

Hunger

IN A WORLD OF

abundance



A STUDY GUIDE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Adventist Development and Relief Agency

Canadian Baptist Ministries

Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Christian and Missionary Alliance

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada

Mennonite Central Committee Canada

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries

Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

Presbyterian World Service & Development

The Salvation Army

United Church of Canada

World Relief Canada

Many Anglican and Catholic congregations are actively involved as well.

See page 41 for more about the Foodgrains Bank.

Hunger IN A WORLD OF ABUNDANCE

HUNGER. Have we accepted that hungry people are a norm in our society and in our world? What does the Bible’s command to feed the hungry mean? Are we willing to hear what God might be telling us about his plan for abundance? These sessions will lead you through discussions that will help you hear God’s plan for your life as you answer his call to usher in “the year of the Lord’s favour.”

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Let us not be content to wait and see what will happen, but give us the determination to make the right things happen.

Peter Marshall



ISAIAH 61

- 1** *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,*
- 2** *to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,*
- 3** *and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD
for the display of his splendour.*

Introduction

Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus

WHY A NEW BIBLE STUDY GUIDE ON HUNGER?

God's perspective on hunger does not change over time, but human perspective does. We live in a shrinking and ever-more-interdependent world. Whether we look at the labels on our clothes, the globalization of communication and markets, the effect of farm subsidies in Europe and the US on Canadian and developing world farmers, multi-national peacekeeping, or surfing the world wide web, our lives are touched by people, events and ideas that originate far from our homes and borders. And we in turn affect the lives of people far away. This reality has a lot of implications for Christians.



This guide is intended to provide a contemporary look at what the Bible has to say about hunger. It helps congregations open up a discussion of issues related to poverty and powerlessness; the causes, solutions and the roles that Christians might play. It is about the church's struggle to clarify its identity and mission in the face of global hunger at the beginning of the 21st century.

WHO IS IT FOR?

These lessons are basic and introductory and are designed for people of faith who are willing to discuss hunger issues, perhaps for the first time. They aim to initiate discussion, not push people to predetermined answers. At the end of the sessions, people may continue to disagree about issues and strategies, but will remain friends (sisters and brothers) in the faith.

Use this study for:

- Adult or youth Sunday school during a special season of the church year, such as Thanksgiving/World Food Sunday, Canadian Foodgrains Bank Sunday, Lent, or as an on-going supplement to the regular curriculum
- Small groups such as programs for newcomers, Christian initiation of adults and confirmation classes, cell groups, care groups, fellowship groups, men's groups, women's groups, etc.
- Mid-week adult or intergenerational forums

- Program groups and committees to ground the work of mission, e.g. education, advocacy or social justice ministry committees
- Retreats, family nights at home
- Training of congregation's staff
- A focal point for ecumenical and interfaith gatherings such as Foodgrains Bank Growing Projects.

Use the handouts for:

- class discussion sessions
- bulletin inserts or in newsletter mailings to the congregation
- helping to educate the whole congregation (choose one, two or all six)
- incorporation into other education programs or events, or used for individual study and reflection
- additional information with an outside speaker. Contact your national church office (see

page 43) or the Foodgrains Bank for outside speakers.

WHO CAN LEAD THIS STUDY?

Anyone willing and open to helping people discuss and discover God's plan for them in this world can lead this study!

The leader does not need to be someone who is:

- An expert
- A member of the congregational staff
- Someone already active in hunger or social justice issues.

The leader does need to be someone who is:

- Comfortable leading group discussions, who will encourage everyone to participate and accept a diversity of opinions
- Open to the work of the Spirit in the group
- Willing to take on the tasks of preparation and follow up.



COLLABORATIVE AND OPPOSITIONAL APPROACHES

People have varying approaches, interpretations and views, some of which may be strongly held. The leader will want to encourage an atmosphere of trust and openness rather than the promotion of an individual agenda. This requires sensitivity, but will also be helped by starting out with basic ground rules.

On page 31, you will find the introductory hand-out, “Guide to Our Deliberations.” The leader should go over the list with participants at the beginning of the first session, and post a copy of them on newsprint or poster board so everyone will remember during the sessions.

The following columns contrast the difference between collaborative and oppositional approaches and are a good starting point for creating a safe space for meaningful dialogue. Discuss these two different approaches with the group in Session 1 and refer back to them from time to time along with the “Guide to Our Deliberations.”







COLLABORATIVE	OPPOSITIONAL
Finding common ground	Finding points of divergence
Listening to find meaning	Listening to find points to argue
Listening to find agreement	Listening to find flaws
Openness to being wrong	Determination to be right
Weighing alternatives	Winning
Assumes that others have pieces of the answer and all can find it together	Assumes there is a right answer and someone has it
Involves concern for the other person	Involves countering others

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The person(s) initiating this study needs to:

- Discuss ways in which the pastoral team of your faith community can support the program or relate it to other work or studies going on in your faith community
- Decide on the timing and number of classes to be held
- Announce the sessions in the congregation's bulletin, newsletter and Web site (if available), and at the appropriate time when people are gathered for worship
- Have people sign up or indicate how they will be involved so that you will have enough materials and the space adequately prepared.

Each session has:

-  **1 An introductory question.** This gets the discussion going and anchors the discussion in the lives of the participants.
- 2 An opening prayer.** Use your own or the suggestion.
-  **3 Hunger facts.** This adds to people's awareness of hunger-related issues around the world.
- 4 Hunger stories.** These are personal stories of real people around the world.
- 5 God's story.** The biblical perspective on the issues relating to hunger, abundance and scarcity.
-  **6 Our story.** This helps us apply our new knowledge to our lives.
-  **7 Closing reflections and prayer.** These help us remember and focus on one new action we can take away with us and reflect on through the week.

Each of the studies is formatted this way:



ANCHOR – a question that roots the discussion in a personal experience



ADD – brings in basic knowledge of the subject being discussed



APPLY – focuses action in each member's life



AWAY – an assignment or challenge each member of the group can take with them

You will need:

- This leader's guide
- The "Guide to Our Deliberations" poster or sheet, p. 31
- Photocopies of the appropriate handouts and other materials, for each participant
- Bibles for each participant, or enough to share
- Overhead projector or copies of selected pages; a VCR for videos (see your national church or Foodgrains Bank websites for relevant videos)
- Pencils and markers
- Newsprint and easel or black board
- Masking tape
- A rough outline of how you plan to divide the time of the session among activities—even though things might not go exactly as you plan!



ADDITIONAL HINTS

- **Begin** your own preparation with prayer.
- **Read** over the session so that you have a good idea of the materials and direction.
- **Make** the required copies or transparencies.
- **Encourage** everyone to participate in the discussion and be receptive to listening to all points of view. Be clear at the beginning of each session, and by your own actions throughout the session, that whether or not you agree with someone's opinion, no opinion or person is to be belittled.
- **Expect** that the discussion will bring out a variety of opinions. Encourage participants to speak with certainty only of their own experiences and to avoid making generalizations from them or about others.
- **Appoint** a recorder to take notes from the sessions for you.
- **Track** the time so you will not have to rush or omit the closing meditation and prayer. You might ask for a volunteer timekeeper to tell you when you are halfway through, or when there are 10 minutes left.
- **Add** your own notes to the recorder's notes at the end of each session. Is any action required on your part before the next session? Has anyone else volunteered to look into something that they might need to be reminded of? Are there issues arising out of the discussion that you might want to be particularly alert to before you meet again?
- **Find** a co-leader.
- **Remember** that not all participants will be knowledgeable about the Bible or Christian faith. Be sure to define confusing terms.
- **Never** feel you must go through all the material or ask every question. Pick and choose based on the needs of your group.

- **Remind** the group to use the collaborative approach. Post the "Guide to Our Deliberations" prominently.
- **Always** arrive early and set up the room according to the suggestions for the session, or in a way that is appropriate for your group.
- **Look** through the glossary of terms and make copies for group participants. You may want to use some of the glossary terms for discussion starters, encourage participants to use glossary terms as part of the "Our Story" section of the handout, or simply keep for information.

TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT HUNGER

Consider using *Food For All: A Buffet of Ideas About Hunger* to bring new perspectives to the children in your congregation about hunger. This six-lesson resource is designed for children from age six to early teens and is available from Canadian Foodgrains Bank office in Winnipeg. Call 1-800-665-0377 or visit our website to order a copy.





While women weep, as they do now, I'll fight;
while children go hungry, as they do now I'll fight;
while men go to prison, in and out, in and out,
as they do now, I'll fight;
while there is a drunkard left, while there is a poor
lost girl upon the streets,
while there remains one dark soul without the
light of God, I'll fight—
I'll fight to the very end!

General William Booth



When Did We See You Hungry?

▶ **LESSON OBJECTIVE**

To help participants discuss issues concerning global hunger, and to begin to see the human face of hunger in fresh ways.



1. WELCOME AND OPENING

In your own words, welcome the group, invite them to be seated, and say:

Please state your name, the reason you are here, and answer the following question: Recall a time you felt hungry; it could be as simple as the time you forgot your lunch. What was it like? What did you eat to satisfy your hunger? Did anyone share their food with you?

(You may want to write this question on the board or on a piece of paper for everyone to read.)

Handout: Distribute the “When Did We See You Hungry” handout to the group.

2. PRAYER

Pray in your own words, ask someone to pray, or use the following prayer:

Loving God, in your grace you have gathered us at this time and in this place to hear the word you are speaking this day in the voice of people who are hungry and poor. Open our hearts and minds

to the power of that word. May we see with your eyes the vision of a world which knows no borders, no boundaries, no fear, but invites us again to live together the promise of abundance which is both your gift and promise. We ask this in the name of your Son, who lives and reigns united in the love of your Holy Spirit, now and always. Amen.



3. HUNGER FACTS

Read these facts or share some you’ve found yourself:

- More than one billion people still live on the local equivalent of less than US \$1.00 per day, though the number of undernourished people is declining. (www.hdr.unpd.org)
- There is enough food today to feed all people in the world with a nutritious diet, and likely

there will continue to be enough through 2020. (www.bread.org)

- Undernourishment in developing countries has, overall, decreased almost 30 percent since 1980, but about 800 million people are still malnourished. Among other problems, undernourishment impairs physical development, increases susceptibility to illness, contributes to slow learning or short attention spans, and increases lethargy and productivity. (www.fao.org)
- Malnutrition remains the leading cause of disease and death in the world. At the same time, there are more than one billion adults in the world who are overweight, and many die from obesity-related diseases every year. (www.who.org)
- Over one billion of the world's children lived in poverty in 2004. (www.unicef.org)
- More than one million children live in poverty in Canada. That number has been increasing since 1989. (www.campaign2000.ca)



Ask people a few questions concerning these facts:

- Do any of these numbers surprise you?
- Is it possible to deal with these challenges?
- What do these hunger facts mean to you?
- How do the numbers make you feel? For instance, that 800 million people are malnourished and that one billion adults are overweight?

Allow the discussion to continue, moderating the discussion, and asking new questions as they arise.

Ask the following question, and finish the following sentence:

- Do you believe it is possible to halve the number of people living in poverty and hunger by 2015?
- We could halve the number of people living in poverty and hunger if:

4. HUNGER STORIES

Ask different people to read one of the personal stories aloud. Make notes of key points that arise during the conversation, and discuss the following questions:

List some of the key reasons you think each of these people is hungry. (*Suggest some of the following if necessary.*)

- Lack of education
- Low paying or lack of work
- War, injustice, greed
- Ignorance (whose?)
- Neglect of scripture
- Racism, racial differences
- Gender inequalities
- Immigration
- Destructive personal habits
- Disabilities
- Natural disasters

- Inadequate support systems, or failure of caring community
- Inadequate socialization
- Etc.

Do you know anyone who deals with hunger and poverty? Are any of the previous answers part of the reason they are hungry?

Choose some questions from the following to discuss:

- How does each speaker experience life? What would a day look like for them? How different are the things you worry about compared to what they might worry about?
- Why do you think the person from Pakistan feels invisible?
- Have you ever felt invisible? Why?
- Why is hunger and poverty shameful?
- When a child fears for her basic necessities, how does that make you feel?

5. GOD'S STORY

Read Matthew 25:31-46

(A shortened version is found in the handout.)

Discuss the following:

- In what way would it be true or false that when we see someone hungry we are seeing Christ?
- Who do you think “the least of these” are today?
- How would one of the people we read about earlier feel if they read this story? What would they say?
- Neither group seems aware that they have helped or declined to help the poor. Why do you think this is?
- Does this passage mention anything about belief in Jesus? Why do you think that is?
- Do you think that actions are more important

than faith, or vice versa? Why? What does this passage seem to be saying about this?

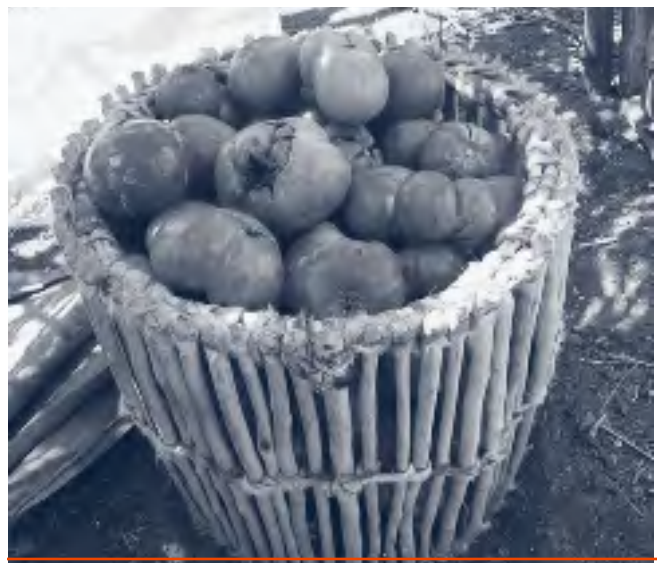
- How do these words make you feel about your own life? About your church?



6. OUR STORY

This study isn't just about sharing information or opinions. It is about discerning God's call and our response.

- **List** some of the things you have done, or you know our church is doing to help the problem of poverty and hunger.
- **Articulate** some connections between the action possibilities and the study session.
- **Invite** comments or questions about the session.
- **Ask** if there is anything we can do before our next meeting as individuals, families, or as a group, to help alleviate the effects of poverty and hunger in one person's life.
- **Provide** further information on organizations such as Canadian Foodgrains Bank, your national church relief and development agency, or local food banks or soup kitchens.



- **Inform** participants about next session, “Defend the Cause of Those Who Are Poor,” based on Psalm 72. Ask them to take the hand-out home and read through it in the following week.

Become aware of the following Millennium Development Goal:

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Reduce by half the proportion of people who live on less than one dollar a day.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.



7. CLOSING

Pray in your own words, invite participants to pray during a time of group prayer, or use the suggestion below:

Ask the group to be quiet for the closing reflection and prayer.

Beginning with the person on your left, ask the participants to read Matthew 25:34-40 aloud, each person taking one line. After a moment of silence, invite the group to join you in this short prayer, saying it three times, with the group joining after the first time:

O God, give us—all of us—this day our daily bread.

8. AFTER THE SESSION

- Collect the notes made by the recorder.
- Jot down any unanswered questions, suggestions or requests made by the group.
- Note anything you would like to remember for the next session.
- List anything that needs to be communicated to the congregation or to congregational leaders.
- Pause and thank God for being with you in leading and serving this group.
- Pray that God will cause you all to remember and reflect on the discussion during the week.



Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime.

*Aristotle
(384 BC-322 BC)*



Defend the Cause of Those Who Are Poor

▶ **LESSON OBJECTIVE**

To discuss causes and solutions surrounding poverty and wealth disparity.



1. WELCOME AND OPENING

In your own words, welcome the group, invite them to be seated, and if there are new people, invite everyone to say their name while they answer this question:

What was a favourite childhood meal or special treat that was unique to your family or culture? What made this special?

(You may want to write this question on the board or on a piece of paper for everyone to read.)

Summarize some of the main points from last week, and introduce this week's objective.

Handout: Distribute the “Defend the Cause of Those Who Are Poor” handout to the group.

2. PRAYER

Pray in your own words, ask someone to pray, or use the following prayer:

Gracious God, your name is justice; your name is love. Continue to grace us and strengthen us to grow in your likeness. Make the cause of disadvantaged people our cause and draw us more closely to you and to all whom you love. Help us to act with courage, with faithfulness and with



compassion this day and everyday. We ask this in the name of your only son, who lives and reigns with you, united in the love of your Holy Spirit, now and always. Amen.



3. HUNGER FACTS

Have people take turns reading out the hunger facts.

- More than one billion people still lack access to safe drinking water. During the '90s, over one

billion people gained access to safe drinking water. (www.un.org)

- Forests cover about 30 percent of the world's total land area, for a total of 3.9 billion hectares.
- Only about two percent of the world's forests, or 81 million hectares, are certified as being managed in a sustainable manner, with about 92 percent of these forests lying in temperate, industrialized countries.
- The 94 million hectares of forest lost over the ten-year period, represented about two percent of the world's total forest cover, or an area larger than Venezuela. (www.safnet.org)

Break into groups of two or three and have people come up with short prayers for justice and righteousness. These prayers can be very simple—no special language necessary. After the time is up, have each group share their prayer. Look for commonalities and differences. Note them on the blackboard.

4. HUNGER STORIES

Ask someone to read the stories aloud. Make notes of key points that arise during the conversation, and discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think Nede Jaro is in this situation?
- What would it take to change his condition?



- What is the role of local government to provide assistance and help people like him move to more self sufficiency?
- Do we, as the church, have a responsibility to people in other countries to help them move towards more self sufficiency?
- Discuss the other stories as well. Why do these things happen? What can be done?

5. GOD'S STORY

Read Psalm 72

(A shortened version is found in the handout, or read the entire text.)

Read Psalm 72 again, in unison.

After a brief pause, ask people to recall, without looking, some the requests found in the Psalm. Record the statements in a visible place (newsprint or blackboard). Then look at the Psalm again and check your answers against what is found in the text.

Choose some of the following questions:

- Who might have been considered “afflicted” when this Psalm was written?
- Who are the afflicted ones today?
- What do you think the writer means when he speaks about ‘justice?’
- What is prosperity? Did it have different meanings when this Psalm was written and now?
- Does it have different meanings for people like Nede Jaro and people in our situation?
- Do you think the ruler referred to in this psalm is the only one who is responsible to see justice done? As part of a wealthy nation, can we be considered “rulers” today?
- Do you believe the promises outlined for the ruler are still good today? Would a ruler who seeks justice be blessed with prosperity and peace?



6. OUR STORY

This study isn't just about sharing information or opinions. It is about discerning God's call and our response.

Look at the list begun in the handout. Can you see yourself doing any of these? What would your family or the people you live with say if you did something from this list? What is something you would like to do with your family.

Also, visit www.foodgrainsbank.ca and click on global issues. Read about a program that the food grains bank is involved in and discuss it with your family.

Become aware of following Millennium Development Goal:

Ensure environmental sustainability

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of

environmental resources. Sustainable development means reducing hunger and poverty in environmentally sound ways, by: meeting basic human needs, expanding economic opportunities, protecting and enhancing the environment, and promoting democratic participation.

- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.
- Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020.



7. CLOSING

Pray in your own words, invite participants to pray during a time of group prayer, or use the suggestion below:

Ask the group to be quiet for the closing reflection and prayer.



Beginning with the person on your left, ask the participants to read Matthew 25:34-40 aloud, each person taking one line. After a moment of silence, invite the group to join you in this short prayer, saying it three times, with the group joining after the first time:

O God, give us—all of us—this day our daily bread.



8. AFTER THE SESSION

- Collect the notes made by the recorder.
- Jot down any unanswered questions, suggestions or requests made by the group.
- Note anything you would like to remember for the next session.
- List anything that needs to be communicated to the congregation or to congregational leaders.
- Pause and thank God for being with you in leading and serving this group.
- Pray that God will cause you all to remember and reflect on the discussion during the week.

I choose kindness...I will be kind to the poor, for they are alone. Kind to the rich, for they are afraid. And kind to the unkind, for such is how God has treated me.

Max Lucado



A World of Abundance

▶ **LESSON OBJECTIVE**

To help participants discuss God's intended abundance and well-being.



1. WELCOME AND OPENING

You will need 7 candles for this session.

In your own words, welcome the group, invite them to be seated. If there are newcomers, make introductions and ask each person to answer the following question:

When have you seen or experienced something that made you say, "This is good."

(You may want to write this question on the board or on a piece of paper for everyone to read.)

Handout: Distribute the "A World of Abundance" handout to the group.

2. PRAYER

Pray in your own words, ask someone to pray, or use the following prayer:

O God, your name is providence, your name is love. You have spoken us into life, formed us in goodness and summon us to fullness. Continue to shape us in the knowledge that your gifts are abundant, and your spirit within us can do all that we are called to do. We ask this in the name of your own Christ, who lives and reigns united with you



in the love of your Holy Spirit, now and always. Amen.



3. ABUNDANCE FACTS

Have people take turns reading out the statistics.

- There is enough food grown today to provide more than enough for every person on earth.
- Canada has 10 percent of the earth's forests.
- Ninety-eight percent of Canadian households have at least one television.
- In North America, up to 25 percent of all food produced for consumption is discarded at source by producers. Many food banks and charities now collect and distribute this food to feed Canada's hungry.
- Forty percent of Brazil is covered in Amazon rain forest.

Ask the following questions and allow time for discussion:

- What do these facts mean to you?
- How do the numbers make you feel?

4. STORIES

Instead of hunger stories, direct group members to the blank part of their handout. Invite them to write out their vision of abundance. Use the following example to get them started:

- In my world of abundance
 - My laundry is always done.
 - I “catch” every time I “fish.”
 - My golf game keeps getting better and there’s always enough time for a family dinner.
- In my world of abundance
 - I don’t have to wonder about hungry kids in my neighbourhood, my city, my planet.
 - I know that people never die from water-borne illness and all of our cups overflow.



5. GOD’S STORY

Read Genesis 1. Light one candle each time “It was good,” is read.

(A shortened version is found in the handout.)

Lead the group in silent reflection. Guide reflection with these questions. Read them slowly and allow “breathing time” between each of them.

Think about times in your life when something has been good. What did it feel like?

Think about a time when things weren’t good. What did that feel like? What does it feel like to be wanting, lacking, insecure? What does it feel like to have a parent, a child, someone you love in trouble and feel unable to do anything about it?

What do you think God feels when he sees his good creation, and still sees powerlessness, want, hunger, scarcity?

After this time of reflection, ask people to share their thoughts and feelings. Try to keep the tone quiet and reflective.

Read or say in your own words:

The main theme in the Bible concerning hunger is God’s promise of abundance in the context of human faithfulness. The story of God’s generosity starts in Genesis with an exuberant liturgy of abundance—“It is good”—continues through the Psalms with a high-spirited expression of praise and carries through the stories of humanity’s often turbulent and troubled relationship with God.

Even with over six billion people on the planet, hunger is no more inevitable than it is justifiable. There is more than enough food grown today for everyone to have enough. Yet chronic hunger persists in the lives of over 800 million people.

God’s promised provision is tied to action. From the very first chapters of the Old Testament, where God places Adam and Eve in the Garden with an abundance of food and tells them to replenish the earth and take care of it, to the

feeding of the five thousand in the New Testament, where a small boy's faith and willingness to share creates a miracle, God uses people to provide.

Things worked out with manna as long as people didn't lose faith in God's provision and resort to hoarding. God's economy is defined by the promise of abundance in the context of faithfulness. From a Christian faith perspective, scarcity is a human construct and part of the human horizon of action.

Abundance or scarcity? God's way or ours? It seems it is up to us to decide.



6. OUR STORY

Remind the group that this study isn't just about sharing information or opinions. It is about discerning God's call and our response.

Look at the "Our story" list on the handout. Is there anything that you would want to do from that list? What are some other ideas you have about something you could do?

Is there anything we, as a group, could do together? It could be a group event, or it could be done individually, but it would be the same activity.

Consider how you might challenge your congregation to do something for the poor. Find out if your group or issues concerning poverty could be included in a public prayer during a regular worship time.

Become aware of the following Millennium Development Goal:

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.



7. CLOSING

Pray in your own words, invite participants to pray during a time of group prayer, or use the suggestion below:

Ask the group to be quiet for the closing reflection and prayer.



After a moment or two of silence, say:

Remember our beginning and our end is in the abundance of God's love. Be still, now. Our life together and this moment together is a taste of God's abundance. Let us pray:

Oh God, lover of all you have made, walk with us this week and lead us more deeply into your mystery. Let us touch others and make tangible in their lives in some small way, the gift of knowing that there is enough, more than enough.

Then, three times, with the whole group joining in on the second and third repetition:

O God, give us—all of us—this day our daily bread.

8. AFTER THE SESSION

Before everyone leaves, introduce the topic for next week, "The Precious Children." Ask people to bring a photograph of a child they know or love, something crafted by a child, or a painting that depicts children. They will be asked to share why they chose the item they are bringing.

- Invite anyone who would like to share suggestions or ideas about what your group may do together.
- Collect the notes made by the recorder.
- Jot down any unanswered questions, suggestions or requests made by the group.

- Note anything you would like to remember for the next session.
- List anything that needs to be communicated to the congregation or to congregational leaders.
- Pause and thank God for being with you in leading and serving this group, and for being "enough."
- Pray that God will cause you all to remember and reflect on the discussion during the week.

Gratitude ... goes beyond the "mine" and "thine" and claims the truth that all of life is a pure gift. In the past I always thought of gratitude as a spontaneous response to the awareness of gifts received, but now I realize that gratitude can also be lived as a discipline. The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy.

Henri J. M. Nouwen



The Precious Children

▶ LESSON OBJECTIVE

To confront the impact of hunger on children around the world.



1. WELCOME AND OPENING

Consider how you can bring the subject of children to the décor of the room—photographs, crayons, child-like objects.... You will also need small pieces of paper with one of the hunger facts for children on them.

Remember to introduce people if anyone is new. Ask people if they remembered to bring a photo or memento of a special child in their lives. Have people show or share item, explain why they brought it, and tell a favourite story about the child.

Also, ask people to report on the activity they may have done last week that you had discussed as a group. How did that go? Is there anything else that could be added? Jot down any important issues that need to be addressed.

Handout: Distribute “The Precious Children” handout to the group.

2. PRAYER

Pray in your own words, ask someone to pray, or use the following prayer:

Loving God, you came to us as a vulnerable child, entrusted to a mother denied shelter and rest. Although you are the sovereign of the world, you



come again and again to us in the children of this world. Because they are your own, you make them our own. Attune our hearts to know the depth of this mystery and this gift, and make us one with them and with you. We ask this in the name of the One who became our flesh and dwelt among us, and now dwells and reigns again united with you in the love of your Holy Spirit, always and forever. Amen.



3. HUNGER FACTS

Have people take turns reading their facts.

- As many as 113 million children do not attend school. However, this target is within reach. For instance, India is expected to have 98 percent of its children in school by 2005.
- Every year nearly 11 million young children die before their fifth birthday, mainly from preventable illnesses. That number is down, however, from 15 million in 1980.

- Each day in the developing world, 29,000 children die from mostly preventable and treatable causes such as diarrhea, acute respiratory infections or malaria. Malnutrition is associated with more than half of these deaths. (www.unicef.org)
- As many as 300,000 children serve in government forces or armed rebel groups, some as young as eight years old. (www.hrw.org)
- According to the International Labor Organization, an estimated 246 million children are engaged in exploitative child labour. Almost three-quarters of them work in hazardous environments such as mines or factories, or with dangerous substances such as chemicals and agricultural pesticides. Some 5.7 million of these children work under especially horrific circumstances, including the virtual slavery of bonded labour. (www.unicef.org)
- Over one billion of the world's children lived in poverty in 2004. (www.unicef.org)
- More than one million children live in poverty in Canada. That number has been increasing since 1989. (www.campaign2000.ca)
- One in every six children in Canada is poor during the first three years of life—the time of greatest brain development. (www.campaign2000.ca)

Discuss these facts. Do any of the numbers surprise you?



4. PERSONAL STORIES

Ask different people to read one of the personal stories from the handout aloud. Make notes of key points that arise during the conversation, and discuss the following questions:

- How do these stories make you feel?
- Is it hard for you to imagine children in these situations?
- Are you aware of any children that are not well cared for? Have you ever felt called to do something for them?
- What do you know about children and bonded labour or slavery? How could you become aware of issues surrounding this world problem?

5. GOD'S STORY

Read the Lamentations 4 passage.

(A shortened version is found in the handout.)

Begin by sharing the following brief introduction to the scripture:

The book of Lamentations was written in the aftermath of a devastating war that crushed the city of Jerusalem, left destruction and famine in its wake and saw the leadership of the nation largely sent into exile. Given what we know of the effects of war and conflict on the most vulnerable in society, we shouldn't be surprised to find that the prophet uses the images of women and children to bring home the plight of the whole people. The destruction makes the people desperate. This desperation is physical—death in battle had been the fate of many of the men, and slow death by hunger and malnutrition was the fate of the children. The mothers who saw them starving could do nothing but die with them. Their desperation was also spiritual. Had God abandoned the people, forsaken the covenant? Were the fathers, mothers and children of so little value that not

even God cared anymore? The prophet shares their story with us. As we listen, let us join our hands and hearts with those who wept in the fallen city of Jerusalem.

Tell the group that after someone reads the passage, you will have a short time of silence, and then you will ask the participants to name a word, phrase or image that stood out in their minds during the reading.

Read the passage from the handout. Allow for silence, and then ask for the word, phrase or image. Record these on the board or chart. Ask the following questions:

- Why did that word, phrase or image stand out to you?
- What are some contemporary examples of devastation like this?
- Is this passage reflected in any of the personal stories we read earlier? How?
- How might they be “looking in vain for help?”
- Who do you think are the greatest losers in armed conflict? Why?
- Should the church get involved in helping children in these situations? How? Do you know any stories of positive intervention?



6. OUR STORY

Remind the group that this study isn't just about sharing information or opinions. It is about discerning God's call and our response.

Look at the list on the handout. Is there anything that you would want to do from that list? What are some other ideas you have about something you could do? Is there anything your group could do together? Is anyone willing to further investigate any of the abuses children face around the world and could report on it the following week? Is there anything your group could do for children in your own neighbourhood? Perhaps members of your group could share a meal with a family of young children who is struggling or feeling overwhelmed.

Become aware of the following Millennium Development Goals:

Reduce child mortality

- Reduce by two-thirds the percentage of children who die before age five.

Improve maternal health

- Reduce by three-quarters the percentage of women who die in pregnancy and childbirth.





7. CLOSING

Pray in your own words, invite participants to pray during a time of group prayer, or use the suggestion below:

Collect all child-like objects from the room. As each piece is placed on the table, say the words of Jesus, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” (Luke 18) Then pray:

Gracious God, lover of all whom you have made, we place before you this night the hopes and dreams of each of these children we love and cherish—those we can name and those we can not. We promise you this night, that we will keep them in our hearts, prayers and actions until the day that no child again will beg for food, weep for water or cry out for a loving touch. As Jesus said to let the little children come to him, we ask you that we might be Jesus for a child who is hurting. Amen.



Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is in an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob, and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.

*Frederick Douglass
(1817-1895)
Speech, April 1886*

8. AFTER THE SESSION

- Collect the notes made by the recorder.
- Jot down any unanswered questions, suggestions or requests made by the group.
- Note anything you would like to remember for the next session.
- List anything that needs to be communicated to the congregation or to congregational leaders.
- Pause and thank God for being with you in leading and serving this group.
- Pray that God will cause you all to remember and reflect on the discussion during the week.



Hunger No More

▶ **LESSON OBJECTIVE**

To better understand God’s vision for the world.



1. WELCOME AND OPENING

You will need bread and juice for this session, as well as a cross or crucifix, and coloured construction paper cut into different shapes.

Remember to introduce people if anyone is new. Ask people if they were able to share a meal with someone in the past week. Ask how it went. Ask if there is any follow up that should happen.

Describe a meal you have prepared for others.

Handout: Distribute the “Hunger No More” handout to the group.

2. PRAYER

Pray in your own words, ask someone to pray, or use the following prayer:

Oh God, you have given us your promise, a word and a covenant that brings us the touch of your favour and grace, and allows us to sip from the springs of living water and taste the bread of your salvation.

Oh God, you have made us into your promise, a covenant to all you have created, a word that



drives us and calls us and makes us into the people that you desire.

Oh God, we ask you to empower us with your presence until we are transformed and have become part of your plan for this world, so that all can live with enough, to eat and drink to the fullness of your reign. Amen



3. HUNGER FACTS

Take turns reading these facts.

- Two-thirds of illiterate people are women, and the rate of employment among women is two-thirds that of men.
- Over 1.3 billion people lack access to safe water and 2.4 billion lack adequate sanitation.

- Women in Africa walk an average of six km per day to supply water for their families. Many walk up to 20 km per day.
- Contaminated water kills 2.2 million people per year.
- When poverty and hunger are reduced among women, population rates usually decline. (www.bread.org)

Allow people to comment or raise issues for discussion. Discuss the following questions:

- What factors empower or disempower people?
- Do the following empower or disempower? Why or why not?
 - Strong spiritual life
 - Physical or mental conditions
 - Socialization
 - Money or other resources (land, home, etc.)
 - Education
 - Participation in public life (voting, civil rights, wars, etc.)
 - Discrimination by race, nationality, gender, religion, age, etc.
 - Internet and web-based resources and information
 - Discussion of issues

4. HUNGER STORIES

Ask different people to read one of the personal stories aloud. Make notes of key points that arise during the conversation, and discuss the following questions:

- How do these stories make you feel?
- Compare the stories. What are the similarities? The differences? What would give the woman from Ukraine hope?
- If any of these people were invited to define “salvation,” what do you think they would say?
- How do you define salvation?
- Gandhi once said that “some people can only see God in a loaf of bread.” Do you think this is true? Why or why not? Do you think any of the people featured in the personal stories would say this is true? Why or why not?

5. GOD’S STORY

Read the Revelation passage.

(A shortened version is found in the handout.)

Begin by sharing the following brief introduction to the scripture:

When the book of Revelation was written, it addressed Christians who were trying to be



faithful to the vision of Jesus in a very difficult and hostile world. In some ways then, the book is addressed to people who are like us. Some people have tried to make the book of Revelation seem hard to understand, or directed to just a few people. The passage we are reading today, which is based in part on an earlier passage in the book of Isaiah and adapted in our opening prayer, is actually very simple. It does not describe salvation for a few people but for a vast throng beyond imagination. That is what the number 144,000 would have meant to the people John was addressing. This passage is part of what is known as the song of victory. The victory is God's vision for creation—the vision that God began with in creating a world marked by peace and abundance; the vision which God has maintained and for which God gave the only Son, the lamb; and which God will see come to pass. Can we understand this as our vision as well? Let us listen to what the Spirit is saying to us, the church.

Tell the group that after someone reads the passage, you will have a short time of silence.

Have someone else read the passage again. Then gently ask, "Can these words live today? Not in the past or the future, but today?"

After a moment or two of silence, ask each participant to share a word or phrase or image that came to mind as the passage was written. Record on the board or newsprint what each person says, and after each comment, ask again, "Can these words live now?"



6. OUR STORY

Remind the group that this study isn't just about sharing information or opinions. It is about discerning God's call and our response.

Distribute pieces of paper (each in a different colour or shape). Read the Revelation passage once again. Read the Personal Story and Empowerment/Disempowerment lists again. Ask people to reflect on these readings and make a commitment to God based on these readings. They may decide to pray daily for the poor and weak. They may choose to volunteer at an agency in their area to help those who are poor. It should be some kind of action that displays a commitment to ushering in God's kingdom today.

Gather these papers to the centre of the table. Place the bread and juice on the papers. Invite



participants to share the food and drink together, being mindful of those that do not have enough.

Become aware of the following Millennium Development Goal:

Promote gender equality and empower women

- Eliminate the gender discrepancy in primary and secondary education by increasing opportunities for girls to attend school preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.



7. CLOSING

Pray in your own words, invite participants to pray during a time of group prayer, or use the suggestion below:

Ask the group to take some time to be quiet and centred for the closing prayer. Invite them to say, “We do believe it,” after each statement is said by you or someone you have asked to lead the prayer.

Then, three times, with the whole group joining in:

And give us, all of us, our daily bread. Amen

Invite the participants to take their commitment from the tray, and invite them to make it part of their lives. Invite participants to make a copy of their commitment and give it to you to keep until next week.

8. AFTER THE SESSION

- Collect the notes made by the recorder.
- Collect commitments.
- Jot down any unanswered questions, suggestions or requests made by the group.
- Note anything you would like to remember for the next session.
- List anything that needs to be communicated to the congregation or to congregational leaders.
- Pause and thank God for being with you in leading and serving this group.
- Pray that God will cause you all to remember and reflect on the discussion during the week.

The most terrible poverty is loneliness and the feeling of being unloved.

*Mother Teresa
(1910-1997)*



Go and Do Likewise

▶ **LESSON OBJECTIVE**

To learn to become a “neighbour” in a deeper sense, and to imagine and act on ways that we and our congregation can follow Jesus’ teaching to “go and do likewise” together with poor and hungry people.



1. WELCOME AND OPENING

Welcome people and invite them to share one or two significant things they have learned over the past few weeks. Invite them to share a positive memory of the past weeks, or a way that they have been challenged to act.

For this session, it would be helpful if you collected denominational or other materials that highlight development work in Canada and around the world. Use some of the stories found there instead of the success stories on the handout sheet, if it is appropriate for your group.

Handout: Distribute the “Go and Do Likewise” handout to the group.

2. PRAYER

Pray in your own words, ask someone to pray, or use the following prayer:

(L) God, give us the grace to hear your word, the word of the one who is calling, speaking and

acting to those who are oppressed, poor, and burdened. God of the poor, you challenge us with the vision of a world of shared abundance and grace possibilities.

(All) Lord, have mercy.

(L) God of the prisoner, you invite us to risk living in glorious freedom as your children.

(All) Christ have mercy.

(L) God of the broken-hearted, you empower us to heal and be healed by walking with those whom you love and for whom you gave your son.

(All) Lord, have mercy.

(L) And lead us now, God of hopefulness, to see your people who suffer, to hear your word that summons us to love your world. We ask this in the name of your beloved son Jesus Christ and his Spirit who lives in us. Amen.



3. HUNGER STORIES

Look at the photos and short passages from the handout. Ask:

- Are there any stories or people from the past few weeks that are most memorable to you? Why?
- Have you learned about any aid organizations in the past weeks that appeal to you? Why do they appeal?
- What kind of aid or help seems most appropriate to you? Why?
- Are there any stories you have heard that you have not shared with the group?
- Are there any stories that you found discouraging? Disempowering? Why?

4. GOD'S STORY

Read the Luke passage.

(A shortened version is found in the handout.)

Begin by sharing the following brief introduction to the scripture:

Jesus often taught in parables. This form of story is designed to challenge the assumptions of the listener and to explode the ways in which the listener has become accustomed to thinking about the world, both the way things are and the way things ought to be. The parable of the “Good Samaritan” mixes experiences and characters which would have been familiar to those who first heard it with some radical possibilities on which to build a new understanding of what must be done to “inherit eternal life.”

Tell the group that after someone reads the passage, you will have a short time of silence.

Have someone else read the passage again. Then ask the group to mention the names of the verbs, or action words, that stand out in the parable. Print them on newsprint or the board. Look at the reading together and make sure you’ve got them all. Then make two categories: the positive actions and the negative actions. Place them in these categories as the group calls them out. For example:

Negative

Fell
Stripped
Passed by
Etc.

Positive

moved with pity
went to him
brought him to an inn



Ask the group to consider the positive verbs or actions. What can they mean for us today? For instance, “put him on his own animal,” would that mean we should give people transportation? Help them get from place to place? What kind of actions do they correspond to today?

Some other examples: The Samaritan was directly engaged—he poured, touched, cared.

He was pro-active and went beyond what he was responsible for.

He did whatever it took.

He committed for the long haul—leaving money for the person’s future care.

Ask: What does the parable invite us to do in the light of our calling as Christians?

5. SUCCESS STORIES

Handout: Read the Success Stories

Break into groups of two or three and assign a different success story to each one. Ask each group to appoint a note taker and then discuss the following questions:

- In this story, how is success defined?
- What is the underlying issue that is at the root of the problem addressed by the people in the story (discrimination, gender issues, environmental issues)?
- What else could be done to address the underlying issue?



6. OUR STORY

Remind the group that this study isn’t just about sharing information or opinions. It is about discerning God’s call and our response. Say, in your own words, “Our story for the final session of this group study is yet to be written. In each of the previous sessions it has always flowed from the

interaction of three stories: God’s story, Hunger’s story and Personal stories. How should we begin to write a story of our own making? Is there anything we could be called to do, together or individually, to bring God’s hope and restoration to the people around us, the people around the world?”



7. CLOSING

Pray in your own words, invite participants to pray during a time of group prayer, or use the suggestion below:

Ask the group to be quiet and centred in God for the closing reflection and prayer. Invite them to respond, in unison, after you read each sentence, with “God, you are our God. We are seeking you.”

Tell them you will begin with the following quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer and allow a few moments of silence.



“The way of Jesus Christ, and therefore the way of all Christian thinking, leads not from the world to God but from God to the world.”
(*Ethics*, p. 351)

8. AFTER THE SESSION

- Discuss with the group whether you should keep meeting to discuss plans for justice or mercy work within your congregation.
- Challenge others to think about leading this same Bible study with others in the congregation.
- Record thoughts, ideas for ministry, callings people may have had, and put them in a format that can be reproduced and handed out.
- Ask people to commit to prayer for the items discussed, and follow up with others to see if they want to serve the poor in your community or around the world in a new way.
- Contact a denominational agency or the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to get help and information about starting something new in your church.



If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

*John F. Kennedy
(1917-1963)
inaugural address,
January 20, 1961*





Guide to Our Deliberations

We as people of God have never had all of the answers to life's questions, but we are committed to trusting in God and depending on each other for care and comfort as we discern God's will for us in complex situations.

Some things to keep in mind as we proceed:

We are guided by a concept of shared wisdom.

No one of us has all of the wisdom. Each of us, however, has a piece of the wisdom. Therefore, we encourage all participants to work hard to share ideas and to begin to think in new ways. No one, however, will be forced to share or to speak.

We listen carefully to each other, not to win arguments but so that we can better understand other people and the issue at hand.

We can agree or disagree. Everyone's opinion is respected, and every person's dignity is affirmed.

We observe the common courtesies of discussion.

We don't interrupt others or dominate the discussion. We acknowledge our own feelings and avoid judgmental language. We give feedback and speak only for ourselves and not for others.

Everyone should have the opportunity to speak. Some of us are naturally more vocal than others, but we want to hear each person.

We remember what binds us together: our unity in Christ and our care and concern for each other as a community of believers.





We must never minimize the suffering of another. Scripture's mandate to us is, "Weep with those that weep."

Billy Graham





The Millennium Development Goals

In September, 2000, 189 nations, including Canada, affirmed a set of international development goals in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. These have come to be known as the Millennium Development Goals. They reflect an understanding of the devastation caused by global hunger and poverty, and aim for a world that is free of such misery. They are achievable. Most of them are very specific, and the UN has indicators by which progress can be monitored.

Many countries have made significant strides in fighting poverty despite major obstacles, such as scant resources. Few additional resources, however, have been contributed since the goals were adopted. If additional new funding is not put forth, at the current rate, none of the Millennium Development Goals will be met by their target dates.

By 2015, all UN member states pledged to:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Reduce by half the proportion of people who live on less than one dollar a day.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

2. Achieve universal primary education

- Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.

3. Promote gender equality and empower women

- Eliminate the gender discrepancy in primary and secondary education by increasing opportunities for girls to attend school preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

4. Reduce child mortality

- Reduce by two-thirds the percentage of children who die before age five.



5. Improve maternal health

- Reduce by three-quarters the percentage of women who die in pregnancy and childbirth.

6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

7. Ensure environmental sustainability

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources. Sustainable development means reducing hunger and poverty in environmentally sound ways, by: meeting basic human needs, expanding economic opportunities, protecting and enhancing the environment, and promoting democratic participation.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.
- Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020.

8. Develop a global partnership for development

- Reform the trading system (i.e., the World Trade Organization) and the financial system (e.g., private capital flows and international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund) so that poor countries can more easily sell their products to developed countries at fair prices and obtain the financial resources needed to create stable, growing economies that lift people out of poverty.
- Focus special attention on how to help the poorest countries mobilize the resources needed to reduce hunger and poverty and become self-reliant.
- Focus special attention on how landlocked and small island developing countries can promote economic development and poverty reduction.
- Make an all-out effort to resolve the problem of unpayable debt for the world's poorest countries.
- Develop decent and productive work for youth.
- Provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries.
- Make available the benefits of new technologies.



Glossary of useful terms

Civil society – The sphere of civic action outside government, comprised of citizens' groups, nongovernmental organizations, religious congregations, labor unions and foundations.

Coalition – A set of actors (e.g., public interest groups, foundations) that coordinate shared strategies and tactics to influence public policy and social change.

Comparative advantage – Refers to the economic theory that in international trade it is more advantageous for a country to devote its resources, not to all lines of production in which it may have an advantage (usually a lower production cost), but to those in which its relative superiority is greatest.

Daily calorie requirement – The average number of calories needed to sustain normal levels of activity and health, taking into account age, sex, body weight and climate; on average, about 2,350 calories per person per day.

Debt relief – Measures to reduce the debt owed by developing country governments to either private lenders, governments (like Canada or the United States) or international financial institutions (like the World Bank or International Monetary Fund).

Democratization – The process by which political systems move toward democratic principles and practices, such as open multiparty regime with regular and fair elections, universal suffrage, freedom of the press and other civil liberties (e.g., freedom of expression, freedom of organization).

Developed countries – Also called industrial countries or the North, these are high-income countries, which the World Bank defines as having a gross national income per capita of \$9,266 or more in 1999. Most developed countries have an industrial economy, and most people living in these countries have a high economic standard of living (though significant populations also may live in poverty). Currently, about 50 countries in the world are considered high income, and their combined population is about 0.9 billion, less than one-sixth of the world's population.

Developing countries – *Low-* and *middle-income* countries in which most people have a lower standard of living with access to fewer goods and services than do most people in *high-income countries*. Also known as the Third World, the South and the less-developed countries. Currently, about 125 countries are considered developing and home to approximately five billion people.

Devolution – The movement of the major design of welfare programs from the federal government to states, counties and cities.

Dumping – The practice of selling commodities in a foreign market at a lower price than in the domestic market, often due to government subsidies of the domestic market. See *Export subsidy*.

Empowerment – The processes and conditions that contribute to self-actualization, the expansion of freedom of choice and action. Includes

personal, economic and political aspects. Measures that expand people's ability and access to participate in, negotiate with, influence and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.

Export subsidy – Special incentives, such as cash payments, extended by governments to encourage increased foreign sales; often used when a nation's domestic price for a food is artificially raised above the world market price.

Famine – An extreme collapse in local availability and access to food that causes a widespread rise in deaths from outright starvation or hunger-related illnesses.

Food bank – A charitable organization that solicits, receives and stores donated food and grocery products for distribution to local agencies. See *Food pantry*.

Food Deficit Country – A term used to describe a country that consistently cannot provide the basic caloric needs of its citizens. Both local production and food imports are taken into account

Food insecurity

International – A condition resulting from inadequate consumption and access to sufficient nutritious food to sustain an active and healthy life.

Canada – A household is hungry or at risk of hunger and adopts coping strategies, for example (in increasing order of severity): lowering the quality of meals, skipping meals, adults going without eating, children going without eating.

Food pantry – A food distribution agency that provides its clients needed food for home preparation and consumption. May also provide job training and other safety net services.

Food security – For every person, assured access to enough nutritious food to sustain an active

and healthy life. Includes food availability, access and appropriate utilization.

Food self-reliance – A strategy in which countries boost yields, employing sustainable and efficient farming practices, and diversify their agricultural production, some for export and some for domestic consumption.

Food self-sufficiency – A strategy whereby countries, communities or regions rely exclusively on their own food production.

Foreign aid – See *Official Development Assistance*.

Free trade – The idea that market forces of supply and demand will determine prices and supply levels, without government intervention. In agricultural policy, free trade in its purest form would mean no government price and income support programs, supply management programs, export subsidies or other barriers to international trade.

Free trade agreements – Agreements between two countries (bilateral), or among several countries (multilateral), to eliminate or reduce practices that distort trade. These practices may include tariffs (taxes on traded goods and services) and/or nontariff barriers such as quotas (limits on the amount traded).

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) – An agreement established in 1948 providing the ground rules for multilateral trade policy by its member nations. Successive negotiating rounds of the GATT culminated in the Uruguay Round (1986-1994). In 1995, the GATT was replaced by the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Globalization – The expansion of global linkages. In economic terms, the process of increasing integration of national economies at the global level. In social terms, the increasing interconnectedness of peoples and cultures and the increasing exchange of ideas.

Green Revolution – Modification of agriculture in the 1960s and 1970s to improve agricultural production through the use of new technologies, including new machines, *fertilizer*, *pesticides*, irrigation and cultivation methods, and high-yielding varieties of grains, such as rice, wheat and corn. This revolution was meant to make India and other Asian countries self-sufficient in food production.

Gross domestic product (GDP) – The value of all goods and services produced within a nation during a specified period, usually a year.

Gross national product (GNP) – The value of all goods and services produced by a country’s citizens, wherever they are located.

Growing Project – This is a unique way for people to contribute grain and other agricultural commodities to the Foodgrains Bank. A typical project involves a group of rural and urban people working together to farm a common plot of land. After harvest, the production is donated through Canadian Foodgrains Bank to our church members of overseas food aid and agricultural development projects.

<www.foodgrainsbank.ca>

Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) – A group of 40 countries considered by the World Bank and IMF to have unpayable debt burdens, specifically GNPs per capita of US\$695 or less and ratios of net present value of debt to value of exports that exceed 220 percent. An initiative that provides assistance to eligible countries to reduce external debt burdens to sustainable levels, enabling them to service their external debt without the need for further debt relief and without compromising economic growth. Assistance under this initiative is limited to countries that have established a strong track record of policy implementation to ensure that debt relief is used effectively.

Horizontal integration – The merger of two or more companies that are in the same line of business. For example, if a supermarket group, merged with a rival, that would be considered horizontal integration.

Human rights – The basic rights and freedoms afforded all human beings, including the right to food and other basic necessities, the right to life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law. A summary list can be found in the U. N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Hunger – A condition in which people do not get enough food to provide the nutrients (carbohydrate, fat, protein, vitamins, minerals and water) for fully productive, active and healthy lives.

Income-support payments – Direct payments to farmers that are intended to supplement their farm income without affecting market prices.

Infant mortality rate (IMR) – The annual number of deaths of infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) – An international organization that makes loans to countries with short-term foreign exchange and monetary problems. These loans are conditioned upon the borrowing country’s willingness to adopt IMF-approved economic policies.

Livelihood security – The ability of a household to meet its basic needs for food, shelter, water, sanitation, health care and education.

Living income – A living wage plus income received through other sources than wages, such as inheritance, Social Security or other safety net programs.

Living wage – The wage level necessary to ensure that a person earns enough to live at an adequate standard of living.

Macroeconomic policies – Policies related to general levels of production and income, and the relationship among economic sectors. Microeconomics deals with individual units of activity, such as a firm, household or prices for a specific product.

Malnutrition – A condition resulting from inadequate consumption (undernutrition) or a poorly balanced diet, which can impair physical and mental health, and can be the cause or result of infectious diseases.

Market access – The extent to which a country permits imports. A variety of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers can be used to limit the entry of foreign products.

Market economy – An economy in which prices for goods and services are set primarily by private markets rather than by government planning or regulation.

Market liberalization – The degree to which a market is hampered by outside influence, such as tariffs or barriers. The less impediments, the more liberalized a market is said to be.

Microcredit – Small, short-term loans to low-income people, who are too poor to borrow from commercial banks, to help them start their own businesses, generate income and raise their standard of living.

Minimum caloric requirements – See *Daily caloric requirement*.

Minimum wage – The lowest acceptable level of hourly wages set by law.

Multilateral trade negotiations – Trade negotiations between more than two countries, as distinguished from bilateral trade negotiations, which take place between only two countries.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) – Voluntary, nonprofit organizations that support community development, provide social services, protect the environment and promote the public interest.

North-South – Pertaining to relations between the rich countries of the North and the poor countries of the South.

Non-tariff trade barrier – Any government action, other than tariffs, that may affect trade, such as informal agreements or quotas or non-trade policies that can impede trade, such as health, safety or labor standards.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) – Term used by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for grants and loans to developing countries undertaken by governments to pursue economic development at concessional (reduced or no-interest) financial terms.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – A group of 30 industrialized countries that pursue economic development while fostering good governance in the public sector and in corporate activity. Members include: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States. The Commission of the European Communities also takes part in the OECD's work.

Poverty line (poverty threshold) – An official measure of poverty defined by national governments.

Price-support payments – Payments to farmers that increase prices for certain commodities when supply exceeds demand and prices are unacceptably low.

Protectionism – Trade policy that protects domestic products or industries by limiting imports, as with tariffs or quotas.

Public policy advocacy – Citizen political action focused on the policies, programs and practices of governments, international financial institutions and corporations.

Trade bloc – A group of countries with similar interests who negotiate and bargain together, thereby increasing the strength of their collective voice.

Rule of law – Law by government that is fair and enforceable.

Recession – Two consecutive quarters of negative economic growth as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research, using several key indicators, including employment.

Social safety nets – Government and private charitable programs that provide a minimum income, consumption or wage level for everyone in a social group; may also provide people or entities with protection against risks, such as lost income, limited access to credit or devastation from natural disaster.

Soup kitchen – An organization that provides prepared food for clients in need.

Starvation – Suffering or death from extreme or prolonged lack of food.

Structural adjustment program (SAP) – Economic policy changes, often negotiated as a condition for loans, intended to stimulate economic growth. These measures generally involve reducing the role of government in the economy, and increasing national exports.

Stunting – Failure to grow to normal height caused by chronic undernutrition during the formative years of childhood.

Subsidy – A direct or indirect benefit granted by a government for the production or distribution (including export) of a good or to supplement other services.

Sustainable agriculture – Agriculture that is grown in a way that does not deplete the earth

of natural resources, does not harm the surrounding ecological equilibrium and allows for continued farming on the same land year after year.

Sustainable development – The reduction of hunger and poverty in environmentally sound ways. It includes: meeting basic human needs, expanding economic opportunities, protecting and enhancing the environment, and promoting pluralism and democratic participation.

Tariff – Tax or duty placed on imported, and sometimes exported, goods to protect domestic producers by keeping prices higher than world prices or to generate revenue for the government.

Trade deficit – The difference between the value of a country's imports and the value of its exports when the former is greater than the latter.

Transparency – The degree to which the functioning of the management of a country or organization is visible. A higher degree of transparency means more open management.

Under-5 mortality rate – The annual number of deaths of children younger than 5 years of age per 1,000 live births. A high rate correlates closely with hunger and malnutrition.

Undernutrition – A condition resulting from inadequate consumption of calories, protein and nutrients to meet the basic physical requirements for an active and healthy life.

Uruguay Round – See *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)*.

Vertical integration – The merger of two or more companies in the same supply chain.

Wasting – A condition in which a person is seriously below the normal weight for her or his height due to acute undernutrition or a medical condition.

Welfare – Financial and other assistance provided by government and private charitable organizations to people in need in the areas of nutrition, education, health care and employment.

World Bank – A multilateral economic development institution established in 1945 to extend loans and technical assistance for development projects in developing countries. It formally is referred to as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

World Trade Organization (WTO) – An international organization, headquartered in Geneva, established in 1995 to enforce the Uruguay Round global trade agreement.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank – a primer

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO HUNGER

Established in 1983, Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a Canadian-based Christian organization that helps provide food and development assistance to people in developing countries through our 13 Canadian church member agencies.

Donations made by Canadians have helped Canadian Foodgrains Bank and its members provide over 900,000 metric tonnes of food to people who are hungry throughout the world.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Donations to the Foodgrains Bank are received in various forms. Many people donate cash, while others make donations of grain, corn, oilseeds, pulse crops and other agricultural commodities at most grain elevators in Canada. Livestock producers are also active, donating the proceeds from cattle sold.

Across the country, many people are involved in community growing projects where a group of farmers, non-farmers and agri-businesses get together to farm a common plot of land and donate the crop to the Foodgrains Bank.

Each Foodgrains Bank member agency maintains an equity account at the Bank. Donors can designate which account their money/grain is attributed to. Member agencies work with overseas partners and staff to determine where to program their cash and food. Foodgrains Bank staff facilitate the programming while the operational side of programming is carried out by members and their partners.

WHERE DOES THE GRAIN GO?

Food collected by the Foodgrains Bank is distributed based on need, regardless of religious or political affiliation. For a complete list of countries please visit www.foodgrainsbank.ca and click on “overseas projects.”

Countries selected for food programming vary from year to year depending on the cause of hunger (i.e. drought, famine, civil conflict) and the ability of our member agencies to respond.

HOW IS THE GRAIN/CASH USED?

Member equity is used in a variety of ways:

- Food aid – to provide direct assistance to people in need of food, eg. in response to emergency situations, to assist them when their crops have failed, etc.



- Food security – to aid people in developing countries produce food themselves, e.g. providing seeds, tools, training, etc. so that they can grow their own crops, assisting in the development of water retention projects, etc.
- Food justice – to assist people in overcoming the policy obstacles to securing adequate food

DOES THE GRAIN GET THERE?

Our church members work with trusted agencies overseas to make sure the food gets to where it is intended to go and we are proud of our record. In spite of some very challenging logistics in foreign ground transportation and distribution, we know that more than 95% of every bushel we ship actually gets to where it is needed.

The Foodgrains Bank carefully monitors food aid shipments to avoid the development of dependency or unfair competition with local food production.

EDUCATION

We are active in the area of Hunger Education as we strive to help Canadians understand the issues of hunger and food security.

Every year, the Foodgrains Bank organizes food study tours to allow Canadians the chance to meet the recipients and farmers who are using Canadian food to rebuild their lives. We also arrange for people to come to Canada from overseas to tell us about the challenges they face and the positive difference the assistance makes.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank publishes a variety of education products for schools, churches and youth groups, and helps to organize education events.

PUBLIC POLICY

All aspects of food—from sharing of food to addressing the root causes of hunger—are part of a “Christian Response to Hunger”. The Foodgrains Bank advocates for more and better aid for

agriculture, provides advice to Canadian trade negotiators in an effort to ensure that developing world farmers have a fair chance at being self-sufficient within global trade rules, and works at the realization of the human right to adequate food.

Just as we carefully assess our food programs to ensure we are not causing dependency or local price distortions with our assistance, so too must governments ensure policies actually help, not hinder, people as they work at improving their lives and reducing their vulnerability to hunger.

GET INVOLVED!

All Canadians are welcome to be a part of the Foodgrains Bank and to serve with them as they offer food to those with less. Consider making a contribution in one of the following ways:

- by initiating and/or getting involved in a community project such as a growing project which donates the proceeds of grain raised to the Foodgrains Bank, or another unique fundraising project;
- by donating cash to the Foodgrains Bank to help cover the cost of shipping or to pay for seeds and tools, and other programming;
- by donating grain to help provide food for people in emergency situations; or
- by getting involved in Foodgrains Bank education programming or food justice campaigns.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

1-800- 665-0377

www.foodgrainsbank.ca



Church Agencies and Suggested Websites

Adventist Development & Relief Agency (ADRA)

Web site: www.adra.ca

Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM)

Web site: www.cbmin.org

Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR)

Web site: www.clwr.org

Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada (C&MA)

Web site: www.cmacan.org

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC)

Web site: www.crwrc.org

Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (EMCC)

Web site: www.emcc.ca

Mennonite Central Committee Canada (MCCC)

Web site: www.mcc.org

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (NCM)

Web site: www.ncmc.ca

Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC)

Web site: www.paoc.org

Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D)

Web site: www.presbyterian.ca

The Salvation Army (TSA)

Web site: www.salvationarmy.ca

United Church of Canada (UCC)

Web site: www.united-church.ca

World Relief Canada (WRC)

Web site: www.wrcanada.org

OTHER SITES

www.un.org

www.hdr.unpd.org

www.bread.org

www.fao.org

www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices

www.safnet.org

www.undp.org

www.ecofoot.org

www.bbc.co.uk

www.unicef.org

www.campaign2000.ca

www.hrw.org

www.opportunitycanada.ca

www.oneworld.net

www.harvestproject.org

www.makepovertyhistory.ca

www.micahchallenge.org

Hunger



HANDOUTS



SESSION 1:

When Did We See You Hungry?

HUNGER STORIES

☞ Sometimes I feel like I am invisible. People see me, but they don't want to see me and so they look through me before they look at me. I wish they would just look at me.

Woman from Pakistan

☞ My mom said that I couldn't call her when I am sick at school because if she doesn't go to work then she doesn't get her cheque and then we can't get enough groceries that week and I don't get a lunch. That's why I'm staying in the sick room at school today.

8-year-old child, Canada

☞ If sometimes our poor people have had to die of starvation, it is not that God didn't care for them. It is because you and I didn't give, were not an instrument of love to give them that bread, to give them that clothing. It is because we did not recognize him, when he came in distressing disguise, in the hungry man, in the lonely man, in the homeless child and seeking for shelter.

Mother Teresa

☞ My husband and I could no longer feed all of our children, so you see here, my daughter, the youngest. We have had to choose not to feed her. We cannot feed her anymore and so she will die.

Mother from Bangladesh

GOD'S STORY (excerpted from Matthew 25:34 ff.)

Then the King will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food.

I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.

I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

I needed clothes and you clothed me.

I was sick and you looked after me.

I was in prison and you came to visit me.

Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or saw you thirsty and gave you something to drink?"

And the King will reply, "Even as you did it to the least of these members of my family, so you did it for me."



HUNGER FACTS

Millennium Development Goal #1: Halve the proportion of people in poverty and hunger.

- More than one billion people still live on the local equivalent of less than US \$1.00 per day, though the number of undernourished people is declining. (www.hdr.unpd.org)
- There is enough food today to feed all people in the world with a nutritious diet, and likely there will continue to be enough through 2020. (www.bread.org)
- Undernourishment in developing countries has, overall, decreased almost 30% since 1980, but about 800 million people are still malnourished. Among other problems, undernourishment impairs physical development, increases susceptibility to illness, contributes to slow learning or short attention spans, and increases lethargy and productivity. (www.fao.org)

The Millennium Development Goals were decided upon by the United Nations as important milestones to reach worldwide by 2015.

OUR STORY

- Some interpreters suggest that Matthew 25:34-40 may be loosely based on Isaiah 61. Read and reflect, alone or with others, on these two passages this week.
- Reflect on or discuss Matthew 25:40. Who counts as family today? In what sense are we all part of the family of God? What does Jesus mean when he talks about “the least?”
- Although war and natural disasters may cause hunger emergencies, long term malnutrition is caused by poverty and powerlessness. If people had resources, such as land or money, they could buy food. If they had personal and political power, they would lobby their government for change. Reflect or discuss what we can do to help reduce poverty and powerlessness in our communities, nation and world.
- Reflect on or discuss the personal stories and the list of facts. Each story is based on the life of a real person. Think about and pray for these people. And pray, each day, “O God, give us—all of us—this day our daily bread.”





SESSION 2:

Defend the Cause of Those Who Are Poor

HUNGER STORIES

🗨️ A Story from Ethiopia

Nede is a farmer in southern Ethiopia. The region in this area is highly fertile but is badly eroded due to deforestation and water sources whose reliability is affected by the deforestation and are inadequate for the 6000 residents. The population of the area has increased rapidly in the past 40 years and average land holdings are now about one acre.

Jaro was born here around the time of the Italian invasion (1935). He remembers the area was heavily forested with only a few areas cleared for agriculture. Travel between villages was never done alone because there was so much wildlife: monkeys, baboons, leopards and black-maned lions.

Two catchment ponds were the only sources of water, but they were enough and never dry. His father farmed about eight acres—he farms two.

Jaro says the deforestation happened quickly over the past 20 years as a result of the “nationalization” of the forests under the previous government. Having no stake in the forest, the people cut the trees to make houses and charcoal. As the trees disappeared, seasonal rains began to cut into the hillside and wash away the soil, leaving only the rocks.

One of Jaro’s three sons will take over the farm—the other two have gotten other employment.

🗨️ A Voice from Ghana

“Take the death of this small boy this morning, for example. The boy died of measles. We all know he could have been cured at the hospital. But the parents had no money and so the boy died a slow and painful death, not of measles, but of poverty.” (www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices)

🗨️ A Young Man from Zambia speaks

“When food was in abundance, relatives used to share it. These days of hunger, however, not even relatives would help you by giving you some food.” (www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices)



GOD'S STORY (excerpted from Psalm 72)

Psalm 72 of Solomon

- 1 Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness.
- 2 He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice.
- 3 The mountains will bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness.
- 4 He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor.
- 7 In his days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound till the moon is no more.
- 8 He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.
- 11 All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him.
- 12 For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help.
- 13 He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death.
- 14 He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight. All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed.

HUNGER FACTS

- More than one billion people still lack access to safe drinking water. During the '90s, over one billion people gained access to safe drinking water. (www.un.org)
- Forests cover about 30 percent of the world's total land area, for a total of 3.9 billion hectares.
- Only about two percent of the world's forests, or 81 million hectares, are certified as being managed in a sustainable manner, with about

92 percent of these forests lying in temperate, industrialized countries.

- The 94 million hectares of forest lost over the ten-year period, represented about two percent of the world's total forest cover, or an area larger than Venezuela. (www.safnet.org)

Additional facts may be found at www.foodgrains-bank.ca. Please visit several or all of these sites for up-to-date information and stories about hunger around the world.

OUR STORY

- With your family, or room mates, watch the short film, "The Man Who Planted Trees," available through your public library or from the National Film Board. It is an inspiring story about the power of one person to make a difference.
- Read and pray about one news story.
- Skip meat in a meal and give away the saved money.
- Write a letter outlining your concerns for the poor and send it to the newspaper or a political leader.
- Reflect on or discuss the personal stories and the list of facts. Each story is based on the life of a real person. Think about and pray for these people. And pray, each day, "O God, give us—all of us—this day our daily bread."





SESSION 3:

A World of Abundance

ABUNDANCE STORIES

In my world of abundance. . .

- My laundry is always done.
- I know that people never die from water-borne illness and all of our cups overflow.

GOD'S STORY (excerpted from Genesis 1.)

In the beginning, God said, "Let there be light,"
And God saw that the light was good.

God said, "Let the dry land appear."
And God saw that it was good.

And God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation."
And God saw that it was good.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky."
And God saw that it was good.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures."
And God saw that it was good.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind."
And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness."
God saw everything he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

The main theme in the Bible concerning hunger is God's promise of abundance in the context of human faithfulness. The story of God's generosity starts in Genesis with an exuberant liturgy of abundance—"It is good"—continues through the Psalms with a high-spirited expression of praise and carries through the stories of humanity's often turbulent and troubled relationship with God.

Even with over six billion people on the planet, hunger is no more inevitable than it is justifiable. There is more than enough food grown today for everyone to have enough. Yet chronic hunger persists in the lives of over 800 million people.

God's promised provision is tied to action. From the very first chapters of the Old Testament, where God places Adam and Eve in the Garden with an abundance of food and tells them to replenish the earth and take care of it, to the feeding of the five thousand in the New Testament, where a small boy's faith and willingness to share creates a miracle, God uses people to provide.

Things worked out with manna as long as people didn't lose faith in God's provision and resort to hoarding. God's economy is defined by the promise of abundance in the context of faithfulness. From a Christian faith perspective, scarcity is a human construct and part of the human horizon of action.

Abundance or scarcity? God's way or ours? It seems it is up to us to decide.

ABUNDANCE FACTS

- Ninety-eight percent of Canadian households have at least one television.
- In North America, up to 25 percent of all food produced for consumption is discarded at source by producers. Many food banks and charities now collect and distribute this food to feed Canada's hungry.
- Forty percent of Brazil is covered in Amazon rain forest.
- The wealthiest fifth of the world's people consume 86 percent of all goods and services, while the poorest fifth consumes one percent. (www.undp.org)

Additional facts may be found at www.food-grainsbank.ca. Please visit several or all of these sites for up-to-date information and stories about hunger around the world.

OUR STORY

- Read with your family or room mates the first and second chapters of Genesis. What are the major themes of each chapter? What are the implications for us that God created the world and that he "saw that it was good?" What would he see today? Good? Bad? A bit of both?
- Choose a few facts on this page and discuss them.
- Reflect on or discuss the personal stories and the list of facts. What lessons can be learned from these? What are the implications of the growing population and the growing gap between the rich and the poor?
- Invite someone who has recently moved to Canada from a developing country over for dinner or to speak at your church about their experiences.
- Educate yourself and your family about the issues surrounding the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa.
- Pray, as a family, as a community, "O God, give us, all of us, this day our daily bread."
- Are you overstepping your abundance allowance? Go to www.ecofoot.org and find out!





SESSION 4:

The Precious Children

HUNGER STORIES

🗨️ Rani's Story

In part of Battala slum, Dhaka City, Bangladesh, shanties of bamboo have been constructed on raised platforms over a big ditch, which is used for all sorts of waste. Below the shanties is thick and greasy mud or water covered in water hyacinth. Rani worked as a maid in two houses. Her husband left her and she lives in a bamboo shanty with her two children and has no alternative but to leave her children in the house when she goes to work. One day, her two-year-old daughter dropped into the ditch and could not get out.

In the last two years, five children have been lost in Battala this way. If a baby falls in, she or he drops with force and sinks deep into the greasy mud or goes into water under the hyacinths. Any rescue operation under the raised platforms is difficult, so there is no hope of getting the babies out alive. (www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices)

🗨️ Bishop Paride Taban's Story

The soldiers came to the school and took away children for the army. The women in the village were angry and discussed what to do. They took their babies to the barracks. "If you want to take our children, take them from the beginning, not after we have raised them." They put the babies down. The commander of the troops looked at the crying babies and released the school children.

🗨️ A story from a Canadian city

We live in an area with a lot of mixed income levels. When a new family moved in next door, there

were children who began to come over to our home quite frequently. When it became apparent that people in the home were abusing drugs, Child and Family Services took the kids, but returned them the next day. One boy, who was 11, was often in charge of his two younger siblings, and sometimes he would leave them in the park, or they would start fires in garbage cans. One day, he came to our home when we were having a barbecue and asked if he and his sisters could eat with us, as no one had been home for the past two days and there was no food in the house. We let them stay—what else could we do? The next day the mother came home and they all moved out. Someone else moved into the house, but I have never forgotten that little boy

🗨️ A story from Ivory Coast

"People who are drinking cocoa or coffee are drinking their blood," says Salia Kante, director of Save the Children in Mali, where children are often abducted or purchased for \$30.00 for the Ivory Coast cocoa plantations. "It is the blood of



young children carrying 6 kg of cocoa sacks, so heavy that they have wounds all over their shoulders. It's really pitiful to see." (www.bbc.co.uk)

GOD'S STORY (excerpted from Lamentations)

The Prophet's story of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE

- 2 How the precious sons of Zion,
once worth their weight in gold,
are now considered as pots of clay,
the work of a potter's hands!
- 3 Even jackals offer their breasts
to nurse their young,
but my people have become heartless
like ostriches in the desert.
- 4 Because of thirst the infant's tongue
sticks to the roof of its mouth;
the children beg for bread,
but no one gives it to them.
- 9 Those killed by the sword are better off
than those who die of famine;
racked with hunger, they waste away
for lack of food from the field.
- 10 With their own hands compassionate women
have cooked their own children,
who became their food
when my people were destroyed.
- 17 Moreover, our eyes failed,
looking in vain for help;
from our towers we watched
for a nation that could not save us.

HUNGER FACTS

- As many as 113 million children do not attend school. However, this target is within reach.
- Every year nearly 11 million young children die before their fifth birthday, mainly from preventable illnesses. That number is down, however, from 15 million in 1980.
- Each day in the developing world, 29 000 children die from mostly preventable and treatable causes such as diarrhea, acute respiratory infec-

tions or malaria. Malnutrition is associated with more than half of these deaths. (www.unicef.org)

- One in every six children in Canada is poor during the first three years of life—the time of greatest brain development. (www.campaign2000.ca)
- As many as 300 000 children serve in government forces or armed rebel groups, some as young as eight years old. (www.hrw.org)
- According to the International Labor Organization, an estimated 246 million children are engaged in exploitative child labour. Almost three-quarters of them work in hazardous environments such as mines or factories, or with dangerous substances such as chemicals and agricultural pesticides. Some 5.7 million of these children work under especially horrific circumstances, including the virtual slavery of bonded labour. (www.unicef.org)
- More than one million children live in poverty in Canada. That number has been increasing since 1989. (www.campaign2000.ca)

Additional facts may be found at www.food-grainsbank.ca. Please visit several or all of these sites for up-to-date information and stories about hunger around the world.

OUR STORY

- Read the passage from Lamentations with your family or room mates. Discuss what happens to children in war zones, as refugees, as displaced persons, as slaves. Find out about your suppliers for coffee, chocolate, bananas, clothing, and try to discover if children were used to produce these items, and how they were treated. Discuss what you can do to change the working conditions for children around the world.
- Discuss the personal stories. What would you do if your neighbours included hungry children?
- Pray, as a family, as a community, "O God, give us, all of us, this day our daily bread."



SESSION 5:

Hunger No More

HUNGER STORIES

A story from Uganda

When Joyce Namubiru's husband died of HIV/AIDS in 1993, the family was devastated not only emotionally, but financially. With four children to support, Joyce started selling used clothing on the street in her village outside Kampala. It was when she joined a Trust Bank and received a \$100 loan that she was finally able to provide her children with the food and education they needed to survive. Today, Joyce also cares for two of her grandchildren whose fathers have also died of HIV/AIDS. (www.opportunitycanada.ca)

A story from Dominican Republic

Instead of using a business loan to improve her own impoverished life, 20-year-old Opportunity International client Margarita Pimental Suero started a school for the poor of her community. Today, thanks to a series of loans and a determination to succeed, Margarita has put herself through university and provides a government-approved curriculum for 92 youngsters. She also provides employment for three other women in her community. (www.opportunitycanada.ca)

A story from the Ukraine

If I lay down and died, it wouldn't matter, because nobody needs me. This feeling of my own powerlessness, of being unnecessary, of being unprotected is for me the worst of all.

(www.worldbank.org)

A story from Canada

The real effect of poverty is long term. You slowly wear out your clothes, you put off getting a haircut, the unvaried diet makes you pasty and any emergency need for funds is a problem. Your morale comes under pressure as well and after months of failing to get jobs (I was turned down once for McDonalds in the early '90s), despair kicks in. I have found it a truism that would-be employers don't like the whiff of desperation. If you say you'll do anything, and sound like you mean it, no one will give you anything. (And lest you are inclined to think I am, or was, a slacker, I have worked at everything from picking up rocks on a farm, store setup, painting, moving and yard work to typing.) It's not so hard to live in poverty for a brief period, or so long as hope holds up. It's when it looks like a long grey future that it drains all colour from your life. *Ian Welsh*



GOD'S STORY (excerpted from Revelation 7)

- 9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.
- 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." They are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.
- 16 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.
- 17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

HUNGER FACTS

- Two-thirds of illiterate people are women, and the rate of employment among women is two-thirds that of men.
- Over 1.3 billion people lack access to safe water and 2.4 billion lack adequate sanitation.
- Women in Africa walk an average of six km per day to supply water for their families. Many walk up to 20 km per day.

- Contaminated water kills 2.2 million people per year.
- When poverty and hunger are reduced among women, population rates usually decline. (www.bread.org)

Additional facts may be found at www.food-grainsbank.ca. Please visit several or all of these sites for up-to-date information and stories about hunger around the world.

OUR STORY

- Discuss the personal stories and the empowerment facts with your family or room mates. Have you ever experienced the long slow poverty that wears you down?
- What are families and communities called to do in the face of poverty?
- Do you think it is true that poverty and hunger are more of a problem for women and children than for men? Why? Why does this happen?
- Is there something you could do for a family that is experiencing hunger or poverty? What is the role and responsibility of family members, churches, community organizations and government to ensure the health and well-being of children (and their mothers) in our communities?
- How does one "empower" people?





SESSION 6:

Go and Do Likewise

PERSONAL STORIES

Algeria: Cereal and Livestock Smallholder Development Project

A woman works in her potato field in Ibn Affane. As part of the credit for on-farm investment component, seasonal loans are used for the purchase of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides.



IFAD Photo by Alessandro Rosati

Nepal: Small Farmer Development Project

Produce from a vegetable garden. Discover more stories and photos by visiting the websites listed throughout this Bible study guide. Choose your favourites to bring to this session, if desired.



IFAD Photo by Anwar Hossain

GOD'S STORY (excerpted from Luke 10)

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.

“Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

26 “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

27 He answered: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

28 “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

30 In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

- 31** A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.
- 32** So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.
- 33** But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.
- 34** He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.
- 35** The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’
- 36** “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”
- 37** The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”
Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

SUCCESS STORIES

India

The Shanti Bhavan (Haven of Peace) school near Bangalore sets out to prove that children from extremely poor backgrounds, if given the right education and technology, succeed in a globalised world as well as their better-off counterparts.

A dusty one-hour drive from Bangalore brings you to Shanti Bhavan residential school set up by Abraham George, an Indian who, after making it big in America, returned to India with a mission: to open a private non-sectarian boarding school for children of India’s poorest of the poor. To take them out of their degraded environments and provide them access to quality education. To help them make something of their lives, and prove that, given access to the same technologies and education that have enabled other Indians to thrive in a globalised world, these children, too, can become leaders in their chosen fields.

Shanti Bhavan currently houses 160 students—all “untouchables”—children of poor farmers, daily-wage labourers, coolies, rag-pickers, quarry workers. “They come from homes below the poverty line, and from the lowest caste of untouchables, who are supposed to be fulfilling their destiny and left where they are—according to the unwritten laws of Indian society,” says Lalita Law, the school’s principal. “We get these children at age four. They don’t know what it is to have a drink of clean water or use a toilet. They bathe in filthy gutter water—if they are lucky to have a gutter near where they live. They don’t even have proper scraps of clothing.”

Shanti Bhavan is a project of the George Foundation, Abraham George’s not-for-profit organization, set up in 1995 in Bangalore, India. The Foundation aims to alleviate poverty, promote environmental health and strengthen democratic institutions and values in developing countries. It believes that poor people are able to break the cycle of poverty and social deprivation only through institutions like Shanti Bhavan. The Foundation believes that the impact of major successes through training at Shanti Bhavan is permanent for the children and their families.

Desert Schools

The marushalas are often the only schools in the Rajasthan desert. But they could rival some of the best practices in urban schools.



The marushalas (desert schools) of western Rajasthan exist where there are no other schools. Pioneered by an NGO called the Urmul Trust, this unique alternative desert school is any urban pupil's fantasy. There are no classes in the accepted sense of the term. No corporal punishment, no stress-inducing tests. Instead, a relaxed learning environment, where children look forward to coming to school.

The marushala follows the agricultural calendar, enabling its students to study as well as contribute to the family's livelihood. (www.oneworld.net)

Ethiopia

Delight shines from the face of Zewdie Taddese as she shows off the fruits of her garden. Here on a tiny plot of land, in the Central Highlands of Ethiopia, she is growing trees bearing coffee, papaya, guava and oranges. Vegetables and sugar cane also sprout from the earth.

This profusion of green behind her tiny home wasn't always here. In years past, her garden stood bare due to erratic rains. Then in 1997, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) built a river diversion weir with water conveying systems on the nearby Hermata River. One of its small canals flowed by Taddese's village.

Taddese dug a small channel from the canal right through her yard. Gates control the flow of water, so every eight days water flows through her yard, helping her to water her garden.

"This helps our living standard because we take this food to the market and we sell it," says Taddese, through an interpreter. "Since the project we are now sufficient to live ourselves." (www.foodgrainsbank.ca)

Canadian Story

"Ning" is a recent immigrant with a young daughter. She has an undergraduate degree and plenty of experience in her field of work, but her training is not recognized in Canada. However, Ning is determined to make a future for herself and her daughter, and so she has applied to universities across the country in order to further

her education. Because much of her fixed income is being spent on application fees and equivalency exams, Ning came to the Harvest desperately in need of food. We gave her groceries and helped with job search strategies as she waited for a response from the schools. As she continues to address her challenges in this new country, we at the Harvest are grateful to be in a position to assist Ning and her daughter through this transition. (www.harvestproject.org)

OUR STORY

Read Luke 10 with your family or room mates, or reflect on your own.

Discuss: What do you think is the main message of the parable? Why is it placed between the stories of sending out the disciples and the story of Mary and Martha?



How do you answer the question, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

How is this message most effectively applied in today’s world? How does one become a Samaritan?

NOW WHAT?

Consider what you could do, alone, with your Bible study group, or with your family. Some suggestions:

- Start or join a Social Action Committee in your church.
- Volunteer in a soup kitchen, food bank, or homeless shelter.
- Reach out to a needy family—invite them for supper, or baby sit their kids.
- Become more aware of the issues by reading, visiting websites, finding out what your denomination is doing, and by talking with others.
- Shop more ethically; investigate fair trade products.
- Volunteer as a mentor to children or teens who are poor.
- Teach literacy or ESL.
- Add to this list! What can you do? What will you do?

