind them to use it before meals during that week. A copy-ready version of the prayer is available in the Leader Resources section.

*Gracious God, this food comes from your creation—warm sunlight, rich earth, and cool rain. May it nourish us, in body and mind, and provide us with the things that are good for living. Amen.*

## If you have more time/ If you are on a service trip/retreat

Certainly, if you intend to use this on a retreat, do not stop at a fast-food joint! Or if you do, be sure to pick up the nutritional information so that everyone can analyze their choices.

During the retreat, instead of having a rainbow snack, have a whole rainbow meal.

## Super Size Me

Show and discuss *Super Size Me*, the documentary/mocumentary on the fast-food industry that follows what happens to a guy who decides to eat nothing but McDonald's food for a full month. (Rated PG-13) 2004.

## Keep it Simple, Shop the Outdoors

Take your group to a grocery store and give a little tour. Depending on the size of your group, you may want to warn the grocer before you go. Every grocery store is set up in a similar fashion: When you enter and go to one side, you'll find the produce—the fruits and vegetables. This is a good place to start! In the back, usually you'll find the meat and dairy products: from steak to milk to eggs and yogurt. Continuing around, you'll probably find cheeses and the bakery. You could live well on those foods, and you've only been through about a quarter of the store! What's in the middle? Chips, cookies, canned fruits and vegetables, processed grains, and lots of food with lots of ingredients that are not actually food.

Not everything in the middle of the store is “bad for you.” Whole grains like corn meal, brown rice, bran, and whole wheat flour; tomatoes in various forms; and fruits and vegetables are there, so you don’t have to avoid EVERYTHING in the middle of the store, but do pay attention to the ingredients you are buying and ask yourself: Is there a fresher, whole-food option?

Try to find a local farmer or farmers market to purchase fresh food from—you are supporting local farmers, eating real food, and putting money into the local economy.

## Take Care All Week Long!

**(There is a copy-ready version of this in the Leader Resources section, if you want to provide copies for the participants.)**

**Monday’s Memory:** Today, with every meal you eat, try to remember what the food looked like in its original form. If you don’t know, try to find out. Think about how similar, or how dissimilar, the food on your plate is from how it looked before.

**Tuesday’s Test:** Write down the alphabet. Now try to match a name of a fruit or vegetable with every letter of the alphabet. Ask people around you, or use the Internet to help you if you really get stuck!

**Wednesday’s Word:** “More die in the United States of too much food than too little.” – John Kenneth Galbraith

**Thursday’s Tune:** Watch “Veggie Believer”  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jn\\_\\_yfyIMU4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jn__yfyIMU4)

**Friday’s Food:** Go back to your list on Tuesday of all the vegetables of the alphabet. Find one you haven’t tried before and go to the store, pick it up, buy it, and eat it!

**Saturday’s Scene:** Watch The Chopper  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=va2LPoSMMuE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=va2LPoSMMuE)

**Sunday’s Site:** At [www.smart-mouth.org](http://www.smart-mouth.org) click on “Choose ur chews” to find out how your favorite foods stack up. You can build your favorite meal and find out how healthy it is.

## For More Information

### Books:

Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson, *Chew On this: Everything you don’t want to know about fast food* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006)

Craig Sams, *The Little Food Book: You Are What You Eat* (The Disinformation Company, November, 2004)

Alice Waters, *Fanny at Chez Panisse: A Child’s Restaurant Adventures with 46 Recipes* (New York: William Morrow Cookbooks, 1997)

### Websites:

[www.edibleschoolyard.org](http://www.edibleschoolyard.org)

[www.foodroutes.org](http://www.foodroutes.org)

[www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)

[www.kidsgardening.org](http://www.kidsgardening.org)

[www.thefoodproject.org/youth](http://www.thefoodproject.org/youth)

[www.school lunch initiative.org](http://www.school lunch initiative.org)

[www.eatgrub.org](http://www.eatgrub.org)

## Now that you know what you know, what can you do? (Faith in Action Steps)

**(There is a copy-ready version of this in the Leader Resources section if you want to provide copies for the participants.)**

1. Keep a food diary for a couple of weeks so you can see how much of the food you eat is actual food, and how much of it is “junk food.”
2. Remember, bodies go through crazy times in middle school. What is important in learning to take care of yourself is not how you look, but that you’re eating a regular, balanced diet and getting some exercise. The rest will work itself out in time.
3. Learn to read food labels to find out if food is good for you.
4. Eat food! Instead of eating things with tons of ingredients, grab a piece of fruit or a vegetable.
5. Try to trace where your food came from—from where it is on your table through all the hands that touched it. Try to reduce



the number of steps between the food you eat and the earth. Here is a Web site to help: [www.localharvest.org/](http://www.localharvest.org/). Here you can find out how to find food grown near you.

6. Ask your family to consider buying food from a farmers market or other local sources.
7. Look at your own school and church—if you find lots of unhealthy food there, try to find ways to change the menus by working with groups of parents or other adults to speak to the people in charge of food. Learn about the “Rethinking School Lunch” movement at [www.ecoliteracy.org/programs](http://www.ecoliteracy.org/programs) and [www.schoollunchinitiative.org](http://www.schoollunchinitiative.org).
8. Go home and look in your own kitchen to assess how your family eats. Talk to your family about what you’ve learned, and suggest one or two changes you might make to the everyday food your family eats.
9. Start helping out in your garden, or start one in your yard or neighborhood.
10. Find out what is available in your community by doing a Community Food Audit, found at [www.eatgrub.org/materialsCommunityFoodAudit.pdf](http://www.eatgrub.org/materialsCommunityFoodAudit.pdf). Post your completed list somewhere in your church to share with the congregation.

## Session 1: Leader Resources

### RAINBOW FOODS CHART

*Below is a chart of rainbow foods that tells you why you should eat a rainbow!*

Color	What's in that?	Why should I eat them?	Where can I find it?
<b>Red</b>	Lycopene ( <b>lî</b> -ka-peen) Anthocyanin (an-tha-sî-a-nin)	Helps prevent some cancers	Strawberries Tomatoes Watermelon Cherries Red grapefruit
<b>Orange</b>	Beta-carotene (bay-ta <b>care</b> -a-teen) Limonoids ( <b>lim</b> -in-oidz) Vitamin C	Protects against chronic bronchitis, asthma and emphysema Reduces the risk of cataracts and lung cancer Decreases cholesterol levels	Carrots Squash Citrus Melons
<b>Yellow</b>	Limonoids ( <b>lim</b> -in-oidz) Beta-carotene (bay-ta <b>care</b> -a-teen) Zeaxanthin (zee-a- <b>zan</b> -thin) Potassium (pa- <b>tass</b> -ee-um)	Protects against chronic bronchitis, asthma and emphysema Reduces the risk of cataracts Decreases cholesterol levels Protects vision Prevents tumors and cancer in the colon, breast and prostate glands	Yellow peppers Corn, Legumes
<b>Green</b>	Lutein ( <b>loo</b> -teen) Saponins ( <b>sap</b> -o-nin) Glucosinolates (gloo-kô- <b>sin</b> -a-late)	Preserves eyesight Maintains heart and skin health Prevents cancer	Spinach Collard greens Broccoli
<b>Blue</b>	Anthocyanins (an-tha-sî-a-nin)	Prevents some cancers. Great for your brain!	Blueberries Grapes Plums
<b>Purple</b>	Anthocyanins (an-tha-sî-a-nin) Flavonoids ( <b>flâ</b> -vo-noydz).	Strengthens collagen proteins Prevents cancer Provides anti-inflammatory benefits	Grapes Raspberries Eggplant

Information from the Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center, College Station, Texas. <http://vfic.tamu.edu/>

## RECIPES FOR STRAWBERRY MILKSHAKES

### *Recipe for a Strawberry Milkshake*

½ cup cream  
½ cup milk  
1 tbsp. vanilla  
1 tbsp. honey  
1 cup strawberries  
crushed ice

Put all ingredients in a blender and blend until thick.

### *Recipe for a McDonald's shake*

From [www.mcdonalds.com](http://www.mcdonalds.com): **Strawberry Triple Thick® Shake:**

Vanilla reduced fat ice cream: Milk, sugar, cream, nonfat milk solids, corn syrup solids, mono- and diglycerides, guar gum, dextrose, sodium citrate, artificial vanilla flavor, sodium phosphate, carrageenan, disodium phosphate, cellulose gum, vitamin A palmitate. Strawberry syrup: Sugar, water, corn syrup, strawberries, high fructose corn syrup, natural (botanical source) and artificial flavors, pectin, citric acid, xanthan gum, potassium sorbate (preservative), caramel color, calcium chloride, red 40.

(The artificial flavoring contains the following chemicals): amyl acetate, amyl butyrate, amyl valerate, anethol, anisyl formate, benzyl acetate, benzyl isobutyrate, butyric acid, cinnamyl isobutyrate, cinnamyl valerate, cognac essential oil, diacetyl, dipropyl ketone, ethyl butyrate, ethyl cinnamate, ethyl heptanoate, ethyl heptylate, ethyl lactate, ethyl methylphenylglycidate, ethyl nitrate, ethyl propionate, ethyl valerate, heliotropin, hydroxyphenyl- 2-butanone (10% solution in alcohol), ionone, isobutyl anthranilate, isobutyl butyrate, lemon essential oil, maltol, 4-methylacetophenone, methyl anthranilate, methyl benzoate, methyl cinnamate, methyl heptene carbonate, methyl naphthyl ketone, methyl salicylate, mint essential oil, neroli essential oil, nerolin, neryl isobutyrate, orris butter, phenethyl alcohol, rose, rum ether, γ-undecalactone, vanilla and solvent.

(from *Chew on This*, Schlosser and Wilson, p. 114)

## Session 1: Leader Resources

### CAN YOU GIVE ME A DEFINITION, PLEASE?

<i>Words and Definitions</i>	
Vitamins	Nutrients the body needs in small amounts to grow and stay strong. Examples are vitamins A, C, and E. Fruits and vegetables are good sources of these!
Antioxidants	Molecules that help stop oxidation by free radicals. Oxidation is when molecules that are missing an electron steal electrons from other molecules. Free radical activity can damage cells in your body. Found in many fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, meat and fish.
Calcium	A mineral that keeps your bones strong. This is why you should drink milk or eat dark greens!
Whole grains	Foods made from the entire grain seed. Examples: whole wheat bread and brown rice.
Carbohydrates	A good source of energy! Find these in foods like bread, pasta, and rice.
Protein	Helps your body grow and repair itself and gives you energy. You can find this in meat, nuts, cheese, and eggs.
Cholesterol	A waxy substance in your blood. If you eat too much (especially from factory-farmed meat or fat sources*) it can cause heart disease.
Saturated fats	A type of fat that can be harmful if you eat too much. They are solid at room temperature—like cheese and butter.
Calories	A way we measure energy found in food. Young females should have about 2,200 a day, young males about 2,500.
Starch	A complex carbohydrate that won't dissolve in water. This can be found in some vegetables like corn and potatoes.

\* Unlike grain-fed livestock, pasture-raised/grass-fed animal meat and dairy products have ample good cholesterol and fats that your body requires for healthy development.



## Session 1: Leader Resources

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### HEALTH IN JEOPARDY BOARD GAME

Protein Power	Veg Out!	It's Fruity	Everything But the Kitchen Sink	Wholly Grains
100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300
500	500	500	500	500
1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000

**To make a larger version of this board game for your class,**  
use one 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper or card stock for each square and have  
the question written on the back of the numbers.

# THE STORY OF THE EDIBLE SCHOOLYARD

## **A Chef Named Alice**

.....

In 1971 Alice Waters opened a restaurant in Berkeley, California—Chez Panisse. At the restaurant she offered food that was simple and fresh, food that mainly got its taste not from fancy sauces and seasonings but from the quality of the basic ingredients. Alice always sought out the best-tasting tomatoes, the best peaches, the best plums. When she couldn't buy them at the market, she found people to grow them for her. She formed close ties with local farmers and ranchers, refusing to buy food that was out of season or that had been transported thousands of miles. The food she bought had to be organic, locally produced, and delicious.

## **A Neglected School**

.....

Every day, while driving to Chez Panisse in the morning and driving home late at night, Alice passed Martin Luther King Middle School. It seemed like a sad place, with graffiti on the windows and burned-out grass on the lawn. Although students still attended classes there, the school looked neglected.

During a visit to the school Alice became less concerned about how the place looked—and much more concerned about what the kids were being fed there. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School had been built in the 1920s to educate 500 children. Now it had twice that many students. The cafeteria was too small to feed that many kids. It had been shut down for years and was being used for storage. There was still nasty old leftover food in the ovens. Lunch was reheated frozen hamburgers, chicken nuggets, and fries served at a snack bar on the edge of the playground. The sight of the abandoned cafeteria and the cheap fast food made her realize that something had to be done right away to change the way these kids thought about food. And she decided to do it.

## **How They Changed**

.....

Twelve years later the school had the most innovative and remarkable food program in the United States. Called the Edible Schoolyard, it doesn't just provide healthy, nutritious meals. It gives kids a firsthand education in the role that food plays in society. It teaches skills they can use for the rest of their lives. A huge garden replaced the asphalt schoolyard. Today this school garden produces strawberries, potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce, herbs, beans, corn, pumpkins, asparagus, broccoli, beets, carrots, garlic, cucumbers, peppers, cabbage, and brussels sprouts, among other things. There's a chicken coop where hens can wander freely and lay eggs. There's a wood-burning outdoor oven for cooking pizza and baking bread. The place looks like a small farm in the heart of a lovely town.

## **A Typical Day**

.....

The sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders at Martin Luther King Jr. come from a wide variety of backgrounds. About 20 different languages are spoken at students' homes. Roughly one-third of the kids are African-American, one-third are white, and the rest are mainly Asian or Latino. All of them have to work in the garden, planting, tending and harvesting food. And all of them have to work in the school's new kitchen, learning how to prepare food, how to serve it, and how to clean up after everybody's eaten it. Ester Cook, the chef-teacher at the Edible Schoolyard, has thought up many ingenious ways to combine cooking and gardening with learning. In the classroom, food-related subjects are used to help teach science, history and ecology. A science project might involve earthworms in the garden; a history project might unfold in the kitchen, with samples of what European serfs ate during the Middle Ages. Teachers work with their students in the garden and the kitchen. At Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School food isn't something you scarf down quickly and then forget about. It's an integral part of daily life.

On a recent day in the kitchen, 32 sixth-graders got ready to make up a simple fruit salad. They were new to the school. They washed their hands, put on green aprons, and grabbed sharp knives. Ester Cook, the school chef, told them to keep the knives at their sides, pointed downward. She didn't want anyone getting stabbed. The kids sat at three big tables. A few seemed afraid of the knives. "You guys can handle it," Ester said. "They're not toys, but you can handle it." The kids started peeling, slicing and dicing the fruit. Large steel tubs were

soon filled with pieces of kiwi, orange, and pepino dulce (a pear-shaped fruit with greenish flesh that tastes like honeydew melon or cantaloupe). Napkins and plaid tablecloths were brought out, the tables were set, the food was served, and everyone started to eat. For some students, long accustomed to eating microwave dinners in front of the TV, those school meals were the first ones they'd ever made from scratch.

## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

*Gracious God, this food comes from your creation—warm sunlight, rich earth, and cool rain. May it nourish us, in body and mind, and provide us with the things that are good for living. Amen.*

*Gracious God, this food comes from your creation—warm sunlight, rich earth, and cool rain. May it nourish us, in body and mind, and provide us with the things that are good for living. Amen.*

*Gracious God, this food comes from your creation—warm sunlight, rich earth, and cool rain. May it nourish us, in body and mind, and provide us with the things that are good for living. Amen.*

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## Session 1: Leader Resources

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### TAKE CARE ALL WEEK LONG!

#### *Monday's Memory:*

Today, with every meal you eat, try to remember what the food looked like in its original form. If you don't know, try to find out. Think about how similar, or how dissimilar, the food on your plate is from how it looked before.

#### *Tuesday's Test:*

Write down the alphabet. Now try to match a name of a fruit or vegetable with every letter of the alphabet. Ask people around you, or use the Internet to help you if you really get stuck!

#### *Wednesday's Word:*

"More die in the United States of too much food than too little."  
—John Kenneth Galbraith

#### *Thursday's Tune:*

Watch "Veggie Believer" [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jn\\_\\_yfyIMU4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jn__yfyIMU4)

#### *Friday's Food:*

Go back to your list on Tuesday of all the vegetables of the alphabet. Find one you haven't tried before and go to the store, pick it up, buy it, and eat it!

#### *Saturday's Scene:*

Watch The Chopper [www.youtube.com/watch?v=va2LPoSMMuE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=va2LPoSMMuE)

#### *Sunday's Site:*

At [www.smart-mouth.org](http://www.smart-mouth.org) click on "Choose ur chews" to find out how your favorite foods stack up. You can build your favorite meal and find out how healthy it is.

# NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### (Faith in Action Steps)

1. Keep a food diary for a couple of weeks so you can see how much of the food you eat is actual food, and how much of it is “junk food.”
2. Remember, bodies go through crazy times in middle school. What is important in learning to take care of yourself is not how you look, but that you’re eating a regular, balanced diet and getting some exercise. The rest will work itself out in time.
3. Learn to read food labels to find out if food is good for you.
4. Eat food! Instead of eating things with tons of ingredients, grab a piece of fruit or a vegetable.
5. Try to trace where your food came from—from where it is on your table through all the hands that touched it. Try to reduce the number of steps between the food you eat and the earth. Here is a Web site to help: [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org). Here you can find out how to find food grown near you.
6. Ask your family to consider buying food from a farmers market or other local sources.
7. Look at your own school and church—if you find lots of unhealthy food there, try to find ways to change the menus by working with groups of parents or other adults to speak to the people in charge of food. Learn about the “Rethinking School Lunch” movement at [www.ecoliteracy.org/programs](http://www.ecoliteracy.org/programs) and [www.schoollunchinitiative.org](http://www.schoollunchinitiative.org).
8. Go home and look in your own kitchen to assess how your family eats. Talk to your family about what you’ve learned, and suggest one or two changes you might make to the everyday food your family eats.
9. Start helping out in your garden, or start one in your yard or neighborhood.
10. Find out what is available in your community by doing a Community Food Audit, found at [www.eatgrub.org/materials/CommunityFoodAudit.pdf](http://www.eatgrub.org/materials/CommunityFoodAudit.pdf). Post your completed list somewhere in your church to share with the congregation.

# S E S S I O N 2

## *Are You Starving?*



# SESSION 2

## ARE YOU STARVING?



These activities will help your group begin to understand the complexities of hunger and food insecurity in the world, and explore the Bible's imperative to be concerned about hunger and the people it affects. You'll learn about some of the root causes of hunger, and some ways that people are working for change. See the **Key Ideas** below for more information.

This session has lots of activities—some will be local, and some are global in their perspective. You can take more than two weeks on this issue! If you have access to a computer, Internet connection and projector, you will be able to do some of these activities interactively on a big screen; otherwise, you'll need to print resources.

Note to leaders: Some people in your class or community may be painfully aware of the realities of hunger in our country and in your community. Be sensitive to this in your language and activities. Most of the resources here will help them understand more clearly why they experience hunger, but you may want to change your questions and discussions to reflect their experience.

- An Unbalanced World: A Distribution Exercise
- It Wasn't Me

### Bible Ties



### Closers

- Revisiting "All You Need..."
- 10 Things Revisited
- Prayer for the Week



### Openers

- All You Need Is...
- 10 Things



### Learning Activities

- A Week of Making Ends Meet
- Poverty Map
- Hungry Decisions



*If you have more time/If you're on a trip*

*Are You Starving All Week Long?*

*For More Information*

*Now that you know what you know, what can you do?  
(Faith in Action Steps)*



# SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

### Key Ideas

- Hunger is both a global and a local problem.
- Root causes of hunger include poverty, powerlessness, debt, violence and militarism, growing population, environmental degradation, economic globalization, and AIDS.
- Many wise and compassionate people are working against hunger. They offer us signs of hope and welcome our help.
- God and Jesus have strong words for people who ignore the hungry.

### Openers

#### All You Need is . . .

To Prepare

Supplies needed:

- A Koosh ball or another kind of small ball or object that the group can easily toss and catch.

To Play

Begin your session by finding out how imaginative your group can be about ending world hunger.

1. With a Koosh ball, or something you can throw around, ask the group first "All you need to make the baseball team is..." (a catcher, a pitcher, a shortstop, a coach, a place to play, bats, balls, bases, etc.)
2. Toss the Koosh ball to someone, who gives one answer, and then tosses it to someone else for the next answer. Keep the game going long enough for their answers to start to get creative.
3. Then switch topics. Ask next, "All you need to make a loaf of bread is..." (flour, yeast, water, sugar, herbs, an oven, etc.)
4. When that topic is exhausted, ask, "All you need to end world hunger is..." Be sure you keep the Koosh ball going around until you start hearing about the root causes! (love, action, knowledge, jobs, living wages,



food, a concern for the environment, people learning to not be greedy, access to medical care, peace, etc.)

### Discussion Questions:

1. Of the list of things that it would take to end hunger, what is the easiest thing to do? What is the hardest thing to do?
2. What can you do on your own, from that list, and what will take more people?
3. What keeps us from doing what it takes to end hunger?

### 10 Things

To Prepare

Supplies needed:

- Paper and pens or pencils
- Flip chart or newsprint and markers

To Play

Ask each person in your group to make two columns on a piece of paper, and number to five on both sides. Ask them to write down 5 things they know, or think they know about hunger in one column, and 5 things they don't know on the other side. Have people share some of their answers and record them on a flip chart. You'll revisit this list at the end of your group time.

### Learning Activities

#### A Week of Making Ends Meet

This activity will help participants understand the reason why so many people struggle with food insecurity. (Food insecurity refers to people who have uncertain or limited availability of adequate supplies of nutritional and safe food.)

To Prepare

Supplies needed:

- Newsprint and markers
- Enough calculators so that each group of 3-4 participants has one



Ahead of time, write the weekly earnings (\$285.38) and the possible weekly expenses from the story below on the newsprint so that everyone can see it (e.g., Bus Fare—\$15.00)

#### To Play

1. Divide the participants into groups of three or four people.
2. Hand each group a calculator, paper, and pencils.
3. Read the following scenario to them:

You are a single mother with two children, a daughter age 3, and a son age 6. You work two jobs, both part-time—a morning job cleaning houses and the afternoon/evening shift at a fast-food restaurant across town. You work 40 hours a week, 50 weeks a year. Your pay is hourly and you do not have health insurance, retirement, or sick leave benefits. You earn \$14,269 per year; which is \$285.38 a week, or \$7.13 an hour. Your task is to take what you have made this week and decide how to spend your money, using your calculator. Remember: you start with \$285.38. Here are the possibilities:

4. Post the newsprint and quickly review the possible expenses.
- A monthly bus pass is cheaper than buying the fare each day, but you never have that much cash at one time. Bus fare to get to work for the next week is \$15.
  - The rent is due by the first of the month, and if you do not have it on time the property owner has threatened to evict you and your children. This week's portion is \$158.77.
  - Your daughter has had a cold and now is complaining of an earache. You will need to spend the day waiting in line at the free clinic. The medical visit is free, but the antibiotics are \$9 and the cost of missing a full day's work is \$53.16 for a total of \$62.16.
  - Both children have outgrown their shoes, and you need a new pair for work. At the local discount store the children's shoes cost \$15 each and yours cost \$20 for a total of \$50.
  - Your son loves snakes and is working at school on a unit about reptiles. You'd like to take both children to an outing at the zoo: \$13.
  - There's a snow day and both your son's school and your daughter's day-care center are closed. You can get a neighbor to stay with them while you go to work, but the trade-off is that you need to provide the videos (\$6) and pizza (\$12) for a total of \$18.

- Your electric bill is low. You don't own many appliances and are good at turning out lights, but it needs to be paid this week: \$38.50.
  - You need groceries. Food stamps pay for most of the bill, but you still need some things that are not covered: \$14.85.
  - Adequate and reliable day care for your daughter has been very difficult to find in your neighborhood, but you finally found a woman who runs a day-care center out of her home. If you do not pay the bill on time each week, she will not keep your child. This week's services cost \$46.45.
5. Ask each group to work together for ten minutes to decide how to spend the \$285.38.
  6. After ten minutes, call the groups back and ask each group to report how they spent the money, why they made their decisions, and how they felt trying to live at the edge of the poverty line.

(An alternate to this activity is a game called the Monthly Juggle, which can be found at [www.pcusa.org/hunger/downloads/hae\\_monthly.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger/downloads/hae_monthly.pdf). This is a card game that lays out many of the same facts but gives different descriptors and different possible endings.)

### Poverty Map

This activity helps your group understand more about hunger, food insecurity and poverty in our country. (Food insecurity refers to people who have uncertain or limited availability of adequate supplies of nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate food.)

#### To Prepare

Look at the Web sites listed below and select a way to share one of the maps with your group.

[www.nccbuscc.org/cchd/povertyusa/map.htm](http://www.nccbuscc.org/cchd/povertyusa/map.htm)

This map is good to use if you have access to the Internet with your class. It allows you to roll the mouse over each state to see that state's statistics.

If you don't have internet in the place you meet, see [www.dataplace.org/map](http://www.dataplace.org/map) and then select "poverty rate" from the drop-down menu, which has a map you can print off and take with you to class with some of these same statistics. The other map has a little bit more information about each state, so you may want to look at it and write down information about your state or county.

### To Play

Give students the following questions to help them work with the map.

1. Which states have some of the highest poverty rates?
2. Which states have some of the lowest poverty rates?
3. How is our state (or county) doing?
4. What do you think causes poverty in urban areas?
5. What do you think causes poverty in rural areas?
6. What surprises you about the information on this map?
7. How are poverty and hunger connected?
8. How is this information connected to what we learned about last week? Is it easy to make decisions to eat healthy food if you might not even know where your next meal is coming from?

## Hungry Decisions

This activity on the Church World Service Web site teaches students about different decisions people affected by hunger have to make every day.

### To Prepare

Supplies needed:

- Computer, Internet access and a projector
- OR several computers with Internet access
- OR a print-out of the Hungry Decisions exercise found at [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org)

### To Play

Go to [www.churchworldservice.org/decisions](http://www.churchworldservice.org/decisions). In this exercise you will take the part of a man or a woman who is trying to eke out a living in a poor rural area of a developing nation. At the end of each page you will face a difficult decision between two courses of action. Your choice of one or the other will direct you to another page, where the consequences of your decision will lead to a new dilemma, another choice, another page, and so on - and finally to one or another of 16 possible endings. The story of your life -- your very survival and that of your family - will depend on how you make these "hungry decisions."

There are three ways you could do this exercise.

1. If you have access to the Internet, a computer and projector, do this activity

together. [www.churchworldservice.org/decisions](http://www.churchworldservice.org/decisions)

2. If you have access to a computer lab, have people do this in pairs, and discuss afterwards.
3. Print out the story and each of the outcomes from each decision before class, and with no need for a computer.

"Hungry Decisions" is used here with permission from Discipleship Resources, PO Box 840, Nashville, TN 37202, [www.discipleshipresources.org](http://www.discipleshipresources.org).

## An Unbalanced World: A Distribution Exercise

This exercise from Bread for the World Church Resources provides a visual example of the distribution of the world's food and wealth. Use it to stimulate discussion about our role as citizens and as a nation in bringing about fairness, justice and a balanced world.

### To Prepare

Supplies needed:

- One loaf of bread
- Six country description cards (included)
- One dinner plate
- One paper plate
- A map of the world
- Tacks or tape

### To Play

1. Divide participants into three groups (based on the percentages below) to represent high-, middle- and low-income countries. The high-income countries will have the fewest people, but the most bread; the low-income countries will have the most people and the least bread.
2. Give the dinner plate to the high-income group and the paper plate to the middle-income group. The low-income group does not receive a plate.
3. Pass out the country description cards to two people in each group. State that the three groups represent wealthy, middle-income and poor countries.
4. Read the short group description for the high-income group (see below).
5. Ask the cardholders in that group to read their card and tack it to the country they represent on the map. (You may want to locate the countries prior to the exercise in case anyone needs assistance.)

6. Put the appropriate amount of bread on the plate, explaining that this represents the amount of food the group gets.
7. Repeat for the middle-and low-income countries. Participants should refrain from eating the bread until the exercise is over. Allow the groups to share bread only if they choose or ask if they can.

## Country Descriptions

### High-income

(also called “developed countries” or One-Thirds World)

- Number of participants: about 15 percent of your group
- Percentage of bread = 90%
- Group description: About one in six people worldwide live in high-income countries that include places such as the United States, Japan and Australia. Many people get more to eat than they need.

#### Country Description Card 1

My name is Yuko. I live in Japan, a nation of islands that is slightly smaller than California. The average life expectancy is 81.25 years and about .1% of people are living with HIV/AIDS. Education is a priority here. Every child is enrolled in school and our literacy rate is 99%.

Despite my country's wealth, 14% of Japanese children live in poverty. A rising divorce rate has increased the number of mothers supporting children on one income. Most of these single-parent families live below the poverty line. Low wages for women and non-payment of child support contribute to this problem.

#### Country Description Card 2

My name is Meredith. I live in the United States, which is 2.5 times the size of the European Union but less than a third of the size of Africa. Our average life expectancy is 77.85 years, and .6% of our population lives with HIV/AIDS. Most states require education between the ages of 6 and 16 and 99% of our population is literate.

While many people in my country are wealthy, 12% of people live below the poverty line and 12.4 million children live in households where people have to skip meals or eat less to make ends meet. That means one in ten households in the United States are living with hunger or are at risk of hunger. The

United States has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the developed world, mostly due to large disparities among different racial and ethnic groups. African Americans, for example, have an infant mortality rate that is twice as high as the national average.

### Middle-income

- Number of participants: about 25 percent of your group
- Percentage of bread = 8%
- Group description: One in four people worldwide live in middle-income countries. These include places such as Albania, Thailand and Guyana. Many people do not get enough to eat.

#### Country Description Card 1

My name is Diego, and I am from Costa Rica. My country is a bit smaller than West Virginia, and our life expectancy is 77 years. Our literacy rate is 96%. Poverty has been significantly reduced over the last 15 years, and my country now has a strong social safety net. However, nearly one-fifth of the population still lives below the poverty line. Our unemployment rate is 6.6%.

The HIV/AIDS prevalence is .6%. The National Health System offers free and universal HIV testing and antiretroviral treatment.

#### Country Description Card 2

My name is Lydia. I live in Ukraine, which gained independence in 1991 with the breakup of the Soviet Union. My country is slightly smaller than Texas. We have a 99.7% literacy rate, and our life expectancy is nearly 70 years. HIV/AIDS is a growing problem, however. The prevalence rate is 1.4%, and Ukraine reports the highest number of annual AIDS deaths in Europe. Most of those living with the disease do not have access to antiretroviral treatment.

My country's government reports a 2.9% unemployment rate, but the International Labor Organization estimates that the real rate is 9--10%. Nearly one-third of Ukrainians live in poverty.

### Low-income

(also called “developing countries” or Two-Thirds World)

- Number of participants: about 60 percent of your group
- Percentage of bread = 2%



- Group description: More than half the people in the world live in low-income countries like Haiti, Bangladesh and Mozambique. Nearly 800 million people in developing countries are malnourished.

### **Country Description Card 1**

My name is Mwenzi. I am from Zambia, which is slightly larger than Texas. The life expectancy in my country is 40 years, and the HIV/AIDS prevalence is 16.5%. There is a high risk of infectious diseases, such as bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, malaria, and the plague. Neither of my parents can find a job, although both want to work. The unemployment rate here is 50%, and the poverty rate is 86%.

Four out of five people over the age of 15 can read and write. Zambia received \$640.6 million in development aid in 2002. Our telephone facilities are aging but are among the best in sub-Saharan Africa. Internet service is widely available, although few people have computers.

### **Country Description Card 2**

My name is Farishta, and I am from Afghanistan. My country is slightly smaller than Texas, and the terrain is mostly rugged mountains. The life expectancy is 43 years. The HIV/AIDS prevalence is .01%, but we have a high risk of infectious diseases like malaria and typhoid fever. Just over a third of our population is literate.

Our unemployment rate is 40%, and over half of the Afghan people live in poverty. At the Berlin Donors Conference for Afghan Reconstruction, 60 countries pledged \$8.9 billion in development aid from 2004 to 2009. An estimated 4 million refugees fled in October 2001, but today 2.3 million have returned. On average, four out of 100 Afghani citizens have cell phones.

*(Note: These are generalizations. Within each group, there are very wealthy and very poor people. This exercise is simplified for the purpose of starting a discussion. The percentage of bread represents an estimate of the distribution of world wealth in order to show the discrepancy between high-middle- and low-income countries. It does not represent exactly how much food is available in these countries. Finally, estimations of HIV/AIDS prevalence vary. This exercise uses CIA data, which is based on 2003 estimates.)*

## **Discussion Questions**

**Follow-up discussion is a very important part of this exercise. Make sure you allow enough time for people to talk about what they experienced, learned and observed.**

1. For the high-income group, how did it feel to have so much food compared to your neighboring countries?
2. For the low-income countries, how did it feel to have so many people and so little food?
3. For middle-income countries, what is preventing you from achieving a better standard of living?
4. Has anyone had a personal experience witnessing poverty in the United States or in a visit to a low-income country? How different is it across nations like the United States, Ukraine, and Zambia?
5. What are things you use every day that you might not have if you lived in poverty? (Examples: books, Internet, flush toilets, police protection, medicine, running water.) How would this affect your educational and economic opportunities?
6. What are some of the causes of poverty that you heard in each of the stories?
7. What can we do, as students, church members and citizens, to bring about a more equitable wealth distribution in the world?
8. What are ways in which the United States and other developed countries can invest in people throughout the world? How can advocacy influence these decisions?

All data and information came from the CIA *World Factbook*, UNAIDS, *Center for Disease Control and Prevention*, *Economic Survey of Japan 2006: Income Inequality, Poverty, and Social Spending*, Cortin, Sean, "Japan, Land of Rising Poverty,," *Asia Time*, February 11, 2005.

[www.bread.org/get-involved/at-church/resources/An-Unbalanced-World-A-Distribut.html](http://www.bread.org/get-involved/at-church/resources/An-Unbalanced-World-A-Distribut.html)

### **It Wasn't Me:**

To Prepare

Supplies needed:

- Causes of hunger lists (see Leader Resources section for lists)

Break your group into pairs and set up a debate. Give each group information from the Web site below about some of the causes of hunger. (It has

a section called “root causes of hunger” that have papers and articles about some of the root causes.) Give them about 10 minutes to prepare their position. Depending on how many people are in your group, some possible positions include:

- Hunger is caused by war.
- Hunger is caused by diseases.
- Hunger is caused by debt that countries can’t get out of.
- Hunger is caused by damage to the environment.
- Hunger is caused by the ways people buy and sell food around the world.
- Hunger is caused by some people having more power than others.
- Hunger is caused by levels of population.

Then have each pair face off with another pair in this format:

1. Flip a coin to see who goes first.
2. The winning team has two-minutes to state their position in an opening statement. (For example, war is a cause for world hunger because...)
3. The opposing team then gives their two minute opening statement. (For example, other countries’ governments are a cause for world hunger because...)

See the Leader Resources Section for additional information on issues related to the root causes of hunger. You can find further information at the following Web sites:

[www.churchworldservice.org/hungerbooklet](http://www.churchworldservice.org/hungerbooklet)

[www.globalpolicy.org/soecon/hunger/hungerindex.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/soecon/hunger/hungerindex.htm)

## Bible Ties

### Matthew 25:31-40

Today your Bible study will teach the practice of *lectio divina* (literally this means “divine reading”), a process of studying and praying the Bible. For this study, you will first consider a word or phrase that stands out to you. Then, you will read the text and get some background on it. A third time, you will listen for what the text might be inviting you to do. Here are some instructions:

1. Invite your group to get comfortable, close their eyes to listen if they would like.



2. Ask them to listen to the reading for a word or phrase that stands out to them. We do this because it helps us listen actively. Tell them that they will be asked to share their one word or phrase when the reading is done, through a process of mutual invitation. You’ll invite the first person to share, and they should say their word or phrase, or pass, but either way, they should invite someone else to share in the group, and so forth until all have shared or had the opportunity to share. They don’t need to share why they chose the one word or phrase—just the word or phrase. You may wish to give an example of how this will sound, so that they understand. (Say: for example, the first person might say “require” and then invite the next person to speak. That person might say, “walk humbly. John?” and then John might say “with. Maria?” and so forth.)
3. Read Matthew 25:31-40.
4. Invite a person to share their word or phrase, and remind them to ask the next person.
5. After all have shared, point out to people that Christ is saying not only that you should treat people the way you would treat Christ, but it says you do it to Christ—“Whatever you do to the least of these you also do to me.” Our relationship with each other, and all our neighbors, involves Christ.
6. Read the text again. (You may want to ask another person to read.) Tell them to listen now as if they were the first people Jesus said this aloud to. Ask how they heard the text differently that time.
7. Read the text once again, this time asking people to listen for what they might be invited to do or be this week.

## Closers

### Revisiting All You Need...

If you began this session playing *All You Need Is...*, then end by playing it again to see if you got any new ideas. With a Koosh ball, or something you can throw around, ask the group “All you need to end world hunger is...” and toss the Koosh ball to someone in the group for the first answer. Be sure you keep the Koosh ball going around until



you start hearing about the root causes! Again, close by asking people what things are easy to do, and what things they can do alone, and what they'll need others to do with them to make a difference.

## **10 Things Revisited**

Revisit your list of five things you know or think you know about hunger, and 5 things you want to know.

Ask:

1. Is there anything you would add to either list?
2. Is there anything you would take away from the list?
3. Did we talk about any of the things in our list of 5 things you want to know more about?

## **Prayer for the Week:**

**(There is a copy-ready version of this in the Leader Resources section.)**

Make cards with this prayer on it for people to take home to use before meals this week. Close your time together by saying this prayer together.

*O God: To those who hunger, give bread. And to those who have bread, give the hunger for justice. Amen,*

(Prayer from Latin America)

*If you have more time/If you're on a trip*

## **A Fast That Lasts**

Engage your youth in hunger issues by participating in *A Fast That Lasts*. You can order a complete kit for a 24- or 30-hour fasting retreat with lasting impact. The kit includes *Hunger Has A Cure* CD-ROM, a three-segment video, Bible study, games, activities, and a detailed planning guide. Order online (this resource and other hunger resources) at [www.pcusa.org/hunger/resources.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger/resources.htm) or by phone through Presbyterian Distribution Service at (800) 524-2612, referencing PDS #7436002324.

## **Take a further step for hunger:**

### **CROP Hunger Walks**

CROP Hunger Walks are a great way to learn about hunger and to begin to make a difference. Church

World Service sponsors these community-organized fund-raising events nationwide. Walkers pledge to complete a several-mile walk and find friends and family members to support them. The money supports Church World Service international relief and development work and local hunger agencies. Students can receive "service learning credits" or "service learning hours" for walking in a CROP Hunger Walk or even more if they organize one. Find out more at [www.cropwalk.org](http://www.cropwalk.org) or call toll-free 888-297-2767.

## **Do a food scavenger hunt**

Talk to your local food bank to find out what they are most in need of. Make a list, and divide your group into smaller groups and send them out into the community. Be sure you send them with small letters/receipts saying who your group is, what they are doing, and who they are collecting food for. Give the groups an hour to come home with as much food as they can. You can either assign a point system to individual items, or give a point for each item, or weigh the food.

## **Work at a food bank or shelter**

Find out if there are opportunities for you to serve and share a meal with people experiencing food insecurity. Try working with another group in your church-get them to prepare the food, and then you can serve it and share in the meal with the people. Be sure you spend some time with the agency contact in order to learn about the work they do and the people they know.

## **Do a Hunger Simulation with your congregation**

You can find several different kinds: a Feast or Famine Meal, a Poverty Meal, or a Hunger Surprise Meal. All resources are available online from the Presbyterian Church at [www.pcusa.org/hunger/hunger\\_games.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger/hunger_games.htm). For other great hunger-related simulations, see [www.churchworldservice.org/hungerbooklet](http://www.churchworldservice.org/hungerbooklet).

## **Movie: "With Honors"**

This movie shows a college student who has to befriend a homeless man in order to get his senior economy thesis back. As they get to know one another, our college student learns a lot about life, people, and his own attitudes about people. 1994, Spring Creek Productions, Warner Bros. Pictures, Rated PG-13.

## Movie: *Hidden in America*

This movie is about a father and his two kids who struggle to make ends meet. They encounter obstacle after obstacle, but the movie ends with some glimmer of hope. Citadel Entertainment, 1996. Rated PG-13.

**Saturday's Scene:** Go to [www.Youtube.com/watch?v=hzoNlnZ2ClQ](http://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=hzoNlnZ2ClQ) (Sarah McLachlan, World on Fire) (See the leader's guide for considerations about resources on YouTube)

**Sunday's Site:** [www.bigpicturesmallworld.com/movies/hunger/hunger1.html](http://www.bigpicturesmallworld.com/movies/hunger/hunger1.html).

## Are You Starving All Week Long?

(There is a copy-ready version of this in the Leader Resources section.)

**Monday's Memory:** Have you met someone who lived in poverty or was hungry—maybe even you, or someone in your family? Write about your experience. Here are some questions to consider as you write: What were they like? Where did they live? Why were they hungry? Which of the root causes of hunger applied to them? What would make a difference in that person's life? If you've never met a person who lived in poverty, write about what you think it would be like.

**Tuesday's Test:** Go to [www.readtofeed.org/for\\_kids/fun\\_and\\_games/show\\_you\\_know](http://www.readtofeed.org/for_kids/fun_and_games/show_you_know). Play this trivia game about hunger in the world to find out how much you know!

**Wednesday's Word:** "Give a person a fish, and that person eats for a day. Teach a person to fish, and they eat for a lifetime...."

**Thursday's Tune:** Listen to Mr. Wendell, Arrested Development.

**Friday's Food:** Spend one meal eating just rice, a daily staple for almost half of the people on the planet.

## For More Information

Find out what other people are doing to work on the issue of hunger! They might have ideas for your group about what you can do!

### Web sites:

CROP Hunger Walks:

[www.cropwalk.org](http://www.cropwalk.org)

Presbyterian Hunger Program:

[www.pcusa.org/hunger](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger)

Church World Service:

[www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org)

Open a World of Possibilities:

[www.elca.org/openaworld](http://www.elca.org/openaworld)

UN on Hunger:

[www.feedingminds.org/yw/index\\_en.htm](http://www.feedingminds.org/yw/index_en.htm)

The One Campaign, make poverty history:

[www.one.org](http://www.one.org)

Bread for the World:

[www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)

Food First:

[www.foodfirst.org](http://www.foodfirst.org)

### Books:

**The Right to Food.** Download a pdf version of the book at [www.fao.org/docrep/010/a1300e/a1300e00.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a1300e/a1300e00.htm)

**More About the Right to Food.** Download a pdf version at [ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/009/a1301e/a1301e03.pdf](http://ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/009/a1301e/a1301e03.pdf)



***Now that you know what you know,  
what can you do?  
(Faith in Action Steps)***

**(There is a copy-ready version of this in the  
Leader Resources section.)**

1. Plan to walk in the CROP Hunger Walk in your area, or organize one of your own. (See [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org))
2. Choose from among the 52 ways to build a just and joy-filled food system. (see [www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis/archive/february/youth-fast-52ways.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis/archive/february/youth-fast-52ways.pdf))
3. Volunteer at a food pantry or local homeless shelter. Consider volunteering on an ongoing basis so that you might develop relationships with the people served there.
4. Make a poster to display in your church that will teach others about the root causes of hunger.
5. Put a nickel, dime, or quarter in a box or piggy bank every meal as a reminder of

those without enough to eat. Organize others in your church to do likewise. Donate half to a local anti-hunger program and half to your denomination's hunger program.

6. Collect food from your congregation to donate to a food pantry.
7. Become a ONE Congregation. (See [www.one.org](http://www.one.org))
8. Start a *Bread for the World* chapter at your church. (See [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org))
9. Write a letter to your representatives in Congress to let them know you care about hunger.
10. Ask your pastor what your church is doing to eliminate hunger in your community. Volunteer to help!
11. Ask your school to save all the leftover thrown-out food from one day and weigh it to educate your school about how much food gets wasted each day.
12. Write a skit to present to the congregation, or to the younger children, that teaches some of the things you've learned about hunger.

# CAUSES OF HUNGER

## Hunger is caused by war.

.....

Military conflicts disrupt food production and distribution. Moreover, increased global military spending means less gets spent on social and economic development. Oppressive regimes and corruption can also cause hunger by draining scarce funds away from those most in need.

War also creates refugees—people who have to flee their homes because their lives are in danger. When people lose their homes and land, they have to rely on other people to feed them or live off of whatever resources they can find. Often refugees settle on land that no one else wants because it's not good for growing things. Or they gather in cities or communities and put stress on the food system there because there is more competition for the food resources in that city or town.

## Hunger is caused by diseases.

.....

When people are sick, they can't work or grow food. Disease also impacts families. For instance, 14 million children under the age of 15 have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Orphaned children often live on their own and have to scavenge for food. They may also join already stressed families, which means that there is less food for everyone.

Hunger and disease is a cycle. When people are malnourished, they are less healthy so they cannot work to get food, which makes them even sicker.

## Hunger is caused by debt that countries can't get out of.

.....

Fifty-two of the world's poorest countries (of which 37 are in Africa) owe a total of \$376 billion in debt. The repayments for this huge amount of money take up a very large portion of each country's income, leaving them with little to help themselves and solve their hunger problems.

The areas where chronic, persistent hunger occurs need money and resources to develop and imple-

ment ways to help solve their problems. Cancelling world debt would provide these countries with the ability to help themselves. Without debt, countries could develop their economy in order to safeguard against future hunger problems, develop and import technologies to begin and increase the amount of output from their farmable land, or buy food from other countries, helping to solve the redistribution problem.

## Hunger is caused by damage to the environment.

.....

Climate change (or global warming) is already affecting and will dramatically impact food production patterns. Scientists also say that global warming causes larger and fiercer storms. As we witnessed in Indonesia and the U.S. Gulf Coast, those with few resources are typically hardest hit.

Changing weather patterns or extreme weather events, such as floods or droughts, can have negative consequences for agricultural production. Increases in temperatures and more or less rainfall can wipe out farmers' crops and make it hard for them to grow food. As a result people have less access to food, which forces them to buy food products. This affects their financial situation. It also influences their health, as people often buy cheaper food that is frequently less nutritious. This can be especially hard on children, the elderly and people with chronic diseases who need a nutritious diet.

Climate change also leads to pest outbreaks that further weaken food systems. For example, locusts can destroy an entire crop in a couple of days.

## Hunger is caused by the ways people buy and sell food around the world.

.....

The way we eat makes the food crisis worse because higher-income consumers grab such a large share of the globe's food. They consume more and also eat

a lot of meat and dairy. Meat and dairy use a lot of feed grains and land for grazing. For example, beef cattle eat seven pounds of grain for every pound of beef produced. U.S. citizens consume, on average, an astounding 275 pounds of meat each year, while people in Denmark consume even more—321 pounds. By contrast, Nigerians consume just 19 pounds and Indians consume only 11 pounds (2002 data). When much of the grain and farmland is used to produce meat and dairy for a small portion of the earth's people, it impacts how much food is available for the rest of the world.

Hunger is caused by some people having more power than others.

The wealthiest fifth of the world's people consumes 86% of all goods and services, while the poorest fifth consumes 1%. Most companies produce goods based on how much money they can make. Much of the best agricultural land in the world is used to grow products like cotton, sisal, tea, tobacco, sugar cane, and cocoa, which are bought by that wealthiest fifth of the world's population. These items are not food or have very little nutritional value and most of these products are shipped out of the country for people in other parts of the world to use. Companies can make money from producing them, though, so they use the land for things that don't provide food and income for the people who need it most. Most of us don't think about ourselves as having a lot of power, but the decisions we make about what we buy and who we buy it from determine how companies act. People who don't have money to buy things don't have much power to influence the things that get planted and produced right in their own countries.

Hunger is caused by poverty.

In developing countries every fourth child lives in poverty in a family with an income of less than \$1 per day. That means that it is very hard to buy food, especially nutritious food. Even in rich countries there are tens of millions of people who are "food insecure." That means that they are not sure where their next meal is coming from. Poor families must make very difficult choices in their meager budgets. Those subsisting on the lowest incomes have been forced to cut back on their diets, even reducing the number of daily meals. Misery and severe malnourishment, if not outright starvation, are the inevitable result. Those who survive face serious long-term health consequences, such as stunting and mental retardation. What this means is that ending hunger requires doing away with poverty or, at the very least, ensuring that people have enough money to get adequate food everyday.

Hunger is caused by increases in population.

The human population is continuing to rise, which puts a lot of pressure on the supply of food. The more people there are, the more food is needed and the more energy, fuel, fertilizer and water are needed to produce it. As the cost of these resources goes up, the price of food goes up, too. This is especially a problem when food is so unevenly distributed. A small number of people use most of the food resources in the world and often are wasteful in how much they use. The rising number of people on the planet also impacts the environment. Each year cities, roads, airports, golf courses, suburbs and other human uses swallow up vast tracts of prime farmland. Erosion takes away more land, causing deserts to expand and water resources to shrink. This means that less food can be grown on that land.

## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

*O God: To those who hunger, give bread. And to those who have bread, give the hunger for justice. Amen.*

*(Prayer from Latin America)*

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*(Prayer from Latin America)*

# ARE YOU STARVING ALL WEEK LONG?

*H*ave you met someone who lived in poverty or was hungry—maybe even you, or someone in your family? Write about your experience. Here are some questions to consider as you write: What were they like? Where did they live? Why were they hungry? Which of the root causes of hunger applied to them? What would make a difference in that person's life? If you've never met a person who lived in poverty, write about what you think it would be like.

### *Monday's Memory:*

Have you met someone who lived in poverty or was hungry — maybe even you, or someone in your family? Write about your experience. Here are some questions to consider as you write: What were they like? Where did they live? Why were they hungry? Which of the root causes of hunger applied to them? What would make a difference in that person's life? If you've never met a person who lived in poverty, write about what you think it would be like.

### *Tuesday's Test:*

Go to [www.readtofeed.org/for\\_kids/fun\\_and\\_games/show\\_you\\_know](http://www.readtofeed.org/for_kids/fun_and_games/show_you_know).  
Play this trivia game about hunger in the world to find out how much you know!

### *Wednesday's Word:*

"Give a person a fish, and that person eats for a day.  
Teach a person to fish, and they eat for a lifetime...."

### *Thursday's Tune:*

Listen to Mr. Wendell, Arrested Development

### *Friday's Food:*

Spend one meal eating just rice, a daily staple for almost  
half of the people on the planet.

### *Saturday's Scene:*

Watch [www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzoNInZ2ClQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzoNInZ2ClQ) (Sarah McLachlan, World on Fire)  
(See the leader's guide for considerations about resources on YouTube)

### *Sunday's Site:*

Go to [www.bigpicturesmallworld.com/movies/hunger/hunger1.html](http://www.bigpicturesmallworld.com/movies/hunger/hunger1.html).



# NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### **(Faith in Action Steps)**

1. Plan to walk in the CROP Hunger Walk in your area, or organize one of your own. (See [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org))
2. Choose from among the 52 ways to build a just and joy-filled food system. (see [www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis/archive/february/youth-fast-52ways.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis/archive/february/youth-fast-52ways.pdf))
3. Volunteer at a food pantry or local homeless shelter. Consider volunteering on an ongoing basis so that you might develop relationships with the people served there.
4. Make a poster to display in your church that will teach others about the root causes of hunger.
5. Put a nickel, dime, or quarter in a box or piggy bank every meal as a reminder of those without enough to eat. Organize others in your church to do likewise. Donate half to a local anti-hunger program and half to your denomination's hunger program.
6. Collect food from your congregation to donate to a food pantry.
7. Become a ONE Congregation. (See [www.one.org](http://www.one.org))
8. Start a *Bread for the World* chapter at your church. (See [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org))
9. Write a letter to your representatives in Congress to let them know you care about hunger.
10. Ask your pastor what your church is doing to eliminate hunger in your community. Volunteer to help!
11. Ask your school to save all the leftover thrown-out food from one day and weigh it to educate your school about how much food gets wasted each day.
12. Write a skit to present to the congregation, or to the younger children, that teaches some of the things you've learned about hunger.

# SESSION 3

## *Earth to People – Hello?*



# SESSION 3

## EARTH TO PEOPLE—HELLO?



*T*hese activities will help your group learn about the environmental impact our food choices make on the Earth. Does God care about the Earth? You'll look at what the Bible has to say about the environment, plus stories from people who decided to make a difference! See the **Key Ideas** behind this session for more information.

### Bible Ties



### Closers

- Old Turtle
- Faith Practice
- Prayer for the Week



### Openers

- 100-Mile Snack
- No Processed/Packaged Food Snack



### Learning Activities

- Planes, Trains and Automobiles
- We Have Baggage
- "Words to Know" Match Game
- Environmental Church Audit
- The Price Is (Water) Right?



*If you have more time/  
If you are on a trip/retreat*

*Earth to People All Week Long*

*For More Information*

*Now that you know what you know,  
what can you do?  
(Faith in Action Steps)*

# SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

### Key Ideas

- Food is a gift from God to all living things.
- Eating is an environmental act. How we grow and package our food affects the Earth, other species, and our own future.
- Every dollar we spend is a vote for how we want our food to be produced.

### Openers

#### 100-Mile Snack

Share a snack that has been grown and produced less than 100 miles away. Your own garden (or someone else's from your church) is a great place to start! Also check this Web site for information: [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org).



#### No Processed/Packaged Snack

Share a snack that requires no processing or packaging: Bring your own bag and/or containers to the store, garden or orchard to collect fruits, vegetables, nuts, or whatever else you can think of that is food in its most "natural" state.

### Learning Activities

#### Planes, Trains and Automobiles

**Debate:** Break your group into two groups, and give them five minutes to prepare what is the most "just eating" practice from the following scenarios:

At your local grocery store, organic peaches are available. The label "organic" tells you that this peach was raised without pesticides (chemicals used to keep "pests" away), which means both that you aren't consuming pesticides, and that it is not hurting animal habitat. They come from California, and you live in (fill in your town). This means that



piece of fruit has to be picked in California, taken to a buyer and sold, put on a truck, and shipped to your town, using lots of natural resources like gas and oil in the truck. The distance an item of food travels from the farm to your table is called a "food mile." The average food item in the United States travels 1500 miles. That means that your peach has to sit on a truck and on a shelf for a long time before it gets into your mouth. And, it has already been touched by lots of hands!

You could also choose to buy a piece of fruit that is grown in your state at the grocery store. It is not organic, they used pesticides, and it was grown on a big, huge farm, but that farm is located in your state. It also sends fruit all around the country, but it doesn't have to travel far to get to you.

Which is the more just choice? Give each group one side of the argument, and ask them to spend time preparing their argument. Again, if you have access to the Internet, they may find some resources there, or you may want to bring some resources in for them. One place to start is an article in *Time* magazine, "Eating Better than Organic" [www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1595245,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1595245,00.html).

After five minutes, flip a coin to decide who will go first, and give them one minute to give an opening argument. Then give each team another minute to refute the other team's opening argument. Then give each team a minute to give closing arguments. Try to decide as a group which answer is the most "just." What would be a more ideal option?

\* Sources: Pirog, Rich, and Andrew Benjamin. "Checking the Food Odometer: Comparing Food Miles for Local versus Conventional Produce Sales in Iowa Institutions." Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, July 2003. [www.swivel.com/graphs/show/20896622](http://www.swivel.com/graphs/show/20896622).

#### We Have Baggage

Twenty-five years ago no one had ever heard of bottled water or plastic grocery bags. Now our landfills are filling up with plastic bags and plastic bottles, plus all the materials we use to package food.



There are people who are trying to change this. See the Session 3 Leader Resources section for four articles with information about groups trying to make a change in their environmental impact:

1. San Francisco charges for grocery bags
2. "San Francisco Bans Bottled Water for City Staff"
3. "Marketing to Kids: It's What's on the Outside that Counts" (Lunchables)
4. "'Greens' Hear a Higher Calling" (churches making environmental choices)

Hand out articles (found in Session 3 Leader Resources section) about these issues and possible changes to pairs or groups of three, and have each group spend 10 minutes preparing a way to present the issue and what one solution is to the group. They could do this through a song, skit, poem, presentation, art, etc.

Questions to ask after the presentations:

1. What, of the ideas we just heard, are things that we could do?
2. What seems like a good idea to you that you wish our community did?
3. What other steps could a church take to have an environmental impact?

### **"Words to Know" Match Game**

Help your group understand important words in order to make good decisions around food and the environment. The following "Glossary" can be set up as a Memory game.

1. Photocopy and cut out the cards prepared in the Session 3 Leader Resources section or use full-size sheets of paper or cardboard to make a big game board people can walk around on.
2. For fun, you may wish to add some pictures to the cards to aid players' memory.
3. Spread the cards out face down and in random order in a grid that is six across and three high)
4. Have group members take turns flipping two cards, trying to match a word with a definition.

**"Words to Know" Match Game words and definitions:**

**Organic:** Food grown with no chemicals and no genetic modification (GMO)

**Free-range:** Animals, like chickens, that can run around outside.

**Fairly traded:** Food grown by farmers, usually organized in cooperatives, who receive a fair price

**Natural:** Food that does not contain additives or preservatives.

**Sustainable agriculture:** Farming that uses various strategies to minimize negative impacts on the environment and to improve the soil.

**Composting:** Recycling food and other things like lawn clippings, with the help of worms and billions of micro-organisms, to create a nutrient-rich soil to incorporate back into the garden or farm

**Vegan:** People who do not eat any animal parts or products, such as dairy, eggs and honey

**Vegetarian:** People who do not eat the flesh of any animal

**Additives:** Chemicals that modify food, for example to preserve it or to change its taste, smell, color or texture

### **Environmental Church Audit**

Read the article "'Greens' Hear a Higher Calling", found in the Session 3 Leader Resources section about churches taking steps to go green. As your group listens, ask them to write down the different things those churches are doing to reduce their environmental impact. Then walk around your church to see what your church is already doing, or what changes your church can make to become more "green," or earth-friendly. Consider presenting your findings and your ideas to the church session, or put together a display to educate church members about what you learned.

### **The Price Is (Water) Right?**

Take some time to discuss water usage and its effect on the world. Everyone has learned that we can conserve water by turning off the faucet when we brush our teeth. Ask your class for other ideas for how to conserve water. Some other ideas include turning off the shower while you shampoo, taking shorter showers, and washing dishes by hand in a sink or basin filled with water. You can find more ideas at [www.monolake.org/waterconservation](http://www.monolake.org/waterconservation).

What many people don't think about is the effect of our food choices on water. For example, agriculture uses more water than any other single activity, mostly because of irrigation. Play this game to help understand the amount of water used in various kinds of food production.

Just like "The Price is Right", in which the game begins with naming the price of a certain large-ticket item, you will have everyone guess the number of gallons of water used in production per pound of food for some kinds of food.



On the first question, they will likely have no idea what to guess, but they will get better after they've seen one example. You may want to bring in a pound of potatoes in order to give them a visual (or a picture). Proceed with the other food items, and have each person write down their guess and reveal their answer.

Potatoes:	60 gallons per pound
Wheat:	180 gallons per pound
Corn:	168 gallons per pound
Rice:	229 gallons per pound
Soybeans:	240 gallons per pound
Beef:	12,009 gallons per pound

Source: Professor David Pimentel of Cornell University explained that the data we have indicates that a beef animal consumes 100 kg. of hay and 4 kg. of grain per 1 kg. of beef produced. Using the basic rule that it takes about 1,000 liters of water to produce 1 kg of hay and grain, about 100,000 liters are required to produce 1 kg. of beef. (Kg. stands for kilogram, which equals 2.2 pounds.) U.S. agriculture uses up 87% of all the fresh water consumed each year. Livestock directly use only 1.3% of that water. But when the water required to grow the grain and grass the livestock eat is included,

livestock's water usage rises dramatically. Every kilogram of beef produced takes 100,000 liters of water. In comparison, some 900 liters of water go into producing a kilogram of wheat. Potatoes are even less "thirsty," at 500 liters per kilogram.

Discuss the differences in impact on water supplies for our food choices.

- What difference does it make if a lot of water is used to make our beef?
- What small changes can we make in our diet to not affect the water supply (just cutting back on some meat makes a difference)?
- How does this fit with what we talked about last week and the week before?
  - Cutting back on beef and eating more plant food, if you are a North American consumer, is generally better for your health.
  - Plant-based diets use fewer resources.
  - Food that we use to feed cattle could be feeding people.
  - Crops converted to ethanol and biodiesel could instead be used to feed people.

## Bible Ties

Genesis 1: The focus of Genesis chapter 1 is creation: God created the earth and God created it to be good. The first part of this exercise will highlight these main points in Genesis through a litany. You'll need three volunteer readers. See Litany in Session Three Resources section.



The chapter goes on in verses 29–31 to tell about our role in creation: to have "dominion" over or the responsibility to care for the earth as a parent would for their child. It is our responsibility to care for the planet because it is God's creation, and it was created good. Caring is an important part of our role in the world.

Questions to ask after reading the litany and the calling in verses 29–31 to care for the earth:

- What does this chapter say about how God feels about creation? (It was good)
- What job was Adam given? (To name and care for all of creation)
- Do you think we do a good job of taking care of the earth?
- How could you and I do better?

## Closers

### Old Turtle

Obtain a copy of the book *Old Turtle* by **Douglas Wood** (author), **Jon J. Muth** (illustrator) and share the story with your students. It tells a story of people learning to remember to care for each other and the earth—and they learn from listening to the earth (Old Turtle and his friends).



## Faith Practice

Genesis talks of humans as beings made from the earth. As a spiritual practice to teach for the week, use the practice many churches use on Ash Wednesday. With some ashes, or dust in this case, make the sign of the cross on each person, saying, "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return" to remind us of our connection to the earth. Ask participants to remember to say that each day, NOT as a reminder of how lowly they are, but as a reminder of their connection to the earth and the rest of God's creation.

## Prayer for the Week

See Session 3 Leader Resources section for a copy-ready version of this prayer. Be sure to print out the prayer for participants to take home and use throughout the week.

*We praise you, God,  
For the wonders of life on this planet,  
And we give you thanks  
For all that the earth provides  
For our food, shelter and well-being.  
We commit to you those areas of the world  
Where the resources of nature are being  
destroyed  
And people's livelihoods threatened;  
And we pray for ourselves and others who work  
to restore the land to people who most need its  
harvest. Amen.*

(Adapted from a prayer from "Christian Aid," found in *Harvest for the World: A Worship Anthology on Sharing in the Work of Creation* by Geoffrey Duncan, p. 18.)

## If you have more time/If you're on a service trip/retreat

1. Visit a dump site or local recycling center to learn from them about the impact of food packaging.
2. Arrange for a visit to a local farmers market or CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm.
3. Find out if there is a restaurant or grocery in your town that uses local produce and organic foods. Visit the restaurant or store for a meal or to shop, and ask a manager to speak with you about their food practices.
4. Watch the movie, "Over the Hedge." (2006 Dreamworks, rated PG)

## Earth to People All Week Long

**(There is a copy-ready version of this in the Leader Resources section if you want to provide copies for the participants.)**

**Monday's Memory:** If you've ever planted a garden, or even a plant that you can eat, spend a minute thinking, writing, or drawing about what it was like to watch the plant go from seed to food. Or do the same with a vegetable plant in a nearby garden.

**Tuesday's Test:** Play the Planet Green Game [www.planetgreengame.com](http://www.planetgreengame.com).

**Wednesday's Word:** "Think of water, food, people, and land as interwoven threads in the fabric of the world." - Anne Olson, Georgia Department of Education

**Thursday's Tune:** Go to [www.kokuahawaiifoundation.org/schoolprograms/3rsschoolrecycling](http://www.kokuahawaiifoundation.org/schoolprograms/3rsschoolrecycling) and find the free link to Jack Johnson's Three R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle song)

**Friday's Food:** See if you can get your family to eat a meal today that includes only foods that are in season in your region. Go to [www.sustainabletable.org/shop/eatseasonal](http://www.sustainabletable.org/shop/eatseasonal) and find out what is available now. Or go to your farmers market and see what kind of meal you can make!

**Saturday's Scene:** Watch [www.youtube.com/watch?v=otcEsZ2loYs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otcEsZ2loYs). All about urban sprawl from Over the Hedge.

**Sunday's Site:** Go to the recipes section of the *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* Web site put together by Barbara Kingsolver's daughter, Camille, and find great seasonal recipes and meal plans. [www.animal-vegetablemiracle.com/Recipes.html](http://www.animal-vegetablemiracle.com/Recipes.html).

## For More Information

[www.thinkoutsidethebottle.org](http://www.thinkoutsidethebottle.org) Learn about bottled water and take the pledge!

[www.sustainabletable.org](http://www.sustainabletable.org) Good information on buying locally, with resources on where to go in your area.

[www.greenlivingonline.com](http://www.greenlivingonline.com)

[www.grinningplanet.com](http://www.grinningplanet.com)

[www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)

[www.animalvegetablemiracle.com](http://www.animalvegetablemiracle.com)

[www.eatwellguide.org/i.php?id=Seasonalfoodguides](http://www.eatwellguide.org/i.php?id=Seasonalfoodguides)  
State by state seasonal food guide.

## Now that you know what you know, what can you do?

**(There is a copy-ready version of this in the Leader Resources section if you want to provide copies for the participants.)**

1. Join the “Enough for All” campaign of Church World Service. See [www.churchworldservice.org/enoughforall/](http://www.churchworldservice.org/enoughforall/).
2. When you, or your family, go shopping for groceries, take along a box or cloth bags, or reuse plastic or paper bags.
3. Pay attention to the amount of packaging on the food you eat. Try to choose food with less packaging, like not buying individually wrapped cheese or snacks, or other items with excess packaging. You can put cheese or chips into a zip-lock bag for a single serving, and then wash the bag out and use it again.
4. Learn where you can buy food that is grown near you. Let the produce manager at your grocery store know that you would like more!
5. Get a water bottle and fill it up at the tap! Drink lots of water, but don’t go through lots of water bottles.
6. Make a display for your congregation about things they can do to care for the earth.
7. Visit and learn about a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm near you. [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)
8. Find out what you can recycle in your town and, if you’re not recycling now, start. Further steps: If your town doesn’t allow you to recycle certain things, write a letter to your city government encouraging them to consider adding the material.
9. Start a compost bin! To find out how, visit [www.globalgang.org.uk/games/diy/compost.html](http://www.globalgang.org.uk/games/diy/compost.html).
10. Get your school cafeteria to start composting.
11. Try eating less meat! If you eat about the same amount as most Americans, consuming less will be healthier for you, healthier for the planet, and since much of our grain goes to feed animals that we eat instead of feeding people, it may have an effect on world hunger as well.

# PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES

### ***Just Eating Dilemma***

At your local grocery store, organic peaches are available. The label “organic” tells you that this peach was raised without pesticides (chemicals used to keep “pests” away), which means both that you aren’t consuming pesticides, and that it is not hurting animal habitat. They come from California, and you live in (fill in your town). This means that piece of fruit has to be picked in California, taken to a buyer and sold, put on a truck, and shipped to your town, using lots of natural resources like gas and oil in the truck. The distance an item of food travels from the farm to your table is called a “food mile.” The average food item in the United States travels 1500 miles. That means that your peach has to sit on a truck and on a shelf for a long time before it gets into your mouth. And, it has already been touched by lots of hands!

You could also choose to buy a piece of fruit that is grown in your state at the grocery store. It is not organic, they used pesticides, and it was grown on a big, huge farm, but that farm is located in your state. It also sends fruit all around the country, but it doesn’t have to travel far to get to you.

Which peach should you buy? Which would be a more just and ideal option?

# WE HAVE BAGGAGE

*San Francisco Chronicle*

SAN FRANCISCO

## *17-cent fee on bags OK'd by environment panel*

*Wyatt Buchanan, Chronicle Staff Writer*

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

The San Francisco Commission on the Environment unanimously approved a proposal Tuesday evening asking the city to charge grocery shoppers 17 cents for every paper or plastic bag they take home.

If approved by the Board of Supervisors and mayor, which could take six months, the fee would be the first of its kind in the country, though several nations charge for shopping bags, and New York City entertained the idea last year.

The commission wants the fee initially to apply only to customers at larger grocery stores. But it wants an option to later extend it to smaller markets, drugstores, department stores, hardware stores, dry cleaners, food takeout, newspapers and other bag distributors.

The supervisors could also determine how large the fee would be and how it would be applied. Supervisors are not bound by any part of the commission's proposal.

As a result of the commission's action, a private agency will be hired to analyze the impact of shopping bags on the city's budget and its environment and examine the impact of a bag fee on low-income people and large families.

The analysis is expected April 30, commissioners said. Depending on the results, the proposal of 17 cents could change, said Jared Blumenfeld, director of the city's Department of the Environment.

Many of the commissioners who spoke said their intention was not merely to increase revenue.

"We're not trying to just charge a user fee; we're trying to make a change in behavior," said Paul Pelosi Jr., commission vice president.

Blumenfeld said the fee was determined by dividing the total cost in cleanup, disposal and lost recycling revenue because of plastic shopping bags — about \$8.7 million — by the number of bags dispersed in the city by large grocery stores each year, which is about 50 million.

Proponents of the bag tax also cite environmental concerns such as the number of felled trees for paper bags and barrels of oil for plastic bags as the basis of the proposal. They say plastic bags harm marine mammals, litter the city and are major contaminants in the city's recycling and composting program.



Opponents of the tax, including the American Plastics Council and the California Grocers Association, have stopped the state Legislature from imposing a similar fee. They argue that plastic bags, which make up 90 percent of all grocery bags, are used to make other goods like composite lumber and that the city instead should develop a recovery program for bags.

Tuesday's meeting allowed the public to comment, and all but three of the few dozen who spoke supported the idea.

"This resolution is an attempt to get people to take responsibility for their actions," said Joe Besso, recycling program manager for Norcal Waste Systems, which runs garbage and recycling services in the city.

Plastic bags are not recyclable in the city, and when they show up with other items they can prevent a whole batch of material from being recycled, he said.

Blumenfeld said such contamination cost the city \$694,000 a year.

Those who opposed the bag fee cited the burden on poor people. The proposal includes a provision to subsidize the cost of bags for the poor, and some who spoke recommended a program to give away free canvas bags.

*kicker: san francisco*

*This article appeared on page B-4 of the San Francisco Chronicle*

## *San Francisco Bans Bottled Water for City Staff*

*June 26, 2007—By Reuters*

SAN FRANCISCO — Thirsty San Francisco city workers will no longer have bottled water to drink under an order by Mayor Gavin Newsom, who says it costs too much, worsens pollution and is no better than tap water.

Newsom's executive order bars city departments, agencies and contractors from using city funds to serve water in plastic bottles and in larger dispensers when tap water is available. "In San Francisco, for the price of one 1 gallon of bottled water, local residents can purchase 1,000 gallons of tap water," according to the mayor's order.

Newsom estimates San Francisco could save \$500,000 a year under his directive, which also addresses environmental concerns over the amount of oil used to make and transport plastic water bottles.

"All of this waste and pollution is generated by a product that by objective standards is often inferior to the quality of San Francisco's pristine tap water," according to the order. The ban on the ubiquitous plastic bottles follows a prohibition in March by city officials on plastic shopping bags in large supermarkets because recycling efforts had largely failed.

*Source: Reuters*

# *Marketing to Kids, It's What's on the Outside that Counts*

Attractive packaging is essential for a food product aimed at children.

Food processors know who's the boss of the shopping cart.

*By Lou Gelfand, Star Tribune*

Last update: June 03, 2007–3:57 PM

Attractive packaging is essential for a food product aimed at children. Food processors know who's the boss of the shopping cart.

"Lunchables" is a prime example. Sold in as many as 40 varieties, it came to my attention as I was watching Saturday morning television, a key location for reaching kids.

My supermarket's refrigerator case had a dozen or more varieties. I selected "Double-Stacked Tacos."

At home I discovered that none of the seven separately packaged items within the carton had a list of ingredients.

The ingredients are printed in 63 lines on a side panel of the outer packaging in type the size of a stock market quotation, on a deep-purple background 1½ inches wide and 5½ inches high. The government approves food packaging labels for accuracy but, obviously, not for readability.

What the consumer needs is an eighth enclosure, a magnifying glass, so that at least the presence of BHT, a controversial preservative, is not obscure.

But of course children, to whom the product is marketed, don't read ingredient lists. And Oscar Mayer, the maker of Lunchables, knows that many a parent would rather give in to a child's pleas than start a public fuss.

The busy, colorful art on the front of the package begins at the left with the words "Maxed out," whatever that has to do with nutrition.

An illustration of two brimming tacos occupies the upper-right quarter of the package front, and also legible, in small type, are the words "enlarged to show detail." Call it truth in packaging, but just barely.

Oscar Mayer wants the consumer to know, as the carton front highlights, that the chicken is "100% white meat." But one has to squint to read the ingredient list to learn that some, or all, of it is rib meat and then open the carton to find that, whatever the components, the chicken weighs all of 1 ounce.

In addition, there is a handful of packaged mozzarella and cheddar cheese bits, a smidgin of packaged salsa, two tortilla wraps, a fruit-flavored water beverage, packaged bits of sour candy and two hard taco shells.

There also is a window on the front, presumably to view the contents. In theory, it is consumer-friendly. In reality, it is useless.

But it used to be worse.

Public interest groups, appalled at the level of sugar, fat and sodium in Lunchables, won some major revisions. Double-Stacked Tacos still have 840 grams of sodium, one-third of an adult's daily recommended amount.

Oscar Mayer uses legal but tricky marketing to sell Lunchables.

The losers are naive consumers. Those who profit are unashamed.

## 'Greens' Hear a Higher Calling

*by Meredith Goad*

Long before he had ever heard of global warming, Loren Downey caulked windows, installed insulation and took care of all the other energy-saving tasks that come with owning a 130-year-old home.

Now the same tasks he performed as a responsible homeowner have become a responsibility of his faith.

Downey is a founder of the EarthCare team at the First Parish Congregational Church in Saco, where church members are replacing windows, conserving hot water and taking other steps to save energy and combat global warming, both at church and at home.

The EarthCare team is one of three dozen around the state that have been formed by congregations interested in preserving the environment not because it is politically correct, but because they believe their faith calls them to do so.

"Looking at it from a church perspective," Downey said, "we've always claimed a part of our mission is to be stewards of God's creation. What a great gift we've been given, and to let it erode and in time disappear around us, our stewardship motives come to bear on this. We've got to do something about it."

The concept of EarthCare teams was developed by the Maine Council of Churches and **Maine Interfaith Power and Light** as a way to help churches focus on environmental issues, particularly global warming. While some churches have been trying to do this for several years, says Anne D. Burt of the Maine Council of Churches, many of them have struggled to get the attention of their congregations.

"There would be one, maybe two if you were lucky, people in a congregation for whom this is really a passion," Burt said. "They see this as really central to their faith. They were feeling isolated and alone."

So last September, Burt and Christine James, congregational outreach coordinator at Maine Interfaith Power and Light, brought together 25 congregations at a planning meeting. Each church made a commitment to try two to three new activities over the next eight months that would shrink their environmental footprints in Maine.

They considered everything from undergoing energy audits and switching to energy-saving light bulbs to simply swapping Styrofoam cups for nondisposable ones at the fellowships held after Sunday services.

The churches, now numbering three dozen, will meet again Sunday at Morris Farm in Wiscasset to share their successes and failures, and recruit other churches into the fold.

The summer meeting will be followed by another planning session in October at the Living Waters Spiritual Center in Winslow.

So far, a trio of southern Maine EarthCare teams that includes Downey's church, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Saco and Biddeford, and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Saco have proved to be the most successful.

Working together, the teams have kept 888,771 pounds of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, from being released into the atmosphere. That's the equivalent of taking 96 cars, or 55 trucks, off the roads.

They did it by making changes not only in church but also at home. Every time a church member chose energy-efficient lighting, replaced a window, installed a low-flow shower head or took some other energy-saving step, they tied a leaf, an apple or a flower to a tree displayed in their sanctuaries.

A leaf represented 500 pounds of carbon dioxide saved, an apple 1,000 pounds and a flower 5,000 pounds.

"It was bright," said Caryl Everett, a member of the EarthCare team at the Unitarian Universalist Church, which has 100 members. "On the coldest days in the winter, it was so nice to see it in the sanctuary."

Everett got involved through the coaxing of her minister, the Rev. Karen Brammer. She says she saw the project as "something where individuals could really make a difference."

The 29 households that ended up participating at the Unitarian Church saved 322,300 pounds, or 161 tons, of carbon dioxide.

In January, the church hosted an energy-efficiency fair that included displays on topics such as recycling, composting and how to save energy with appliances. Only local foods were served at the fair in order to highlight the energy costs associated with transportation. So, on one of the coldest days in January, they ate Maine-made ice cream and drank apple cider.

"I've always tried to eat healthy foods, and I didn't care whether my broccoli came from Maine or California," Everett said. "This has been a real eye-opener for me. I've learned that it really does make a difference. The average meal travels 1,200 miles before it reaches your plate."

Everett buys energy-efficient light bulbs wholesale and makes them available at no extra cost to the congregation. So far, church members have purchased four cases of compact fluorescent light bulbs, which use less than a quarter of the energy put out by a regular 100-watt bulb.

At the First Parish Congregational Church, Downey organized an April transportation fair that featured hybrid cars, bicycles, free bus rides, and other alternative forms of transportation.

His EarthCare team also made sure that the church's new building--its historic home was destroyed in a fire four years ago--will be certified green, with lots of insulation, airtight windows and other features to make it energy-efficient.

First Parish, which has 400 members, started off with a goal of reducing its carbon dioxide contribution by 1,500 pounds. With 20 households participating, the church ended up cutting its emissions by 308,576 pounds.

"We all agree that there's more work to be done," Downey said, "and we have to get more people involved."

Not all EarthCare teams find that they are preaching to the choir.

Downey says it can be difficult to get people interested, in part because the concept of global warming seems so overwhelming, especially in these times when people are worrying about Iraq and potential terrorist attacks.

Marilyn Voorhies can relate. She's a one-woman EarthCare team at St. Saviour's Episcopal Church in Bar Harbor, where she has been doing a lot of environmental evangelizing over the past few years.

She's had some successes. St. Saviour's signed up for one of Efficiency Maine's free energy audits, and recently bought energy-efficient appliances during a renovation of the rectory. The church has now begun replacing regular bulbs with energy-efficient ones, she says.

The biggest environmental milestone so far for the church has been signing up for green power. Voorhies, who drives a hybrid car, is still trying to convince her fellow churchgoers to do the same at home.

"I'm still perplexed that more people haven't gotten on board with this because the cost is minimal," Voorhies said. "If you use 500 kilowatt hours, you're only going to pay \$7.50 more a month. For most people, I don't think that's really all that significant. You go out and buy a couple of lattes at Dunkin' Donuts and you're going to be close to that figure."

Christine James of Maine Interfaith Power and Light says some EarthCare teams have found it difficult to convince their congregations to make even a simple change, such as giving up Styrofoam cups at church coffees or weaning themselves from paper napkins.

"In some congregations, people really face resistance to that," she said.

Immanuel Baptist Church in Portland is in the middle of a transition to cloth napkins and china cups, and now serves fair trade coffee at all its church receptions, says Wendy Harding de Rham, a member of the church's EarthCare team.

The 250-member church already recycles, and is considering the purchase of outdoor photovoltaic lighting. An energy audit was completed in February, and the property committee is deliberating over which of its recommendations the church can afford.

Immanuel Baptist has also purchased "green tags," certificates that support the development of renewable energy, but has not yet decided whether to sign onto a green energy plan.

"I think the hard thing is to just really not get discouraged," Wendy Harding de Rham said. "If you don't make a lot of tangible progress all at once, it doesn't mean you should give up."

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## WORDS TO KNOW MATCH GAME

### *"Words to Know" Match Game Cards*

<b>Organic</b>	Food grown with no chemicals and no genetic modification (GMO)
<b>Free-range</b>	Animals, like chickens, than can run around outside, instead of being kept in a cage or pen
<b>Fairly traded</b>	Food grown by farmers, usually organized in cooperatives, who receive a fair price for their crops

## **Natural**

Food that does not contain additives or preservatives

## **Sustainable agriculture**

Farming that works with the natural environment rather than trying to control it with pesticides or fertilizers

## **Composting**

Recycling food and other things like lawn clippings to help create a nutrient-rich soil to incorporate back into the garden or farm

## **Vegan**

People who do not eat any animal parts or products, such as dairy, eggs and honey

## **Vegetarian**

People who do not eat the flesh of any animal

## **Additives**

Chemicals that modify food to preserve it or to change its taste, smell, color or texture

## GENESIS CREATION LITANY

**Voice One:** In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

**Voice Two:** Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

**Voice Three:** And God saw that the light was good.

**Voice One:** And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

**All:** AND THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING, THE FIRST DAY.

**Voice Two:** And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.”

**Voice One:** So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky.

**All:** AND THERE WAS EVENING, AND THERE WAS MORNING, THE SECOND DAY.

**Voice Two:** And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear.”

**Voice One:** And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together were called the Seas.

**Voice Three:** And God saw that it was good.

**Voice Two:** Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation; plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind.”

**Voice One:** And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it.

**Voice Three:** And God saw that it was good.

**All:** AND THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING, THE THIRD DAY.

**Voice Two:** And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs from the night: and let them be for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.”

**Voice One:** And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night, and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness.

**Voice Three:** And God saw that it was good.

**All:** AND THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING, THE FOURTH DAY.

**Voice Two:** And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let the birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.”

**Voice One:** So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind.

**Voice Three:** And God saw that it was good.

**All:** AND THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING, THE FIFTH DAY.

**Voice Two:** And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind and wild animals of the earth of every kind.”

**Voice One:** And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind.

**Voice Three:** And God saw that it was good.

**Voice Two:** Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

**Voice One:** So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them. Male and female, he created them.

**Voice Three:** God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good.

**ALL:** AND THERE WAS EVENING, AND THERE WAS MORNING, THE SIXTH DAY.

**Voice One:** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.



## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

### ***Prayer for the Week***

We praise you, God,  
For the wonders of life on this planet,  
And we give you thanks  
For all that the earth provides  
For our food, shelter and well-being.  
We commit to you those areas of the world  
Where the resources of nature are being destroyed  
And people's livelihoods threatened;  
And we pray for ourselves and others who work to restore  
the land to people who most need its harvest.  
Amen.

(Adapted from a prayer from "Christian Aid," found in *Harvest for the World: A Worship Anthology on Sharing in the Work of Creation* by Geoffrey Duncan, p. 18)

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## Session 3: Leader Resources

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### EARTH TO PEOPLE ALL WEEK LONG

#### Monday's Memory:

If you've ever planted a garden, or even a plant that you can eat, spend a minute thinking, writing, or drawing about what it was like to watch the plant go from seed to food. Or do the same with a vegetable plant in a nearby garden.

#### Tuesday's Test:

Play the Planet Green Game [www.planetgreengame.com](http://www.planetgreengame.com)

#### Wednesday's Word:

"Think of water, food, people, and land as interwoven threads in the fabric of the world." - Anne Olson, Georgia Department of Education

#### Thursday's Tune:

Go to [www.kokuahawaiiifoundation.org/fileadmin/pdf/3RsSong.mp3](http://www.kokuahawaiiifoundation.org/fileadmin/pdf/3RsSong.mp3)  
And find the free link to Ben Folds' Three R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)

#### Friday's Food:

See if you can get your family to eat a meal today that includes only foods that are in season in your region. Go to [www.sustainabletable.org/shop/eatseasonal/](http://www.sustainabletable.org/shop/eatseasonal/) and find out what is available now. Or go to your farmers market and see what kind of meal you can make!

#### Saturday's Scene:

Watch [www.youtube.com/watch?v=otcEsZ2loYs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otcEsZ2loYs). All about food-RJ from *Over the Hedge*.

#### Sunday's Site:

Go to the recipes section of the *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* Web site put together by Barbara Kingsolver's daughter, Camille, and find great seasonal recipes and meal plans. [www.animalvegetablemiracle.com/Recipes.html](http://www.animalvegetablemiracle.com/Recipes.html)

### For More Information

[www.thinkoutsidethebottle.org](http://www.thinkoutsidethebottle.org) Learn about bottled water and take the pledge!  
[www.sustainabletable.org](http://www.sustainabletable.org) Good information on buying locally, with resources on where to go in your area.  
[www.greenlivingonline.com](http://www.greenlivingonline.com)  
[www.grinningplanet.com](http://www.grinningplanet.com)  
[www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)  
[www.animalvegetablemiracle.com](http://www.animalvegetablemiracle.com)  
[www.eatwellguide.org/i.php?id=Seasonalfoodguides](http://www.eatwellguide.org/i.php?id=Seasonalfoodguides) State by state seasonal food guide.

# NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### **(Faith in Action Steps)**

1. Join the “Enough for All” campaign of Church World Service. See [www.churchworldservice.org/enoughforall/](http://www.churchworldservice.org/enoughforall/).
2. When you, or your family, go shopping for groceries, take along a box or cloth bags, or reuse plastic or paper bags.
3. Pay attention to the amount of packaging on the food you eat. Try to choose food with less packaging, like not buying individually wrapped cheese or snacks, or other items with excess packaging. You can put cheese or chips into a zip-lock bag for a single serving, and then wash the bag out and use it again.
4. Learn where you can buy food that is grown near you. Let the produce manager at your grocery store know that you would like more!
5. Get a water bottle and fill it up at the tap! Drink lots of water, but don’t go through lots of water bottles.
6. Make a display for your congregation about things they can do to care for the earth.
7. Visit and learn about a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm near you. [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)
8. Find out what you can recycle in your town and, if you’re not recycling now, start. Further steps: If your town doesn’t allow you to recycle certain things, write a letter to your city government encouraging them to consider adding the material.
9. Start a compost bin! To find out how, visit [www.globalgang.org.uk/games/diy/compost.html](http://www.globalgang.org.uk/games/diy/compost.html).
10. Get your school cafeteria to start composting.
11. Try eating less meat! If you eat about the same amount as most Americans, consuming less will be healthier for you, healthier for the planet, and since much of our grain goes to feed animals that we eat instead of feeding people, it may have an effect on world hunger as well.

# S E S S I O N 4

## ***Feast and Celebration!***



# SESSION 4

## FEAST AND CELEBRATION!



*I*n these activities, your group will explore the connections between food and celebration, and food and community. Food can be sacred and sacramental — Each of us has memories connected with food and people we love, and you can also find stories like that in the Bible. See the **Key Ideas** behind this session for some more information.

### Bible Ties



### Closers

- Family Time
- Stone Soup
- Faith Practice: communion
- Prayer for the Week



### Advanced Preparation

#### Opener

- Your Comfort Foods



#### Learning Activities

- “Jesus is Coming to Dinner” Skit
- Interview
- Banquet Collage



*If you have more time/  
If you are on a trip*

*Feast and Celebrate  
All Week Long!*

*Now that you know  
what you know, what will you do?  
(10 Faith in Action Steps)*



## Session 4: Feast and Celebration!

### SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

#### Key Ideas

- Eating together creates community in a unique way.
- Communal eating experiences are an opportunity for us to express what we believe about all the stuff talked about in previous sessions.
- Hospitality to strangers, outsiders, and the sick is part of what it means to follow Jesus Christ and part of how others recognize who we are.

#### Advanced Preparation

It would be very difficult to do this session without including a feast with it, so plan on sharing a meal or finding some way to have food as part of your celebration. Ask each participant to bring in a food that their family eats at holiday meals, and share a feast of family favorites.

This session includes a script for a skit, but feel free to make it your own. Find people willing to do the skit ahead of time. If your class is going to work on it, you may consider sharing it with a larger group, such as in a worship service.

There is also a suggestion for interviewing a person who may have had experiences with feasts or famines. You may need to get ideas from church leaders about who would be good to talk to and make arrangements with that person or group of people.

#### Opener

##### **Your comfort foods**

Ask people to write on a piece of paper numbers from one to ten, and then write down answers to the following questions:

1. What do you eat when you're sick?
2. What is your favorite food at Christmas?
3. What do you eat when you're sad?
4. What do you like to eat when you're tired?



5. If someone asked you what food you wanted on your birthday, what would you say?
6. Think of a place you like to go—a camp, restaurant, or some event. What is the food you associate with that place?
7. If you go on car trips with your family, what is your trip food?
8. If your family has reunions or gatherings, what food do you always know will be there?
9. What food is always present at our church meals?
10. What unusual food combination do you eat?

Talk about your answers to these questions as you share a meal together.

#### Learning Activities

##### **“Jesus is Coming to Dinner” Skit**



##### **To Prepare:**

This skit requires five people. You can prepare it ahead of time, but it also works to ask for volunteers from your group.

##### **Supplies needed:**

- Basic script--see the Leader Resources section
- Some furniture to make it look like a home
- Some food, including some bread and a bottle of water
- A t-shirt of some kind
- A container that could hold flour
- Table settings for three

##### **To Play:**

Give actors 10 minutes to prepare. Encourage them to feel free to ad lib on the skit.

Reflection questions to ask after the skit is performed:

1. If Jesus were coming to dinner, what would you serve?
2. Would it be different from what you would serve someone off the street?

3. How can we show that hospitality for all people?
4. How can we get to know Christ through other people?

## Interview

Ask an older adult or a panel of older adults in your congregation to come in and speak to your class. Before they come, brainstorm with your group some questions you could ask them. Some might include:

- When you were a child, who did you eat with?
- What was a typical meal for you when you were growing up?
- What was Christmas dinner like for your family—did you have special foods?
- Are there other times of the year when you remember special foods being shared?
- Did you ever have guests over for dinner?
- How is food different for you now?

You could also ask them to answer the questions the group answered in the opening activity.

There are some major differences between the food eaten today and what people ate 50 or 60 years ago. The hope is that through this interview the group will understand some of those differences, which include:

- Difference in access to foods, and what options are available now
- Greater sense of community attached to food and meals
- Food was more seasonal, and people were closer to their food sources

## Banquet Collage

### To Prepare:

Supplies needed: Supplies to make a collage like a large piece of butcher paper, magazines with pictures of food and people, scissors, markers, pencils.

### To Play:

Tell your group that heaven has often been described as a great banquet—who do you think will be there? What food will we eat? Make a big table for the banquet and fill it, and put different people around the table (either with pictures or by writing names). Make sure everyone in the group has a seat at the table!

## Bible Ties



For the Bible lesson today, look at several different lessons related to food and feasting and welcoming the stranger into our celebrations.

Depending on the size of your group, assign each person or pair or group of people one of the following texts and ask them to notice:

- Who was eating?
- What did they eat?
- What was the purpose of the meal, or the result of sharing food?

### Luke 24:28–35

- Two people on the road to Emmaus
- Bread
- An end-of-the-day meal revealed that the “stranger” they shared a meal with was Jesus

### Isaiah 25:6

- Feast of rich food, to be provided by God

### Luke 15: 11–32

- Prodigal son returns
- Father hosts a feast with a “fatted calf”
- This is a parable about God’s acceptance of those who rebel and return

### Matthew 22:1–10

- Wedding banquet
- Oxen and calves
- The “invited” didn’t come, so the servants went out into the streets and brought in everyone they found. This is a parable comparing the kingdom of God to a wedding banquet.

### Matthew 26:26–29

- The disciples
- Bread and wine
- The forgiveness of sins

### Acts 2:42–46

- Bread
- They “ate with generous hearts” and more joined them every day

### Hebrews 13:1–2

- Show hospitality

### Family Time

Families used to sit around a table and eat dinner together at a fairly regular time. Now families are so often scattered in different directions that we may have lost some of the connection and community that used to come with sharing a meal. Have your group discuss what we might have lost, with these questions:



1. What is mealtime like at your house?
2. How often do you eat with the people in your house?
3. Do you have good conversations when you eat together?
4. How can you work to create community with your family? Some ideas for you:
  - Eat more meals with your family around a table
  - Plan a dinner party
  - Pray before all meals
  - Don't eat in front of the television
  - Do family devotions at dinner time
  - Have discussion questions in a box at the table

### Stone Soup

Read the story "Stone Soup", a children's story where some visitors teach a village to share, and create a community meal.

### Faith Practice: Communion

If possible, celebrate communion with your group. Be sure to talk with your pastor before you choose to do this to find out the right way to celebrate communion in your setting. As an alternate practice, talk about the practice of praying before a meal. Ask if you normally pray before a meal. Ask how praying the prayers you've sent home has gone for people each week. Read through one of the Biblical texts about the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:14–23) and ask people to consider spending a moment "remembering God" before each time that they eat, even if just for a moment.

### Prayer for the Week:

*O God, you promise a world where  
those who now weep shall laugh  
Those who are hungry shall feast  
Those who are poor now, and excluded  
Shall have your kingdom for their own  
We want this world too  
We will act for change  
We choose to be included in your great  
feast of life  
Amen.*

(Adapted from a prayer from "Christian Aid," found in *Harvest for the World: A Worship Anthology on Sharing in the Work of Creation* by Geoffrey Duncan, p.130)

### If you have more time/If you are on a trip:

- Plan a community feast with your church
- Find community meals you might join
- Eat with people at a nursing home who often eat alone
- Share your own meal prayers
- Write meal prayers
- Watch *Pieces of April* or *Home for the Holidays*—Both movies about holiday meals
- See other ideas under "Now that you know what you know..."

If you are on a trip, do this lesson on the last evening of your retreat around a celebratory meal. One movie that fits with the theme of this lesson is *Pieces of April* (2003, United Artists, PG-13) about a quirky young woman who attempts to serve Thanksgiving to her family in her tiny New York apartment.

If on your trip someone you are "serving" is planning to serve you a meal, have a conversation with your group about how they may be feeding you differently—by offering their best and acting as gracious hosts. They might be better than some of us are at practicing hospitality. How can we be gracious guests and allow others to serve us?

If neither of these options is possible, be sure to plan a “feast” near the end of your trip to celebrate all of the work you have done. Give toasts to celebrate the work accomplished. You could make it a “Christmas” dinner, or a “trip prom night” to make it special, and decorate your dining space to make it a celebration. Be sure to get everyone involved in the preparations so that everyone has a part in making it special. If you have been working with people on your trip, invite them to share the meal/celebration with you.

## Feast and Celebrate All Week Long

**Monday’s Memory:** Write about a favorite family meal that you remember.

**Tuesday’s Test:** Research what Jewish people eat to celebrate the Passover.

**Wednesday’s Word:** “It seems to me that our three basic needs for food, security, and love are so mixed and mingled that we cannot think of one without the other. So when I write about hunger, I am really writing about love and the hunger for it. There is communion of more than our bodies when bread is broken and wine is poured.” —Francis Kennedy Fisher (*The Little Food Book*, Craig Sams, pg 14)

**Thursday’s Tune:** Listen to “Until the End of the World,” U2, 1992. This song is written from the point of view of Judas, and the first verse talks about the Last Supper.

**Friday’s Food:** Learn to make one of the foods your family has only on holidays, and share it at dinner tonight. Or, set the table in some special way for a family meal so that it feels more like a celebration.

**Saturday’s Scene:** Watch [www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0Jtcyb6LU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0Jtcyb6LU) (video meditation on the Last Supper.)

**Sunday’s Site:** Look at What the World Eats [www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1626519,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1626519,00.html)

## Now that you know what you know, what will you do?

1. Plan a feast to share with a local shelter or with a shut-in from your church.
2. Make “Birthday Party Kits” for a food pantry, including cake mix, candles, balloons, frosting, a birthday card, and whatever else you can think of. (You may want to avoid getting napkins and plates, because of what you learned about the earth last week.)
3. Make bread for your congregation to use in communion.
4. Plan a potluck dinner for your church to celebrate some event. Have your class host by assigning groups different things to bring, setting the tables, welcoming people, and keeping the “banquet table” stocked. Consider inviting people who are not normally at your church. Who is a stranger to your church? Who could you do a better job of inviting?
5. Offer to volunteer as a group to serve communion in church.
6. Do the “Jesus Is Coming to Dinner” skit for your church.
7. Find things to celebrate with your family. Make a commitment to eat a certain number of meals together.
8. Interview your parents, grandparents or other people in your family about their experiences with food or holidays when they were kids.
9. Interview people in your congregation about what communion means to them.
10. Make a “Stone Soup” together, having everyone bring a different food item to put into a big pot together.

## Session 4: Leader Resources

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### "JESUS IS COMING TO DINNER" SKIT

**Characters:** Two people sitting at home together, three other people who stop by.

**Props:** Some furniture to make it look like a home, some food, including some bread and a bottle of water. A t-shirt of some kind, some container that could hold flour, table settings for three.

**Scene:** Two people are sitting at home trying to decide what to have for dinner when the phone rings.

**Roommate 1:** Hello? ..... Yeah?..... Who?..... Jesus Christ? Are you kidding?..... and you're coming here, to dinner?..... in an hour? Sure, we'd love to have you, of course. I can't wait! (Gets off the phone) OMG! Literally! God is coming to dinner! That was Jesus, and he's coming to dinner, here, in an hour.

**Roommate 2:** Here? In an hour? We'll never be ready! We have so much to do!

**Roommate 1:** We don't have a choice, let's get ready! (Both people start cleaning up, straightening chairs, moving things around, setting the table and pulling out food if you have it.)

**Roommate 2:** What am I going to make? We can't just serve Jesus anything. It has to be the best! (Knock on the door)

**Roommate 1:** Oh no! Who is that? (Runs to the door)

**Visitor 1:** Excuse me, but my daughter and I were just out walking and she had a little accident, sort of blew out her diaper and got stuff all over her clothing. I'm wondering if I could clean her up a little bit, and if you maybe have an old T-shirt we could use to get her home with clothes on.

**Roommate 1:** What? Blew out her diaper? Gross. We're trying to clean up the house for Jesus to come to dinner. Well, whatever—come in, but make it fast, I'll find something.  
(Runs again, searching for something, finds a T-shirt hanging over one of the chairs that didn't get cleaned up yet.) Here! Use this!

**Roommate 2:** Who is this? What's going on?

**Roommate 1:** Diaper, gross, don't ask. He'll be fast.

**Visitor 1:** Sorry to bother you, thanks for letting us in, thanks for the T-shirt.

**Roommate 1:** Sure, anytime, except not in the next 45 minutes! (Shuts the door) OK, what now? (Back to running around)

(Knock on the door)

**Roommate 2:** Who can that be now? (Goes to answer the door) What do you want?!

**Visitor 2:** I'm sorry to bother you. I'm making tortillas and I've run out of cornmeal. Do you have any to spare? We have family coming over and I just don't have enough to feed them.



**Roommate 2:** Family? We have Jesus coming over! Family? I don't have time for this. Here! (Grabs something. Shoves it at the visitor) I don't have cornmeal, but here's flour. Good enough, I'm sure. I'm sorry I have to go.

**Roommate 1:** When did we get so popular?! (Opens the door) Yes?

**Visitor 3:** Hello, my name is Antwon, and I'm with Church World Service's Water for All Campaign. Did you know that 50 percent or more of the earth's people don't have access to improved water in the world, like from a tap or a well? Access to clean water helps prevent diseases, and without it, millions die each year from preventable diseases...

**Roommate 1:** Are you kidding me right now?

**Visitor 3:** Are you familiar with the work of the Water for All Campaign?

**Roommate 1:** OK, what do you want? I have to go.

**Visitor 3:** Our mission is to overcome poverty by enabling the world's poorest people to gain access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education.

**Roommate 1:** Donation? Is that what you want? I have no time for this tonight. Here's \$10. Have a good night. Good luck.

**Visitor 3:** Would you like to sign up for the publication, can I put you down for... (Door closes in his face) Wait, speaking of, could I just get a glass of water, I've been talking all day...

**Roommate 2:** Oh, here! (Hands him the bottle of water)

**Roommate 2:** I think we're just about ready, and Jesus should be here any time. What are we going to ask him? Who's going to say grace over the meal? We better not forget this time, since Jesus is going to be here.

(Roommates sit at the table, thinking)

(Phone rings)

**Roommate 1:** Hello? .....Jesus. Hi....Are you finding the place OK? Of course you are. What am I thinking. You don't get lost. You're the one who searches for the lost. Are you almost here? We have a huge feast prepared.....You've already been here three times. What?.....When did we see you naked?.....Oh... The child with the blown-out diaper.....But, when did we see you hungry.....Oh yeah... The woman who needed cornmeal, right. (Slowly realizing) Thirsty, the man with the Water for All Campaign. Well, you're welcome. It was good to have you. Come back again sometime and we'll try to be more ready. I wish we could have spent time getting to know you.

**Visitor 1:** Whatever you do to the least of these, you also do to me. Matthew 25:40.

**Visitor 2:** For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am among them. Matthew 18:20.

**Visitor 3:** When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. Luke 24:30--31.

**Roommates (together):** Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that, some have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrews 13:2.

## Session 4: Leader Resources

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### PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

#### *Prayer for the Week:*

O God, you promise a world where those who now weep  
shall laugh  
Those who are hungry shall feast  
Those who are poor now, and excluded  
Shall have your kingdom for their own  
We want this world too  
We will act for change  
We choose to be included in your great feast of life  
Amen.

(Adapted from a prayer from "Christian Aid," found in *Harvest for the World: A Worship Anthology on Sharing in the Work of Creation* by Geoffrey Duncan, p.130)

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# FEAST AND CELEBRATE ALL WEEK LONG

### *Monday's Memory:*

Write about a favorite family meal that you remember.

### *Tuesday's Test:*

Research what Jewish people eat to celebrate the Passover.

### *Wednesday's Word:*

"It seems to me that our three basic needs for food, security, and love are so mixed and mingled that we cannot think of one without the other. So when I write about hunger, I am really writing about love and the hunger for it. There is communion of more than our bodies when bread is broken and wine is poured."  
—Francis Kennedy Fisher (*The Little Food Book*, Craig Sams, p. 14)

### *Thursday's Tune:*

Listen to "Until the End of the World," U2, 1992. This song is written from the point of view of Judas, and the first verse talks about the Last Supper.

### *Friday's Food:*

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### *Saturday's Scene:*

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Look at What the World Eats [www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1626519,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1626519,00.html).

# NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT WILL YOU DO?

### ***(Faith in Action Steps)***

1. Plan a feast to share with a local shelter or with a shut-in from your church.
2. Make “Birthday Party Kits” for a food pantry, including cake mix, candles, balloons, frosting, a birthday card, and whatever else you can think of. (You may want to avoid getting napkins and plates, because of what you learned about the earth last week.)
3. Make bread for your congregation to use in communion.
4. Plan a potluck dinner for your church to celebrate some event. Have your class host by assigning groups different things to bring, setting the tables, welcoming people, and keeping the “banquet table” stocked. Consider inviting people who are not normally at your church. Who is a stranger to your church? Who could you do a better job of inviting?
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6. Do the “Jesus Is Coming to Dinner” skit for your church.
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# SESSION 5

## *So What? Now What?*





# SESSION 5

## SO WHAT? NOW WHAT?



*T*hese activities will help your group wrap up what you've learned about and think about what you can do with what you know, as a group and as individuals. In the Bible Ties, you'll again read that God is calling each of us to respond to these justice issues with our choices and our actions. See the **Key Ideas** behind this session.

### Opener

- One Word



### Learning Activities

- "Pray With Your Actions" skit
- What, So What, Now What?



### Bible Ties



### Closers

- The Lorax and One More Word
- Prayer for the Week



*If you have more time/If you are on a trip*

## Session 5: So What? Now What?

### SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

#### Key Ideas

- We are called to continue to eat justly, or to change some of our habits.
- In the church we should hold each other accountable and support each other in making just-food choices.
- God is patient with us in our attempts to make changes. God loves us even when we fail and continues to drive us towards what is good.

#### Opener

##### One Word

Ask each person to write down one word they think of when they think about these activities and discussions they have engaged in around *Just Eating?* Have each person share their one word.



#### Learning Activities

##### “Pray With Your Actions” Skit

To Prepare:

Supplies needed: “Pray With Your Actions” skit found in the Leader Resources section; 7 chairs in a circle; mugs; 3 coffee-can size containers marked on one side with the words “tea,” “coffee,” and “hot cocoa” and with a fair trade symbol on the other side.

To Play:

Use the skit to spark discussion about how we can take our good intentions and live them out in our actions.



Questions following the skit:

1. The skit talks about praying with your actions. How do you think our actions can be prayers?
2. What do you think is more important—praying with words, or praying with actions?
3. When are times that we might be acting like this group—when we pray that we want something to change, but don’t act that way?
4. These people found one thing they could do to pray with their actions, and it is a good start! What can *we* do about it? (This should lead nicely into the next questions.)

##### What? So What? Now What?

Discuss what you’ve learned about in the time you’ve done these sessions.

1. What? Start with asking people to write down 5 things they’ve thought about or learned, or that you discussed since you started this series. Ask people to share those answers with each other; make a list, and add to it if anyone thinks of anything new.
2. So what? Ask what difference it makes. Now that you know what you know, does it matter to you?
3. Now What? You may have come up with some things that could change about your life, your family life or your church life through this process. Spend some time as a group talking about some possible further action you could take together.

Here are some ideas to consider:

- Community Garden: If your church has some empty land nearby, or a plot of grass in the yard or parking lot, consider working with others in the church to build a community

garden. Talk to gardeners or farmers about planting organic vegetables. Distribute the fresh produce to a community feeding program, or families or seniors in need. You could also host a big community meal, and invite all of the above!

- At the end of each session, there is a list of links to organizations that are doing good things. What session was your group most excited about? Check out the Web sites to try to find something that you can do together.
- At the end of each of the first four sessions, there is a list of further Faith in Action steps to consider; look through these lists to get more ideas.

## Bible Ties

Read Romans 12:1–2, asking participants to listen for a word or phrase that stands out to them. Ask each person to share their word or phrase.



Then ask participants to listen to the text again, this time listening in particular to what it might have to say about the things you've talked about in the last few weeks: hunger, the environment, taking care of your own body, and sharing in community. Listen for what it has to say concerning those things.

Read the verses one more time, listening for where God might be calling you to act further. Keep this response to yourself, to share during the closing activity.

## Closers

### **The Lorax and One More Word**

Bring in enough stones for each member of the group. Try to



find stones that are about 3 inches in diameter, or big enough to write the word “Unless” on them. Put the rocks in a pile on the table or floor where everyone can see them. Obtain a copy of *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss and read it to the group. The story ends with the line, “Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better; it’s not.” When the group has heard the story, ask them to consider what actions they are willing to take to change their own behavior around food, faith, and justice. Ask them to share the one thing they are willing to do, and then to take a rock. Have permanent markers on hand so that people can write the word “Unless” on the stone. Ask the group to take their stone home as a reminder of their commitment, and of what they learned here.

## Prayer for the Week

Gracious God, lead us from this place and take us to where you are living; lead us to new awareness of the poor, and show us your home among them; lead us to a new desire for justice and give us a glimpse of the kingdom you are building; fill our hearts with generosity and anoint us to be bearers of good news; and give us your blessing as you have blessed the poor, and show us what we should do. Amen.

*(Adapted from a prayer from “Christian Aid,” found in Harvest for the World: A Worship Anthology on Sharing in the Work of Creation by Geoffrey Duncan, p. 257.)*

## If you have more time/If you're on a trip

- On YouTube, find the video for the Nickelback song “If Everyone Cared.” This is a video that tells stories about others who have decided they care enough to make some kind of change.
- Discuss ways of sharing what you've learned with the rest of your congregation.

# "PRAY WITH YOUR ACTIONS" SKIT

### **"Pray With Your Actions" Skit**

(Adapted from *Harvest for the World: A Worship Anthology* on *Sharing in the Work of Creation* by Geoffrey Duncan, originally called "Praying for Change" on page 137.

Attributed to Traidcraft.)

**Characters:** Narrator, Liz the youth director (or Sunday School teacher), Maria, Chris, Jordan, Ashley, Jason, Miguel

**Setting:** Church Youth Group or Sunday School classroom; sitting in a circle of chairs.

**Props:** Mugs, tea, coffee, and hot cocoa containers, labeled as such, with a fair trade symbol on the other side.

**Narrator:** Welcome to the First Presbyterian Church middle school youth group, where a small group is gathered to talk about the service the group will do this year. They gather every week to discuss what is going on, and to pray to make sure God is aware of what a mess this world is. Here they go:

**Liz:** Please pray with me: God, we see this world, and all the things that need to change. We know you long for peace and justice and that it can only be brought about by people like us. Please change our hearts, and help us to see and imagine this world as you would have it be, so that we might make a difference in the world. Amen.

**Jordan:** I heard about these farmers in Nicaragua in school today. It's bad—they live on like \$250 a year or something. I bet my family spends that on groceries each week. If only we could do something.

**Ashley:** Well, can't we? Can't we do a car wash? Of course, we'd have to wait until after the Dance for the Homeless was over.

**Jason:** We also have that "Buy a Shingle" sale for the new roof.

**Jordan:** It's a little hard to think about Nicaragua, given the other things on our plate. And, God only knows how we can make a change down there.

**Maria:** God certainly does know.

**Ashley:** Huh?

**Maria:** I heard your prayer earlier—I'm pretty sure you said, "Help us to see and imagine this world as you would have it be."

**Liz:** I'm glad the prayer sounded good.

**Jordan:** Wait—how did you know what we were saying, were you hanging around outside listening?

**Maria:** Don't worry, I won't stay long. It's just that you made a request and I'm here to help you figure it out.

**Ashley:** How—what request? We don't even know you. Are you a part of this group? Not that we have memberships or anything, but we've never seen you.

**Maria:** Please change our hearts so that we might make a difference. Is that what you prayed? (Others look confused) Well, I've come to tell you that you've made a difference! And I've brought my friend Miguel to tell you how. (Miguel walks out)

He's a cocoa farmer in Nicaragua, and because your youth director buys fairly traded cocoa, he wants you to know the difference that you've made in the lives of him and his family.

**Ashley:** We like to help out, but we were just saying we have, like, three upcoming projects we're working on.

**Miguel:** Before fairly traded cocoa, we were paid by buyers and sellers who paid whatever they felt like paying us, and if the price was small, there was very little money for us to buy food for our families. Now the price is steady, and I have money to buy cloth-

ing for my kids. I could build a house. Things are improving for us because we get a fair price for the cocoa.

**Liz:** But we're just a small group, and we don't drink cocoa very much.

**Maria:** But others in your church also drink coffee and tea—how much coffee and tea do they drink?

**Jordan:** My mom's like a coffeeholic.

**Jason:** Nothing happens at our church without coffee—sometimes even worship.

**Ashley:** You'd think it was a sacrament.

**Maria:** Then listen to my friend Sureshi.

**Sureshi:** My mom works with fairly traded coffee, and since then, she has been able to send us to school. We don't have our own house yet, but I love the books we get to have for school.

**Chris:** (To person next to him.) Better not let them see what our parents drink here. I don't think that canned stuff is fairly traded. And I don't think my mom's going to go for this fair trade stuff.

**Maria:** So, we just wanted to let you know that your prayers really do make a difference, just like the coffee and tea you drink at every meeting.

**Jordan:** But we're a pretty small church. How can that make a difference for you?

**Maria:** But everyone's half a dozen cups of coffee and cocoa add up. That's more than three million cups of fairly traded coffee in your country drunk every week. It means a lot to the people who can feed their families, provide homes and send their children to school. Your meeting really does make a difference!

**Jordan:** This is terrible. I can't drink this anymore.

**Maria:** Well, I'll have some.

**Ashley:** But I thought you'd want to drink fairly traded stuff.

**Maria:** I do.

**Jason:** Well, this is our favorite hot cocoa, and it's like, all we drink here.

**Maria:** (takes a drink) It is quite good.

**Chris:** But, it's not...

**Maria:** Are you going to tell them, Liz?

**Liz:** (turns the containers around, so that people see the fairly traded symbols)

**Chris:** What??? Liz, what are you doing to us? We have traditions here!

**Liz:** But you didn't even notice I changed it. Our whole church changed—your parents have been drinking fair trade coffee and tea all year too, and they seem to like it.

**Maria:** How did that prayer go again, Liz?

**Liz:** God, we see this world, and all the things that need to change. We know you long for peace and justice, and that it can only be brought about by people like us. Please change our hearts, and help us to see and imagine this world as you would have it be, so that we might make a difference in the world.

**Narrator:** Amen and thanks.



## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

### ***Prayer for the Week***

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