



STUDENT CURRICULUM

By Bridget Nelson and April McGlothin-Eller

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Introduction

Before organizing B1, I spoke to a youth pastor who said that his youth have participated in fasting programs in the past and the routine is always the same. The youth eat as much as they can before the fast, fast for the day, then break the fast with the same amount of food they began it with. Another youth minister told me she experienced the same situation with the funds raised by her group. She said that raising money to save starving children's lives always generates a lot of excitement, but there is little follow through when it comes to youth taking action to affect the lives of children around the world. The youth minister is always thankful for the money raised, but wishes the experience of fasting and fundraising would translate into her youth's choices later in the year, for example at Christmas or when prom expenses begin to pile up.

As I spoke to youth and youth leaders across the connection I began to wonder if it was possible to create an experience that could last beyond a day. Is it possible to remember voluntary hunger when faced with a banquet of excess? Is it possible to raise money for an Advance project and months later still make the connection between our choices when buying cheap goods and the places they come from? Is it possible to have a program that highlights both service and justice? Is it possible?

The short answer is I don't know.

Here's the longer answer: I do know that education and awareness are the common ground upon which each of these possibilities is built. If you really want your youth to B1 beyond one day, they need to understand both the current situation for our poor sisters and brothers *and* how they fit into the picture. If we expect youth to choose wisely when facing excess, we need to provide them with tools to make sound decisions. If we don't act with both service and justice, the grandchildren of our youth will continue to hold B1 events, because neither soup kitchens nor lobby groups working for a higher minimum wage alone will prevent people from being impoverished. It is possible, but it won't be easy...or fun.

On the following pages you'll find the curriculum for B1. This curriculum was written by two United Methodist young adults who are passionate about changing the world around them through education. Other young adults have also contributed to the B1 curriculum. I hope this will be a jumping-off point for your group to learn how to continue to B1 beyond your fasting event.

A better world for all of us is possible; I look forward to living into that world with you!

Rachel R. Harvey
Mission Specialist, The Advance

Biblical Foundations: Bible Studies & Activities



Isaiah 58:6-9a

Scriptural Background for Leaders

The prophet Isaiah wrote for the Israelite people during their good times and their challenging times. The early chapters of the book of Isaiah describe a time of great power for the Israelites, but it was also a time of war and destruction. The Babylonians had destroyed the Israelite communities of Judah and Jerusalem. The Israelite people were removed from their homeland and sent into exile in Babylon. Yet the prophet continued to assure the people that God was in control and would care for them, even in their desolation.

The final chapters of Isaiah were written when the Israelites began to return to their homeland, excited that they were no longer in exile. Unfortunately, upon their return all was not as they hoped. They had dreamed of the day when everything would be restored to its former glory, but despite their best efforts, injustice and difficulty were all around them.

In Isaiah 58:6-9a, the prophet reminds the Israelites that God is counting on them—on their action—to change the injustice and hardship that they encountered. Through Isaiah, God says to the Israelites:

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and God will say: Here am I.

(Isaiah 58:6-9a, Today's New International Version)*

God reminds the people that when they help one another, when they work for the good of all—especially the ones who are the most vulnerable—then God is with them. The power, protection, and love of God will be with them. God will be the light that leads them all along their way. God will also be their “rear guard,” meaning God’s got their back!

This passage speaks loudly to our world today. We are living in a time of great hope and great wealth, and yet all around us in this nation and throughout the world, people are suffering from injustice and hardship. Millions of children go hungry every night; millions more do not have adequate housing. War, disease, and starvation are everyday occurrences.

So, to whom does Isaiah speak today? As people of faith, we are called by God to be the body of Christ on this earth. God is still speaking through this passage, but now we are the intended hearers! Children of God, we are called to this fast, as a people hungering for God and hungering for justice.

* Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, TODAY'S NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION ®. TNIV ®. COPYRIGHT © 2001, 2005 by International Bible Society ®. Used by permission of IBS-STL U.S. All rights reserved worldwide.

Time: At least 30 minutes

Size: Any group size

Activity: What is a Yoke?

(Hint: Not the yellow part of an egg)

SUPPLIES:

- Bibles (various versions)
- A picture of a yoke downloaded from the internet
- A long, smooth piece of wood (e.g., a 2" x 4" or a broom/mop handle)
- A rolling chair, skateboard, or scooter
- A long piece of rope

PREPARATION:

- Tie one end of the rope to each end of the piece of wood or broom/mop handle.
- You are creating a yoke to illustrate the scripture.

Ask: Can anyone tell me what a yoke is? *(Engage with the youth about what they think a yoke is. Encourage them to come up with many guesses. If no one knows, say the following:)* A yoke was a large piece of wood that was strapped on the shoulders or heads of oxen. It usually had a U-shaped ring that went around the oxen's necks. The yoke would be used in farming and agriculture. While the farmer would get much more work done, the oxen would bear the burden of the manual labor of plowing fields and tilling soil. Some farmers still use this practice today. For example most Amish farmers still use oxen to till their fields because they do not use electricity or modern conveniences such as tractors.

Ask: May I have a volunteer? *(You may want to work with the volunteer before you lead this lesson. Have the volunteer put the wood on the back of his/her neck with his/her arms draped over the front of the bar. The rope should be hanging toward the volunteer's back. Sit in the chair, hold the rope, and ask the volunteer to SLOWLY pull you forward.)*

Ask: What did you notice? *(They may notice that the volunteer had an easy or a difficult time pulling you. You may point out that the chair has wheels or the ground is smooth, making it easier to pull. You may also point out that this was not the case for oxen. It was extremely hard labor.)*

Read: Isaiah 58:6-9a. *(Ask someone to read Isaiah 58:6-9a. Use whatever translation you like. Note: The Message by Eugene Peterson does not use the word "yoke." If you use this translation, you may simply read another version also.)*

Ask: What does the prophet Isaiah mean when he talks about breaking or untying the yoke of oppression? *(Leave time for discussion. Note: For more examples of yokes in the Bible, you may direct the youth to the following passages: Isaiah 9:2-4; Lamentations 1:14; Matthew 11:28-30; Galatians 5:1.)* What are the yokes of oppression that exist today?

(After discussing, break up the youth into small groups of no more than four persons. You may want to make sure that each group is diverse in grade level. Younger youth may find the following activity more challenging.)

Say: Think about what situations exist today that are "yokes" for people. Now, using the Isaiah passage as a model, rewrite the scripture in modern-day language. Imagine what God may be asking us to do about these modern-day yokes. *(Encourage each small group to read their interpretations aloud.)*

Matthew 25:34-40

Scriptural Background for Leaders

The Gospel of Matthew was written at a time of great struggle for the Christian church. The writer of this gospel wrote to help members of the Christian community understand how its past religious practices both enhanced and hindered their relationship with God and one another. In his interpretation, Matthew's Jesus taught his followers how to live counter-culturally in a world dominated by the Roman authority, whose way of living did not line up with Jesus' teachings.

In Matthew 25, Jesus gives an example of counter-cultural living. Because the scope of this curriculum is about being one with Jesus and with all of God's children, the curriculum will use only verses 34-40. Jesus uses metaphorical language in this passage to help his disciples understand their new way of living in relationship to all the people they encounter. No longer will they live in isolation, worrying only about themselves and their own needs. Their family—Jesus' family—has expanded to include all people! Everyone they encounter is a member of the family of God—a member of the body of Christ—and ought to be treated as such.

When the disciples encounter a person who is hungry or thirsty or imprisoned, they encounter Jesus. If they choose to walk away and do nothing, they are walking away from an opportunity to meet with Jesus. If they choose to see Jesus in their midst and act accordingly, the disciples have participated in bringing the reign of God on this earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus also says to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40, NRSV) When Jesus says, "the least of these who are members of my family," to whom is he referring? Jesus first makes it clear that everyone is part of his family; nothing can prevent inclusion in this new family—not illness, wealth, imprisonment—nothing. "The least of these" are not less important than anyone else. Rather, they are those who have the least privilege of God's family. Those members of God's family with more privilege have a responsibility to be in relationship with those who have the least privilege. Through those relationships, the reign of God becomes a reality.

Time: At least 45 minutes

Size: Any group size

Activity: With Whom Would Jesus “B1”?

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this study is to determine with whom Jesus would “B1.”

SUPPLIES:

- Bibles
- Printed Scenarios

(Divide the youth into small groups. Four people or less is ideal. Give each group one or more scenarios that they must act out. Give the groups up to ten minutes per scenario to decide their course of action and prepare a brief skit to share with the whole group.)

Scenario 1: You, your mom, and a friend are coming out of a restaurant in a hurry on Friday night. You ate a big meal and still have leftovers. A young man comes up to you, and he tells you that he has not eaten today. He asks if you would give him some money for food. *What would you do?*

Scenario 2: You have been looking forward to the youth ski trip all year, and next Sunday the youth are hosting a ski trip fundraiser. During worship this week, members of the Missions committee at your church tell the congregation about Water for Life (Advance #3020811), a project in Liberia that works with communities to dig wells. These wells provide clean drinking water for thousands of people. The cost of one well is the same as the cost for your group to attend the ski trip. *What would you do?*

Scenario 3: The weather is getting colder each day. You notice a girl at school who is not dressed properly for the weather. She is wearing a light windbreaker and thin tennis shoes, even though it is snowing outside. *What would you do?*

Scenario 4: When you and your family come into the sanctuary on Sunday morning, you see a new family sitting in the pew where your family usually sits. *What would you do?*

Scenario 5: You and your friends are at the convenience store, and you have just enough money for a soda and chips. As you prepare to pay for your snacks, you notice a can with a picture of a young boy, and a sign explaining that his dad was laid off from his job and lost the family's health insurance. Now the family cannot afford to pay for the boy's necessary surgery. *What would you do?*

LEADER HINTS:

(If youth are struggling to decide what they would do, you may use the following suggestions to help move them along. After each performance you may ask the audience what they might have done differently. The following suggestions can also be used to push youth beyond the obvious answers after each group has performed.)

Scenario 1: You could talk to him. You could walk by him because you are running late. You could give the man your leftovers. You could give him some money for food. You could invite the man to share a meal with you. You could direct him to a soup kitchen in your area. You could buy him some groceries. You could talk with your parent(s) and together write to members of Congress about supporting programs that reduce hunger and poverty in the United States.

Activity: With Whom Would Jesus “B1”? (continued)

Scenario 2: You could decide to give money next time. You could encourage the youth to go on a mission trip next year to help dig wells through Water for Life. You could go skiing. You could encourage the youth group to cancel the ski trip fundraiser and raise money for Water for Life instead. You could tithe 10 percent of the money raised at the fundraiser for Water for Life. You could choose not to go on the ski trip at all and donate your trip cost to Water for Life. You could sponsor a letter-writing campaign to members of Congress for foreign aid.

Scenario 3: You could figure that she’s okay and that she probably just forgot her coat today. You could befriend the girl and learn more about her living situation. You could talk to a school counselor to be sure the counselor is aware of the girl. You could bring an extra coat with you and either give it to the girl directly or give it to the counselor to pass along to her. You could start a clothing drive at your school or church to collect winter wear for members of your local community, focusing specifically on youth. You could remember this girl the next time you think you need to buy another jacket when you already own three.

Scenario 4: You could find another pew to sit in. You could introduce yourself to the new family and ask to sit with them. You could sit somewhere else for that Sunday, but introduce yourself to them after worship and invite them to the fellowship time. If they have teenagers, you can tell them about upcoming youth events that they might want to attend. You could offer to give them a tour of the church building or introduce them to the pastor.

Scenario 5: You could do nothing and enjoy your snacks. You could choose not to buy one item and instead donate the money for the surgery. You could choose not to buy anything and instead donate the money for the surgery. You could sponsor a fundraiser to help the family with their medical bills. You could sponsor a letter-writing campaign for health-care reform in the United States.

(After each group has performed, give them an opportunity to discuss their reactions to this activity. Ask them how they felt when deciding their course of action and what influenced their choices. What potential positives and negatives could result from each choice? Where in their lives have they seen these scenarios?)

Read: Matthew 25:34-40. *(Ask someone to read the passage aloud.)*

Say: Jesus tells us in this passage that whatever way we behave toward one who is the least among the members of God’s family, that is the way we behave toward Jesus himself. We have the opportunity to encounter Jesus Christ in each person we meet. When we seek out ways to act justly, Jesus is there among us. So, with whom would Jesus “B1”? The answer is simple: Jesus is one with each person who is experiencing poverty, pain, and injustice. Likewise, Jesus is one with each of us as we act with compassion and justice.

In Matthew’s gospel, we hear Jesus say that when we do these things, Jesus is here...we do them to him. In Isaiah 58:6-9a, God’s message is the same. God says that whenever you do this fast by breaking the yoke of oppression and share your food and your shelter, God is among you. God will hear your cries and care for you. This is the great truth for us. In every act of compassion, in every act of justice, we have the power of God with us to guide us and strengthen us along the way. We are not alone.

Ask: How are we building relationships between the members of the family of God? How will we live out this fast beyond today, this weekend, this month, and this year? How will this action for God in Christ turn our lives around forever?

What Is Poverty? What Is Hunger?



Definitions

Food Security: The existence for all people, at all times, of physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary and cultural needs for an active and healthy life.

Hunger or Food Insecurity: The lack of adequate physical, social, or economic access to food, as defined above.

Emergency Food: Any food received from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or any other social service organization for which the recipient does not pay, and which meets an immediate need for the recipient. Typically, emergency food is provided to feed a family for a short period of time (i.e., two to three days).

TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families): Since 1996, TANF is the official name for welfare in the United States. Aid is provided in the form of monthly assistance checks to families with children who meet certain government requirements. Some of the program requirements are federal and some vary by state, allowing states to make adjustments based on cost of living. TANF is only available to adults responsible for children. Since 1996, adults without children have not been eligible for welfare. TANF is funded through the Department of Human and Health Services at the federal level and has a five-year lifetime limit.

Food Stamps: The Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Food Stamp Program gives families a set amount of money each month from the federal government to be spent on groceries. There are very specific eligibility requirements to receive food stamps. The amount one receives is based on the number of people in the household. Most states have moved to EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer). You may have noticed an "EBT" option at your grocery store register's card processing machine, next to the "Credit" and "Debit" options. Food Stamp recipients are issued a type of debit card with a pin number, and their food stamp allotment is renewed automatically each month. The move to the EBT card has eliminated much of the abuse of the program and the stigma associated with using food stamps. According to the USDA, the average individual on food stamps receives \$96 per month, and the average household receives \$215 per month. Ask the youth if they have any idea how much their families spend on groceries every month. Adult volunteers might be able to share their families' costs.

Poverty Guideline: Each year there are poverty guidelines set in the United States and worldwide. In the US, the poverty guideline is an annual income dollar amount. If your household earns less than that amount, your household is considered to be living in poverty. For example, in January of 2008, the poverty guideline for a family of four was set at \$22,200. *(It is eye opening to look up your state's minimum wage to see if working for minimum wage is enough to get above the poverty guideline. An average full-time hourly employee will work about 2,000 hours a year. Most states' minimum wage is between \$6 and \$8 per hour. Thus, if a family of four has one working parent making \$8 per hour, they are making about \$16,000 per year, putting them well below the federal poverty guideline.)* Check out www.statemaster.com to find a variety of statistics about your state.



What Is the Scope of the Problem?

Fact Sheets & Discussion Questions

International Poverty Statistics

- More than 850 million people in the world go hungry. In developing countries, nearly 11 million children die every year from preventable and treatable causes. Sixty percent of these deaths are from hunger and malnutrition. (*Bread for the World*)
- AIDS in Africa has killed around 7 million agricultural workers since 1985 in the 25 countries hardest hit by AIDS. It could kill 16 million more before 2020. (*FAO*)
- Globally, 20 percent of the world's people in the highest-income countries account for 86 percent of total private consumption expenditures; the poorest 20 percent account for a minuscule 1.3 percent. (*UNDP*)
- In the developing world, 850 million people are illiterate; nearly two-thirds of these are women. (*UNDP*)
- Every year, some 3.4 million people, mostly children, die from diseases associated with inadequate water supply, sanitation, and hygiene. Over one billion people lack access to water and over 2.4 billion lack access to basic sanitation. Access to clean water is lowest in Africa, while Asia has the largest number of people with no access to basic sanitation. Over half the hospital beds in the world are filled with people suffering from water-borne diseases. (*UNDP*)
- As many as 300,000 children under the age of 18 (some as young as eight years old) serve in government forces or armed rebel groups. (*HRW*)
- Poor nutrition contributes to one out of two deaths (53 percent) associated with infectious diseases among children under five years old in developing countries. (*WHO*)
- There are 35.5 million people living in households considered to be food insecure. Of these, 22.9 million are adults (10.4 percent of all adults) and 12.6 million are children (17.2 percent of all children). (*FRAC—Food Research and Action Center*)

SOURCES:

Bread for the World (www.bread.org)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (www.fao.org)

Food Research and Action Center (www.frac.org)

Human Development Reports (<http://hdr.undp.org>)

Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)

United Nations Development Programme (www.undp.org)

World Health Organization (www.who.int/en/)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Which statistic surprises you the most? Why?
2. Most of the world's poorest people live in countries without the social safety net programs that we have in the United States, such as soup kitchens, food stamps, and job training programs. What do you think the people in other countries do when they fall on hard times? What can we learn from their experience?
3. What are the programs available in our community for individuals and families dealing with hunger and poverty? Can we name some government programs as well as nonprofit or faith-based agencies?
4. Are there ways we can support these programs? Are there ways our church is currently supporting these programs?

United States Poverty Statistics

- In the United States, 11.7 million children live in households where people have to skip meals or eat less to make ends meet. That means one in ten households in the US is living with hunger or is at risk of hunger. *(Bread for the World)*
- In the US, 3.4 million youth between the ages of 14 and 24 are high school dropouts. *(US Census)*
- In the US, two-thirds of children in poverty have one or more parents who work and one-third have a parent who works full-time, year-round. Government assistance programs are a lifeline—yet even with safety-net programs such as food stamps, poor families continue to struggle. *(Bread for the World)*
- The United States could cut hunger in half within two years here at home and within two decades worldwide, for less than 7 cents per American, per day. *(Bread for the World)*

SOURCES:

Bread for the World (www.bread.org)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (www.fao.org)

Human Development Reports (<http://hdr.undp.org>)

Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)

United Nations Development Programme (www.undp.org)

United States Census (www.census.gov)

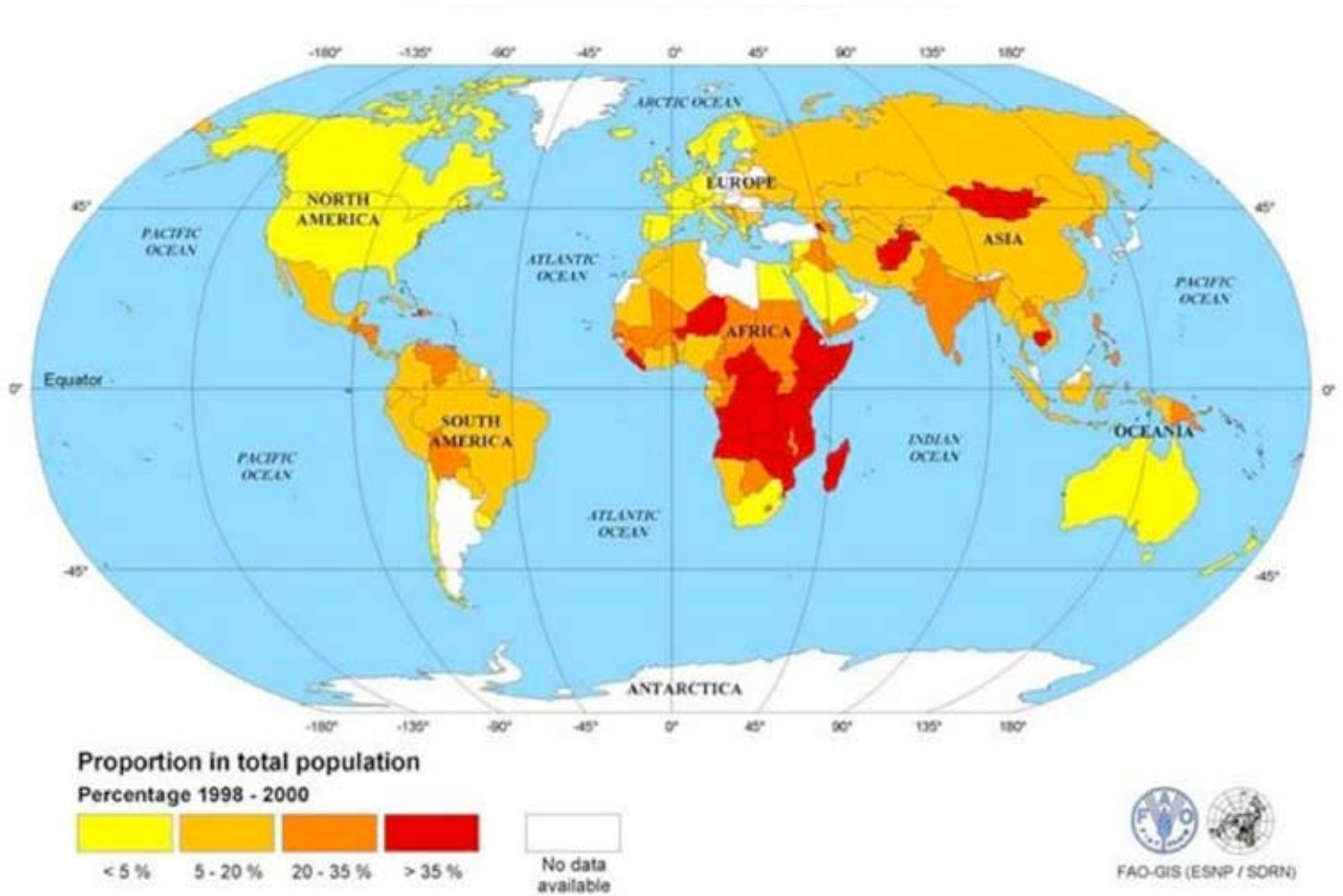
World Health Organization (www.who.int/en/)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What statistic surprises you? Why?
2. How do we respond as people of faith to statistics like these?
3. What are the sources of Emergency Food in our community?
4. Is there a way our church can support their efforts?
5. What does homelessness look like in our community?
6. If we have social safety net programs in the United States, why are people still hungry?

Map of World Hunger

Proportion of undernourished people (1998-2000)



Time: 30 minutes

Size: Any size group

Hunger Map: Discussion Activity

By Becca Farnum

Pass out a blank map of the world to each youth to create a "hunger map." Each youth needs four colors or shades to represent the following percentages: 0-5%, 5-20%, 20-35%, and more than 35% of the population. Have the youth draw their own hunger maps by deciding which percentage of the population they think lives in continual hunger.

After all the hunger maps have been drawn, unveil the accurate hunger map. Compare the hunger maps created by the youth with the accurate one.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do the results surprise anyone?
2. How close was your hunger map to the correct one?
3. What areas of the world seem to be living in the most poverty?
4. What could be causing this?
5. What could you do to "redraw" the hunger map?
6. What could The United Methodist Church do to "redraw" the hunger map?
7. What could the US government do to "redraw" the hunger map?
8. What could other global organizations (World Health Organization, the UN, etc.) do to "redraw" the hunger map?

Close with a word of prayer for communities and people that live in hunger, and for the organizations and people that have the power to help bring about change.

Becca Farnum lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan and is the director of Christian Education at Central United Methodist Church.



Games & Activities That Make a Point

Time: 45 minutes (minimum)

Size: 45 participants (20 minimum; small modifications will need to be made for less than 45)

The Pursuit of Happiness Activity

By Alycia Capone

PURPOSE:

The Pursuit of Happiness Activity is based on language in the Declaration of Independence. The purpose is to demonstrate the need to address social issues, by using a model based on both charity and justice. Utilizing the global unequal distribution of wealth, participants will see the power dynamics in regard to wealth, and understand who makes the decisions that ultimately affect the poorest of the world.

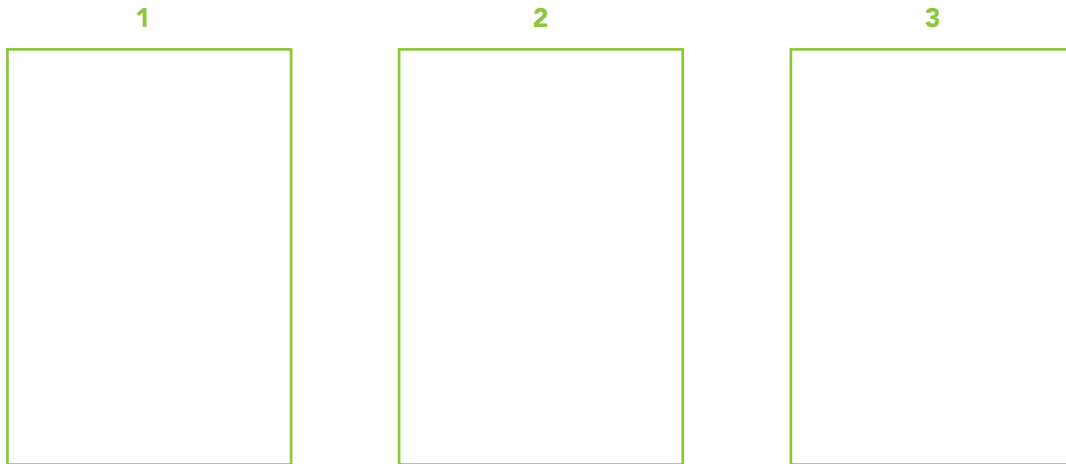
SUPPLIES (ALSO REFERRED TO AS TOOLS DURING THE ACTIVITY):

- Masking tape (one roll)
- Multicolored index/note cards (pack of 100)
- Construction paper (one package)
- Scissors (at least six pairs)
- Glue (at least six bottles or sticks)
- Tape (at least three rolls/dispensers)
- Rulers (at least three)
- Markers (two or three boxes)
- Pens or pencils (at least nine)
- Easel, large butcher paper, or poster board
- Large bowl
- Small table
- Community and Neighborhood Breakdown Sheet (see Resources section, page 23)
- US Constitution Preamble (see Resources section, page 24)
- Declaration of Independence (see Resources section, page 24)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 23 (see Resources section, page 24)
- Isaiah 58 (see Resources section, page 24)
- Report card (see Resources section, page 25)

ROOM SETUP:

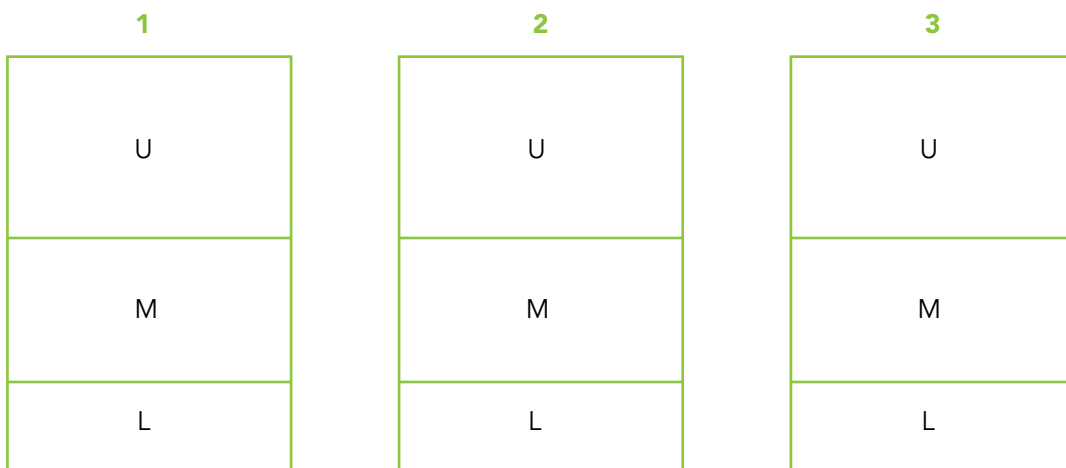
1. Use the masking tape to tape out three large rectangles on the floor. Each of the large rectangles is considered a community. Number each of the communities at the top of the rectangle. Masking tape can be used to make the numbers. Follow the layout shown in Diagram A.

DIAGRAM A



2. Divide each of the communities into three parts. Each part will be a different size and the parts are considered to be a neighborhood. Give each neighborhood a letter. The neighborhoods are U, M, and L. Place the letter U in the largest area, the letter M in the next-largest area, and the letter L in the smallest area. Create the letters using the masking tape. Follow the layout shown in Diagram B.

DIAGRAM B



3. Each neighborhood is given construction paper. Count out the construction paper and place it in each of the respective neighborhoods. The breakdown is as follows:
 - U: 30 sheets of construction paper
 - M: eight sheets of construction paper
 - L: two sheets of construction paper

4. Set up a small table and place all of the supplies on the table; they will be referred to as tools throughout the game.
5. On a large piece of butcher paper or poster board write "cemetery" or draw a tombstone. Hang this sign on a wall outside of the communities.
6. Using another large piece of butcher paper or poster board, write: **"All U's, M's and L's need to build a place that provides access to:**
 - Health Care
 - Food
 - Housing
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Community Structure (Government)."

Hang this in an area that all communities will be able to see throughout the activity.

COMMUNITY SETUP AND PREPARATION:

Divide the participants into three communities of equal size. Each neighborhood will be given the task of constructing buildings. Throughout their time of construction, crises will occur. These crises will impact the way each community functions. Each community will respond differently based upon two models: justice and charity. Community 1 will respond to the crises from a charity perspective only, Community 2 will respond to the crises from a justice perspective only, and Community 3 will respond to the crises from a perspective that combines both charity and justice. These perspectives are not to be disclosed to the communities; only the facilitator is aware of the appointed methods.

Break down each community into the following socioeconomic classes:

- Three people are U, or upper class, who control 75% of all wealth
- Four people are M, or middle class, who control 20% of all wealth
- Eight people are L, or lower class, who control 5% of all wealth.

These socioeconomic classes are not disclosed to the participants. However, the socioeconomic class structure is demonstrated throughout the activity by the amount of space and the number of tools available to the neighborhoods, and who ultimately is able to make decisions.

1. Print the document titled "Community and Neighborhood Breakdown Sheet." Cut apart all the strips, fold them in half, and place them in a large bowl or container. The number on each strip corresponds to the community and the letter corresponds to the neighborhood. You may need to change the amount of neighborhoods for each community distributed, based on the size of your group. Use the following mathematical equation to figure out how many people will make up each neighborhood of each community:

$$U = (\text{Number of participants} \times .20)/3$$

$$M = (\text{Number of participants} \times .27)/3$$

$$L = (\text{Number of participants} \times .53)/3$$

COMMUNITY SETUP AND PREPARATION (CONTINUED):

Example:

$$M = (45 \times .27)/3$$

$$M = (12.15)/3$$

$$M = 4.05$$

$M = 4$ (For a group of 45 participants, each M neighborhood would have four people. So you would need four M's for Community 1, four M's for Community 2, and four M's for Community 3.)

2. Take 20 pink index cards and cut them in half. On each half write: "RIP." You should have a total of 40 RIP cards.
3. The blue index cards will be used for Community 1. Each community will face three crises, and there should be two cards for each crisis—one response card and one report card (for a total of six cards per community). In the activity, on the first card you will write (or print and paste) the response of Community 1 to Crisis 1. On the second card write (or print and paste) the report card score with explanation for Community 1 to Crisis 1. In preparation, write the number 1 on the back of the first two cards, so you can keep track of which crisis corresponds to each set of cards. Continue marking the back of each set of response and report cards.
4. Repeat the steps in number 3 for Community 2, using the yellow index cards.
5. Repeat the steps in number 3 for Community 3, using the green index cards.
6. Print and make copies of the document titled "Report Card." You will need a copy for each community. Make additional copies, in case a community makes an error.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Gather the group together and explain that they are going to be engaged in an activity called The Pursuit of Happiness. Tell the group you are going to ask them to leave the room, and when they return they will take a slip of paper from the bowl or container. On the paper will be a number and a letter. The number will correspond to a rectangle, which represents a community in which they will live. The letter corresponds to the neighborhood of the community to which they will belong. Have the group exit and each take a slip of paper as they re-enter.
2. Once everyone has found their community and neighborhood have the group sit down.
3. Tell the group members they will be building communities within each of their given neighborhoods. The U's will build a community for the U's, the M's will build a community for the M's, and the L's will build a community for the L's. Each neighborhood will be given tools for building. They are not allowed to share tools between neighborhoods.
4. Draw their attention to the butcher paper that tells them what they will be building. Each neighborhood must construct buildings that meet the list requirements, such as access to health care, food, housing, etc. (Be vague with this section, so they can use their creativity to construct whatever they wish.) There are no rules on how the buildings have to look. (When you begin the activity you will allot time for the neighborhoods to build their communities. Watch each community to see how they progress, and move the game along at the participants' pace.)

HOW TO PLAY (CONTINUED):

5. Ask for one volunteer from each community, from any of the neighborhoods. This volunteer will become the Report Card Keeper. Hand a report card to the volunteer as well as a pencil or pen. This tool does not take away from the tools they will receive, nor can it be given up to earn points on their report card.
6. Explain that report cards reflect the community's health and viability. Each community will be graded from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) in five categories: Education, Food, Health, Sustainability, and Voice. Each community will begin with a grade of 5 in each category. As soon as a report card drops below a certain number the community will have to give up something: tools, buildings, people, etc. The highest total grade a community can have is 20. A community is at its optimal health when there is a grade of 5 in each of the categories.

If a community drops below a safe level, the U's will decide which supplies will go, which buildings will be destroyed, or which people will die. The supplies and buildings will be relinquished to the facilitator and can be placed on the table with the other tools for future use. If a person dies, the person will go to the cemetery and remain there for the entirety of the game, and become an observer. The community that had a death will receive a RIP card from the facilitator.

Examples of actions taken when the health of the community falls:

- If Education drops below a 4: loss of jobs = tools returned
- If Food drops below a 4: bad health = tools returned
- If Health or Sustainability drops below a 4: this can cause death = person removed from team
- If Voice drops below a 4: people are being forgotten = tools returned

7. Explain what a Crisis is. Throughout the activity, as the neighborhoods are building, crises will occur. When a Crisis takes place, the building ceases and every community will listen to the description of the Crisis, which will be read by the facilitator. Then each community will receive a response card given to a person in the U neighborhood. The response card describes how a community responds to the Crisis. Once a community reads the card, they must do as the card instructs. After some time is given to respond, the facilitator will distribute the report card to the Report Card Keeper. The report card will let the community know how their response affected the health of the community. The report card will also let the community know what items or person, if any, need to be given up or collected.
8. Ask for a volunteer from the U's in each community. Tell them that they are allowed to collect five tools from the tools table. Once the U's return, ask for a volunteer from the M's in each community to collect two tools. The L's do not get any tools.
9. Begin the activity. Remember to first allow time for participants to build the required buildings. Make sure there is no sharing of tools between neighborhoods. (This may change as the activity progresses, so become familiar with the response cards and report cards. Keep a copy of the response and report cards for the facilitator during the activity.)

The time you allot for each building period between crises is up to you. Watch the group to see how they are responding.

CRISES:**CRISIS NUMBER 1**

Facilitator reads: "With the increase in gas prices, it is becoming harder and harder for the L's to buy food. They are becoming restless and demanding assistance."

Community 1 Group Rules (Charity Only)

Put on Blue Response Card: The M's and U's decide to collectively build a building that distributes food. Collect two sheets of construction paper from the tool table.

Put on Blue Report Card: Sustainability: -1 point, Voice: -1 point

Since a food distribution center will eventually not be able to meet the needs of the L's, your community loses a sustainability point. Since the L's were not asked what they wanted, your community loses a voice point.

Community 2 Group Rules (Justice Only)

Put on Yellow Response Card: The M's and U's decide to lobby to reduce gas prices and promote research to create cars that are not dependent on oil, on behalf of the L's. Collect three sheets of paper from the tool table to make protest signs.

Put on Yellow Report Card: Food: -1 point, Health: -1 point

Since lobbying will not immediately address the hunger of the L's, your community loses a food point. The lack of nutritional food makes the L's more susceptible to illnesses, your community loses a health point.

Community 3 Group Rules (Charity and Justice)

Put on Green Response Card: The U's, M's, and L's have a community meeting. The U's decide to build a building that distributes food. Collect two sheets of paper from the tool table. The M's and L's decide to lobby the government to reduce gas prices and promote research to create cars that are not dependent on oil. You also begin to create cooperative farms to produce food. Collect three sheets of paper from the tool table to make protest signs and two markers.

Put on Green Report Card: All grades remain at 5

Your community has addressed the immediate need of feeding the L's, has included the L's in the process of addressing the crisis, and is attempting to change the governmental policies. Your community maintains its optimal health.

Continue building.

CRISIS NUMBER 2

Facilitator reads: “The United States has been at war for five years now, and the cost to keep the US in the war is far exceeding the budget. Funding needs to be cut from essential services so that it can be put toward covering the cost of the war. Therefore, either medical centers are going to close down or costs will increase.”

Community 1 Group Rules (Charity Only)

Put on Blue Response Card: M's and L's decide to make first aid kits and open up a clinic. Collect two sheets of paper from the tool table.

Put on Blue Report Card: Voice: -1 point, Sustainability: -1 point, Health: -2 points

Since the clinics cannot serve everyone, you are facing severe problems. Yikes! Your report card scores have dropped below a 4 in three areas. You will need to give up a person to restore Health to a 4, and give up two tools to restore Sustainability and Voice to a 4. This will take the pressure off of the clinics. These people must come from the M or L group.

Community 2 Group Rules (Justice Only)

Put on Yellow Response Card: The U's and M's decide to close down the medical center in the L's area, but open the doors of their hospitals to the L's. The money saved by not running the medical center is used to hire the campaign staff to create a movement for universal health care. Collect two sheets of paper from the tool table.

Put on Yellow Report Card: Health: -1 point, Sustainability: -1 point

Since you closed down the medical center, the other hospitals are overloaded, and with no immediate relief, your Health score has dropped below a 4. You have to give up one person to restore it to a 4. This person must come from the M or L area.

Community 3 Group Rules (Charity and Justice)

Put on Green Response Card: The U's, M's, and L's have a community meeting. Everyone decides to collectively fight and protest the war. You lobby your government, singing in unison: “I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield, down by the riverside....” (If you sing this together you can get a pair of scissors.) While protesting, you also set up emergency clinics by downsizing the hospital in the U's area, and by dispersing resources to the M's and L's. Collect three tools.

Put on Green Report Card: All scores remain at 5

Since you all are doing so well with your report card, go collect an additional tool. Keep working together as a whole community.

Continue to build.

CRISIS NUMBER 3

Facilitator reads: "Schools in the L's area continue to fail the statewide exams. The federal government, according to the rules of the No Child Left Behind Act, is cutting funding to all schools located in the L's area. This means that the children in the L's area are going to need to be bused to the schools in the M's and U's areas."

Community 1 Group Rules (Charity Only)

Put on Blue Response Card: The U's and M's decide to create a tutoring program to try to increase test scores by providing education support.

Put on Blue Report Card: Voice: -2 points, Sustainability: -2 points

Your community created a tutoring program, but not all children are able to attend, so the overall test scores will not increase to a level that will remove the school from failing status. Two tools must be given up from either the existing buildings or the leftovers you may have, and two people must be given up, first from the L's and then from the M's. Voice and Sustainability scores will both be restored to 4 after the sacrifice of tools and people.

Community 2 Group Rules (Justice Only)

Put on Yellow Response Card: The U's and M's decide that it is time to appeal the No Child Left Behind Act. They decide to take a trip to the capital building and stage a sit-in on the steps.

Put on Yellow Report Card: Education: -2 points, Sustainability: -1 point, Food: -1 point, Health: -1 point

Yikes! With all of your other boycotts and protests and no success, the health of your community is fading rapidly. You must give up two people from the L area and two tools to restore all scores to 4.

Community 3 Group Rules (Charity and Justice)

Put on Green Response Card: The U's, M's, and L's have a community meeting. They collectively decide to open up tutoring programs and organize community meetings so that parents understand how to take peaceful action against the government. Collect four tools.

Put on Green Report Card: All scores remain at 5

Your L's and M's decide to become one community. You may remove the tape that separates the two spots.

Continue to build.

CRISIS NUMBER 4

Facilitator reads: "With free trade agreements on the rise, employers are searching the countries around the world to find the cheapest labor. Jobs in M's and L's areas are decreasing their wages. People can no longer afford rent. Homelessness is on the rise."

Community 1 Group Rules (Charity Only)

Put on Blue Response Card: The U's become afraid and disengage from the issue. They continue to beautify their community. The M's open up the church to provide shelter, as well as a feeding program. Collect one sheet of paper from the tool table.

Put on Blue Report Card: Health: -1 point, Food: -1 point, Voice: -1 point,
Sustainability: -1 point, Education: -1 point

The increase in homelessness far outweighs the capacity of the shelters. People are forced to live on the streets or move in with other families. By ignoring the problem, the U's only exacerbate it, since there are fewer people to address the crisis. They must give up three people from the L or M area or both, and give up two tools to restore all scores to 4.

Community 2 Group Rules (Justice Only)

Put on Yellow Response Card: The U's disengage and beautify their community. The M's decide to fight free trade laws by hosting educational workshops. Collect one sheet of paper from the tool table.

Put on Yellow Report Card: Health: -3 points, Education: -1 point, Sustainability: -1 point

Beautification of the community will not decrease the homeless issue, and decreases the number of people who can help with the crisis. Changing Free Trade laws will take years and people need housing now. You must give up four people from the L or M area or both, and one tool to restore all scores to 4.

Community 3 Group Rules (Charity and Justice)

Put on Green Response Card: The U's, M's, and L's have a community meeting. They open up the schools and churches for shelter, create a feeding program, and educate the people on their rights. Your community members also begin to repair homes that have been destroyed through volunteer work. They teach people Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Independence. If you recite this out loud, you may go get another tool.

Read Article 23, (1) and (2).

Put on Green Report Card: All scores remain at 5

Collect five sheets of paper from the tool table. The U's decide to join the other subcultures in the community and tear down the wall. Remove the tape that separates the U's from the M's and L's, as everyone begins to open up their homes.

Continue to build.

Victory! Justice Group and Justice and Charity Group, you have won the fight to decrease gas prices and increase money to promote research to create cars that do not use oil, and they have just released a model into the market. Your Food score is restored to 5!

CRISIS NUMBER 5

Facilitator reads: "With wages decreasing the economy is beginning to fall. Products are getting more and more expensive and harder and harder to purchase for the M's and L's. Food is more expensive, so children are removed from school and begin working."

Community 1 Group Rules (Charity Only)

Put on Blue Response Card: The M's convince the U's to move tutoring to the worksites, so that children may still receive a little education on their lunch break. They also assemble lunch bags to bring to the workers. Collect three sheets of paper from the tool table.

Put on Blue Report Card: Education: -2 points, Health: -2 points, Sustainability: -1 point, Voice: -2 points
With children not in school, lack of nutritional food due to increased expenses, increased demands, and diminished supplies, your community is falling apart. Three people must be sacrificed, first from the L group, and the remaining people can come from the M's or U's, plus four tools must be sacrificed.

Community 2 Group Rules (Justice Only)

Put on Yellow Response Card: The U's and the M's decide to divide up into two teams. One team will form a human blockade around the capital building with arms linked, and the other will create a mass calling campaign to the government, encouraging solutions to getting the economy back on track.

Put on Yellow Report Card: Education: -2 points, Health: -3 points, Sustainability: -3 points
Your community has chosen a great way to get the government's attention, but economic failure does not happen overnight, and therefore will not be fixed overnight. Your community is suffering and needs food. You must give up six people and two tools to restore all your report card scores to 4.

Community 3 Group Rules (Charity and Justice)

Put on Green Response Card: The U's, M's, and L's have a community meeting. You all decide to continue with tutoring and food programs, but will make them mobile, going to homes and workplaces. On days off, you all take shifts standing in front of the government building demanding living wages. You all shout together: "THE PEOPLE UNITED WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED!" (If you shout, you will get another tool.)

Put on Green Report Card: All scores remain at 5
Since all is well in your community and you are creating sustainability you can grow, go gather three people from the cemetery and bring them into your community.

At the end of this exercise gather the entire group together and ask the following questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Have each of the communities give a report. Ask each community:

1. What is the health of the community? How did you solve each or selected crises? How many tools were lost or gained? How many people were lost or gained?
2. What, if anything, did you notice was different about each community's response?
3. How did Community 1 respond to the crises? Community 2? Community 3?
4. Why did Community 1's health begin to fail? Why did Community 2's health begin to fail?
5. Why did Community 3's health remain optimal?
6. For those who are in the cemetery, what community and neighborhood were you a part of? What did you notice as observers? Why were you chosen to die?
7. (Write "Justice" on one side of the easel and "Charity" on the other side, divided by a line.) How do you define Justice and Charity as shown in this activity?
8. Can solving problems by Charity alone work? Why or why not? Can solving programs by Justice alone work? Why or why not?
9. (Connect it back to the communities the participants come from.) What crises exist within your communities? How are the crises addressed? Are the methods of addressing those crises justice based, charity based, or justice and charity based? What crises exist within the world? How are the crises addressed? Are the methods of addressing those crises justice based, charity based, or justice and charity based?
10. What crises does B1 address? (Poverty.) How is B1 using the justice and charity model? (The collection of money and donations are charity, the activities and educational sessions are justice, the projects of The Advance do charity and justice work, etc.)
11. Why is this activity called the Pursuit of Happiness? (See the US Constitution preamble and Declaration of Independence.)
12. What does God call us to do? (Isaiah 58.) How does B1 connect to Isaiah 58?

RESOURCES:

COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD BREAKDOWN SHEET

1: U	2: U	3: U
1: U	2: U	3: U
1: U	2: U	3: U
1: M	2: M	3: M
1: M	2: M	3: M
1: M	2: M	3: M
1: M	2: M	3: M
1: L	2: L	3: L
1: L	2: L	3: L
1: L	2: L	3: L
1: L	2: L	3: L
1: L	2: L	3: L
1: L	2: L	3: L
1: L	2: L	3: L
1: L	2: L	3: L
1: L	2: L	3: L

THE PREAMBLE TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, ARTICLE 23

- (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protections of his interests.

ISAIAH 58

1. "Shout for all you are worth, raise your voice like a trumpet! Proclaim to the people their faults, tell the house of Leah and Rachel and Jacob their sins!
2. They seek me daily, they long to know my ways, like a nation that wants to act with integrity and not ignore the Law of its God. They ask me for laws that are just, they long for God to draw near.
3. Yet they say, 'Why should we fast if you never see it? Why do penance if you never notice?' Because when you fast, it's business as usual, and you oppress all your workers!
4. Because when you fast, you quarrel and fight and strike the poor with your fist! Fasting like yours today will never make your voice heard on high!
5. Is that the sort of fast that pleases me—a day when people humiliate themselves, hanging their heads like a reed, lying down on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call fasting, a day acceptable to YHWH?
6. On the contrary! This is the sort of fast that pleases me: Remove the chains of injustice! Undo the ropes of the yoke!* Let those who are oppressed go free, and break every yoke you encounter!
7. Share your bread with those who are hungry, and shelter homeless poor people! Clothe those who are naked, and don't hide from the needs of your own flesh and blood!
8. Do this, and your light will shine like the dawn—and your healing will break forth like lightning! Your integrity will go before you, and the glory of YHWH will be your rearguard.
9. Cry, and YHWH will answer; call, and God will say, 'I am here'—provided you remove from your midst all oppression, finger pointing, and malicious talk!
10. If you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your shadows will become like noon.
11. YHWH will always guide you, giving relief in desert places. God will give strength to your bones and you will be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never run dry.
12. You will rebuild the ancient ruins, and build upon age-old foundations. You will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, and Restorer of Ruined Neighborhoods.†

ISAIAH 58 (CONTINUED)

13. If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath and doing business on the holy day, if you call the Sabbath delightful and the day sacred to YHWH honorable, if you honor it by not pursuing your own ways, seeking your own pleasure, or speaking your own words,

14. then will you find your happiness in YHWH, and I will lead you triumphant over the heights of the land. I will feed you on the heritage of Leah and Rachel and Jacob, your ancestors!" The mouth of YHWH has spoken.

* A yoke, the heavy wooden crossbars that encircle the necks of a pair of oxen or other draft animals working together, is a symbol of subjugation and bondage; here it implies the burden that the working poor face—never making enough money to be able to change their situation for the better.

† Many cities in the ancient world were walled and gated for protection of the inhabitants from outside threats; a breach in the wall was a threat to everyone’s security. To be called a repairer of broken walls and a restorer of ruined neighborhoods (or “ruined streets in which to dwell”) is to be dedicated to reclaiming a community’s safety and dignity from those who would steal and destroy it.

From *The Inclusive Bible, The First Egalitarian Translation*, © 2007 by Priests for Equality.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS REPORT CARD

COMMUNITY

		Crisis 1	Crisis 2	Crisis 3	Crisis 4	Crisis 5
Education	5					
Food	5					
Health	5					
Sustainability	5					
Voice	5					

Alycia Capone lives in New York City and is the Missionary in Residence for Young Adult programs at the General Board of Global Ministries (2007-2009). Alycia served as a US-2 missionary from 2003 to 2005 at Frankford Group Ministry in Philadelphia, Pa.

Time: At least 20 minutes

Size: Any size group

The Babies in the River

Author unknown

Once upon a time there was a small village on the edge of a river. The people there were good and the life in the village was good. One day a villager noticed a baby floating down the river. The villager quickly jumped into the river and swam out to save the baby from drowning.

The next day this same villager was walking along the river bank and noticed two babies in the river. He called for help, and both babies were rescued from the swift waters. On the following day four babies were seen caught in the turbulent current. And then eight, then more, and still more.

The villagers organized themselves quickly, setting up watch towers and training teams of swimmers who could resist the swift waters and rescue babies. Rescue squads were soon working 24 hours a day. Each day the number of babies floating down the river increased.

The villagers organized themselves efficiently. The rescue squads were now snatching many children each day. Groups were trained to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Others prepared formula and provided clothing for the chilled babies. Many people were involved in making clothing and knitting blankets. Still others provided foster homes and placement.

One day a reporter came to the village to learn about this incredible story. She interviewed the man who had first seen the babies, interviewed the rescuers, and took pictures of the women knitting baby blankets. After a few days, she felt she had all she needed for a front-page story, and was getting ready to leave. At the last minute, another question occurred to her and she headed back down to the river. She asked the people there, "Has anyone gone upstream to figure out where the babies are coming from?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Where are the "babies in the river" in our community?
2. Who is rescuing them? How?
3. How can we be involved in this work?
4. Are there people in our community committed to "going upstream"?
5. How can we support these efforts as well?
6. What in this story represents charity?
7. What in this story represents justice?
8. What do you think you'd encounter when you go upstream?
 - a. Would it be easy?
 - b. Who might you come across on your way upstream?

The Babies in the River—Background for Leaders

Use this story any way you think the youth will get the most out of it: read it aloud, hand it out to be read individually, have a few youth create a role-playing exercise, etc.

Here are some points about the story to discuss with youth:

- A response to hunger and poverty will take both feet in our walk of faith: Service and Social Justice, also called Mercy and Justice.
- Works of Service or Mercy are the things we do to help people who are less fortunate than us—feeding people, clothing people, housing people, finding jobs, tutoring, etc.
- Works of Service or Mercy often make us feel better, or feel that we've accomplished something (e.g., if you feed 20 people at a soup kitchen, you know you've fed 20 people). Works of Service or Mercy do not change the power dynamics that keep some people poor and other people rich.
- Works of Social Justice are the things we do to change policy and culture so that less people are impoverished and in need of the works of service—talking with elected officials, educating people about government programs, creating better educational systems, increasing community development, etc.
- Works of Social Justice enable equality. They ask why, e.g., why are people poor? Why can't all children attend a school? Equality should make us all feel good, but often when we work for Social Justice we're working against systems and unearned privileges that keep people in power, and few people willingly give up their power or use their unearned privileges to benefit marginalized communities. Works of Social Justice require a little more patience in terms of results. If you organize with friends at your high school to send 1,000 letters to the President of the United States about the importance of increasing the national minimum wage, you may not see or experience the results right away, or even in ten years. The president may or may not change the amount, but when we work for Social Justice we believe that one day a change will come.
- Both of these types of works are important and life giving. Both actions are literally saving people's lives and are absolutely critical.

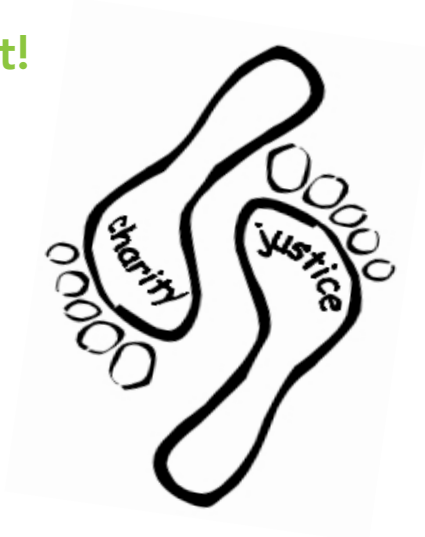
To Walk You Need Both Feet!

JUSTICE IS...

- education
- addressing root causes of injustice
- organizing
- political or judicial action
- social change

CHARITY IS...

- direct service
- support of charitable agencies
- providing for immediate needs
- listening
- caring



BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Justice deals with systems, policies, and structures. It is analytical, asking: what are the causes?

Justice requires long-term struggle and is very controversial.

Justice is exemplified by Moses and the Exodus from Egypt.

Charity deals with individuals. It is spontaneous. There is no attempt to analyze the cause.

Charity requires short-term help and is usually not controversial.

Charity is exemplified by the Good Samaritan.

Listen here, mortal:

God has already made abundantly clear what "good" is, and what YHWH needs from you: simply to do justice, love kindness, and humbly walk with your God.

(Micah 6:8, The Inclusive Bible)

Adapted from a chart produced by Network, a Catholic Social Justice Lobby.

Time: At least 30 minutes

Size: Any size group

Poverty: Is it Personal or Systemic?

ACTIVITY:

Designate two opposite sides of the room as AGREE and DISAGREE. As a leader reads the following statements, participants should move toward AGREE or DISAGREE, or locate themselves somewhere in between. After each statement, ask someone on each side and someone in the middle to share their reasoning. Let there be as much conversation as you want. Encourage youth to ask each other questions as well. Youth may choose to move as others explain their positions.

STATEMENTS:

1. People can get out of poverty if they want to.
2. The government should help people meet their basic needs (food, clothing, shelter).
3. Poor people have obviously made bad choices.
4. Racism and sexism are still holding people back in America.
5. America is an equal playing field, and anyone can succeed.
6. America has the resources needed to end poverty.
7. Welfare programs don't work.
8. The government should do more for poor children.
9. If everyone had a job, there would be no more poverty.
10. Anyone can end up poor.
11. People who don't work are lazy.
12. Everyone deserves an education regardless of where they live.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you know anyone personally who is homeless? What do you know about their story?
How did they end up there?
2. Can you imagine a scenario in which you end up homeless? Describe it.
3. Do you know anyone who continues to make bad choices in life, but does not end up poor or homeless?
Why is that?
4. Do you know anyone who is working but is still poor? Can you imagine a situation where this might be the case and why?

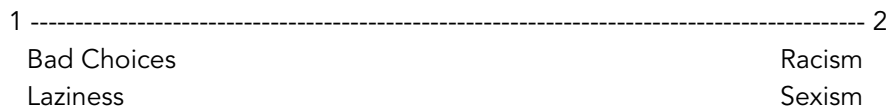
Poverty: Is it Personal or Systemic?—Background for Leaders

Like most topics in the United States, discussions about poverty and hunger can be divisive and challenging. Following are two issues that people can disagree passionately about:

1. Why are people poor?
2. What is the best way to get people out of poverty?

Why are people poor?

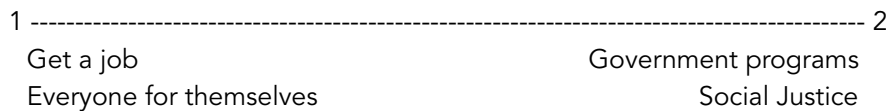
When asked why people are poor, there are many different answers, but most them will fall somewhere on a spectrum between two general camps:



1. People are poor because of bad choices they made, or due to their own laziness.
2. People are poor because of isms (e.g., racism, sexism, etc.), or because of a lack of education or lack of support.

How do we help people get out of poverty?

There are as many opinions about this as there are people. But once again most ideas for solving these problems fall into a spectrum with two opposite ends.



1. Poor people need to get a job and make their lives better for themselves.
2. Policies and programs must be in place which allow poor people to overcome obstacles and improve their lives.

People who find they lean toward the “1” side of the spectrum are looking at poverty and hunger as a personal issue that certain people deal with. They might see poverty as a personal and private problem (e.g., “That’s their problem, what does it have to do with me?”). People who would move toward the “2” side of the spectrum are looking at poverty and hunger from a systemic point of view, (e.g., there is a system and it isn’t working for everyone). They might see these issues as a problem for the whole system to deal with (e.g., “I may not be poor, but we are all in this together”).

Perspective of the “1” side:

The “1”s might accuse the “2”s of being “bleeding hearts” who are too willing to bail other people out of their own messes. They might believe that tax dollars should not be spent on programs (such as Food Stamps and Temporary Aid to Needy Families) because they can create dependency. They are likely to support job-training programs, and they believe that every person can pull themselves up by their own bootstraps.

Perspective of the “2” side:

The “2”s might accuse the “1”s of being indifferent and insensitive to the needs of the poor. The “2”s might feel the government should be more involved in making sure families can meet their basic needs, even if it means higher taxes. They might be supportive of social service programs and worry that not everyone has strong enough bootstraps. They are likely to see poverty as part of a larger issue of injustice in our country.

Both of these points of view are valid and widely held, in our society and by people of faith. Most people are somewhere in between these two extremes. People all across this spectrum are in our churches and serving others. This spectrum of different views has shaped American politics, elections, and public policy debates for a very long time. No one is wrong because all are entitled to their opinions. It is also okay for participants to feel challenged and to learn to articulate their point of view.

In answering the discussion questions listed at the end of the activity, it is our hope that youth will come to see:

- that many of us could be poor if things go a certain way;
- that many of us are privileged enough to have a community around us that would never let that scenario unfold.

Maybe that is the difference between people who are poor and people who are not. EVERYONE has made mistakes, EVERYONE has made bad choices. Some of us have people to support us in those tough times and some of us do not. Some of us were born into privileged families and some of us were not. As people of faith, we’re called to see each person as a child of God. If we are children of God then they are our sisters and brothers, and we need to treat them as we would treat our family members—sometimes better than we treat our family members.

Time: Length of the video is 3 minutes, 11 seconds

Size: Any size group

Imaging Video

By Emily Miller

Show the video to the group (available at fasttodaychangetomorrow.org). Then choose one of the three options for activities/discussion outlined below.

SUPPLIES:

For Option #1

- Television with basic cable (or recorded show with commercials)
- Magazine or newspaper
- Music

For Option #2

No supplies are needed.

For Option #3

- Copies of images that change the world (http://digitaljournalist.org/issue0309/lm_intor.html)
- Background information for images that change the world

OPTION #1

Say: The video begins by stating, “We live in an image-f lled society.” Think about the images you’ve seen in the past 24 hours.

Ask: What did you see on television? Did you listen to music? What picture did the words paint in your mind? Have you read a magazine or newspaper? Were the images you encountered in the video comforting or challenging?

Divide the youth into groups and ask each group to intentionally look for images for 5-10 minutes. Have each group do one of the following: watch TV, read a magazine or newspaper, or listen to music. After the time is up ask the group these questions:

- What did you see, hear, or read?
- What have you learned?
- Who was present in the images you found? (*Men, women, children, people experiencing disabilities, racial/ethnic diversity, people of different sizes, etc.*)
- Who was not present?

After the discussion, have the groups watch, listen to, or read the same materials for the same amount of time, conscious of the questions being asked. Have their answers now changed?

OPTION #2

Say: Ansel Adams said: “A photograph is usually looked at—seldom looked into.” Emily Miller asks: Who’s in the picture? Who’s not?

Ask: If we took a picture of our youth group right now, who’s in the picture and who’s not? What if we took a picture of our church? School club? Family? *Encourage the youth to think beyond the people who are normally present but had to skip the fasting event. For example: Are people of different economic levels present? Are there different types of families represented? Are there different ages represented?*

Ask: Who should be included? Should everyone be welcome? How can we make sure everyone feels welcome in our group? Church? School club? Family?

OPTION #3

Show the youth some of the 100 images that changed the world, according to LIFE magazine. Print out photographs from LIFE’s website (http://digitaljournalist.org/issue0309/lm_intor.html). Give each youth a photograph or have the youth discuss a photograph in pairs or small groups. (Some images may not be appropriate for your group.) Ask each person or group to discuss the following questions:

- What is the subject of your photograph?
- Who’s in the photograph?
- Who’s not in the photograph?
- What emotions do these photographs bring up in you?
- Does the photograph remind you of anything in your life?
- Have you ever heard that a picture is worth a thousand words? What words does this picture raise for you?

Now give the youth or small group the background information for the photos. Ask the following questions:

- Does this new information change what you see? Why or why not?
- Do you have any questions related to your photo that the background information doesn’t answer?
- What photographs do you think should be added to this list?
- What photographs would you include if you were asked to create an album of 20 photographs that changed your life?

After each person or group has had time to answer the questions, discuss each question as a large group.

Emily Miller lives in New York City and is the creative director for United Methodist Women.

Time: At least 20 minutes

Size: Group of at least 10

Ten Chairs Activity

(From United for a Fair Economy: <http://www.faireconomy.org>)

SUPPLIES:

- 10 chairs
- 10 youth

ACTIVITY:

1. Ask for 10 volunteers and ask them to stand behind 10 chairs lined up in a row across the front of the room, with one person behind each chair. Select one youth to represent the wealthiest 10% of Americans. (You may want to pick someone tall, but also someone who is extroverted and will get into the role.) Have that student line up with the chair furthest to the audience's left.
2. Explain that each chair represents 10% of the private wealth in the United States, and each person represents 10% of the US households.
3. Now ask the 10 youth to sit in the seat in front of them, so that all the students are seated in one row.
4. Point out that in their current arrangement, the implication is that all the people share the wealth equally. If divided equally, every household in the United States would have a net worth of \$380,100. Is this an accurate picture of the wealth in America? (No!)
5. Now say, "The wealthiest 10% of Americans control 70% of the wealth in America." Ask the group to portray this statistic. Your "wealthiest 10%" student should lie across seven of the chairs. The other nine students will have to figure out how to share the other three chairs. Don't let them move the chairs or rearrange anything; keep all 10 chairs in one row.
6. Tell the group that even within the wealthiest 10% there is disparity. Ask the "wealthiest 10%" student to use his or her arm to demonstrate that the wealthiest 1% controls 30% of the wealth.
7. Now turn your attention to the other nine youth on the bottom three chairs. Ask them how they are feeling (it is okay for them to feel a little uncomfortable for a minute). Ask the person who is furthest from the wealthiest 10% if he/she can even see the student lying on the chairs.
8. Ask the audience:
 - Is this fair?
 - How does this play out in your life? In your community?
 - How do the people in the bottom three chairs react to each other? (It is often interesting to note that the youth at the bottom can get frustrated with each other, and be rude to each other, but never seem to get angry with the one taking up all the chairs.)
 - What should the people in the bottom three chairs do to change the situation?
 - What should the wealthiest person do to change the situation?
 - How does it feel to represent the wealthiest people?
 - How does it feel to represent the poorest people?
 - In real life, do you think these groups of people see each other often? Where and how?

Time: At least 1 hour

Size: Any size group

Pyramid: A Wealth & Poverty Exercise

SUPPLIES:

- Butcher paper
- Magazines (encourage the youth to bring old magazines to use)
- Marker
- Tape or glue for the collage
- Tape for the walls, if needed

INTRODUCTION:

In the story of Exodus, God recruits Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. This exercise takes a look at why things weren't going so well in ancient Egypt, and whether or not they have gotten any better today. Read Exodus 1:1-14 together.

Ask: What was going on in Egypt? What structure do you think of when you think of Egypt? (Pyramids.)

Say: Maybe God saw that the Egyptians were doing more than building pyramids. Perhaps their society had become a pyramid with a few rulers at the top, and all the oppressed people at the bottom. Maybe that model is what God is calling us away from today.

BUILD A PYRAMID:

Ask: Do we still live in a pyramid society? Let's see. Draw a triangle using enough butcher paper to make the triangle fairly big—about 4 to 5 feet high. Place the following statistics about wealth distribution in the United States onto the pyramid:

At the very top: 1% of the people control 30% of the wealth
These people have an average net worth of \$14 million

A little bit below: 9% of the people control 40% of the wealth
These people are making over \$330,000/year

In the middle: 90% of the people control 30% of the wealth

Note: The bottom 12% of the pyramid is people making less than \$10,000 per year (this group is part of the 90% of population).

DECORATE THE PYRAMID:

Put out a bunch of current magazines, such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *People*, *Seventeen*, *Elle*, *ESPN the Magazine*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *New World Outlook*, *Response*, etc. Encourage the youth to take one and start looking for images and words to put on the pyramid. Have them tear out a bunch of items and then place them on the part of the pyramid they represent. For example:

At the top: jewelry, celebrities, politicians, technology, luxuries

In the middle: families, more modest homes, images of carefree living

At the bottom: natural disasters, war, poverty, sadness, worry

DISCUSS THE PYRAMID:

Ask: What do you think? What do you observe? How does this make you feel? What do you notice about gender? About race/ethnicity? About age? About people experiencing disabilities? About different types of families? (We have often found that people of color are at the top only as celebrities and athletes—at least in the pre-Obama days—and that only certain types of women are portrayed in the “glamorous” life.) Where does your community fit in? Do you interact with people at the other parts of the pyramid? Why do we continue to live this way? Are there alternatives? What keeps people living this way? (It is important to discuss that this is not about “good” and “evil”—the people at the top are not bad people. The pyramid is the problem, in that it creates a system that allows for this incredible disparity. Everyone is stuck in the pyramid, and it is a bad way to organize a society of people.) If God was calling Moses to lead the people away from the pyramids, where did God want them to go? How did God want them to live? Read Exodus 16:11-30 together.

Say: Moses has led the people away from Pharaoh and now they are in the desert. Some of the Israelites are angry with Moses because they think they are worse off now than they were under Pharaoh.

Ask: What does God promise to do? What are the people supposed to do? God promises to provide them with food to eat, but there are some special instructions:

- Everyone takes only what they need.
- Some will have more, some less, but no one will have too much or too little. (As an example, talk about two people in the room going to the pizza buffet together; they may not eat the same amount, but they can both get what they need.)
- Plan for the Sabbath: do enough on the sixth day so you can have enough for the seventh day without collecting.

These instructions come before the 10 Commandments and they teach the people about distribution. God is very clear that they need to follow the instructions. When they don't, when they store up the manna, it goes rotten.

BACK TO THE PYRAMID:

Ask: How would society look different if we followed God's instructions to the Israelites? In what ways do we store up manna today? What does rotten manna look like in our society?

AN ADDITIONAL IDEA (based on time and interest):

Ask: What does the pyramid suggest about the media? Is the top 1% of the population in more than 1% of the media? Why do we see so many images of that life? When do poor people make the news?

Time: At least 90 minutes (including sharing)

Size: Any size group (time for sharing could vary depending on group size)

Collage Making

SUPPLIES:

- Magazines
- Scissors
- Tape or glue
- Tag board or 11" x 17" paper

Youth love to make collages! It can be a creative and fun activity for groups of all ages and sizes. Sharing the collages can also be a great way for the youth to articulate whatever emotions the B1 fasting experience has stirred in them. Throughout this curriculum there are places that lend themselves to a collage-making activity, and you should feel free to add this in at any time. Give the youth a time frame to complete their collages and encourage active listening as students share with each other.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does poverty look like?
2. How should people of faith be responding to the issues of poverty?
3. What kind of world does God want us to create?
4. What does a world free from hunger and poverty look like?
5. What does being a person of faith mean to you?
6. How do you hope to make a difference in the world?
7. What impression do you hope to leave on the world?
8. How do you think God sees the world at this point in history?
9. Who are the "children of God?"

Time: At least 15 minutes

Size: Any size group (time can vary depending on group size and sharing)

Bumper Stickers

SUPPLIES:

- Construction paper cut into the size of bumper stickers
- Markers

Bumper stickers are an attempt to say a lot with only a few words, to express something about ourselves with very little space.

At the end of your B1 fasting event, encourage the students to create bumper stickers about what they learned. Ask them to think about the whole experience, the activities, fasting, ideas, conversations, and people. Then give them some time to think of a phrase to sum it all up. Here are some examples: "We can make a difference," "save the world," "end poverty," "we are all in this together," "God loves us all."

Have students share their stickers and why they chose the words they did. Keep them all to display at church, or send them home as a reminder of their call to B1.



For More Information

Websites

2006 Hunger Report: www.hungerinamerica.org
Bread for the World: www.bread.org
Feeding America: www.feedingamerica.org
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: www.fao.org
Food Research and Action Center: www.frac.org
From Hunger to Hope: www.fromhungertofope.com
General Board of Church and Society: www.umc-gbcs.org
General Board of Global Ministries: <http://gbgm-umc.org>
Global Call to Action Against Poverty: www.whiteband.org
Human Development Reports: <http://hdr.undp.org>
Human Rights Watch: www.hrw.org
One Campaign: www.one.org
The Advance: www.advancinghope.org
United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR): www.umcor.org
World Food Program: www.wfp.org and www.friendsofwfp.org

Short Videos

We have found some videos online at www.youtube.com that you might find helpful or interesting to watch with your youth group. As you know, there is a wide variety of information on the internet, so we are giving you specific titles to type into the YouTube search engine (the titles in bold below). Once you have found these videos, YouTube will suggest others you might enjoy. We strongly recommend that you preview anything you might show your group.

Help Hunger Disappear

Length: 2:43

This is a very creative response to National Hunger Awareness Day in Canada. Perhaps it will inspire some action in your group.

Bill Moyers Journal: Hunger in America

Length: 13:45

American journalist Bill Moyers takes a look at the hunger problem in America. The rising cost of food has made even more people dependent on food pantries. This piece looks into the stories of some people who are new to the emergency food system. Encourage youth to consider whether they can relate to any of the circumstances discussed in the video.

One Campaign: Make Poverty History

Length: 4:20

This is essentially a music video with images of hunger around the world.

Sarah McLachlan – World on Fire

Length: 4:23

This is a music video that details how Sarah McLachlan is spending the money a normal video would cost to help people around the world. Viewing it is a good way to start a conversation about doing the things we do all the time in a different way, in order to make a difference.

Say to the youth: Sarah McLachlan makes music videos all the time and spends about \$150,000. In this video she shows what a difference she can make in the world by spending that money differently. Is there something in your life on which you regularly spend money, that you could do in a different way in order to use that money to help others? If Sarah McLachlan can do this, could other musicians also? Write a letter to your favorite musicians and ask them to be better stewards of their resources.

The BBs of Wealth

Length: 5:19

In this video, United for a Fair Economy answers the question, What does wealth and inequality sound like? Based on wealth distribution in the US, this video creatively displays socioeconomic inequality through sound. Could your youth group do this experiment in your community? Download the video to an iPod or laptop and ask people in your community to listen to the sound of wealth inequality in the US. What other statistics could you demonstrate through sound or the other senses? What would it sound like to “B1”? You could also do a similar demonstration using pennies, which could be used in your church as a part of worship.

Food Stamps Challenge

Length: 1:44

Stanford students take the food stamps challenge, eating \$3 a day.

UMTV Shopping with Food Stamps

Length: 1:48

Posted by a United Methodist church in Nashville, whose pastor did the food stamps challenge to better understand the needs of the church community.

MAZON’s Food Stamp Challenge 2008

Five videos

Two MAZON staff members did the food stamps challenge to raise awareness about poverty and the farm bill. Each of the five videos is a video blog by the two staff members. The video blogs detail what they’ve been able to eat, the progress of the farm bill, and how they’re feeling during the challenge. The videos are: **Intro (8:39)**, **Day One (9:28)**, **Day Two (5:23)**, **Day Six (5:03)**, and **Wrap Up Part II (9:48)**.

Full-Length Movies to Rent

With Honors (1994)

Rated PG-13

Length: 103 minutes

A very popular movie in the early 1990s, this is the story of graduate students at Harvard and a homeless man they encounter. The film looks at the relationships that develop as the homeless man acquires one student's thesis paper, and uses it to force the student to help him meet his basic needs.

Music of the Heart (1999)

Rated PG

Length: 124 minutes

Meryl Streep stars in the true story of a single mom who teaches violin to underprivileged kids in East Harlem. The movie follows the music teacher trying to make a difference while also trying to get by.

Pursuit of Happyness (2006)

Rated PG-13 (language)

Length: 117 minutes

Will Smith stars in the true story of Chris Gardner as he struggles to survive in San Francisco with his five-year-old son. This movie accurately depicts the plight of poor people trying to survive and make ends meet.

Entertaining Angels: The Dorothy Day Story (1996)

Rated PG-13 (some sensuality, language)

Length: 112 minutes

This is the true story of social activist Dorothy Day, the founder of the Catholic Worker movement. The Catholic Worker is a ministry of hospitality to all, but especially to the poor.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FULL-LENGTH MOVIES:

- Name the main characters and discuss their perspectives within the story line.
- Which character did you relate to most? Why?
- What does this movie hope to get us thinking about?
- What is the moral of the story?
- What can we take from this movie and apply to our own lives?

Television Series

JOAN OF ARCADIA: EPISODES FROM SEASON 1 AND 2

Joan of Arcadia is a series following the life of Joan Girardi, a high school student who talks to God. God asks Joan to engage, experience, and enable both her gifts and the gifts of those around her. Joan rarely knows why God is asking her, a C student, to sign up for Advanced Placement chemistry, or sing in the school musical, but she is faithful to God's requests because she realizes her action and inaction always have an effect. The challenges and opportunities presented to Joan expose her to the interconnectedness of life and our choices. The series was cancelled after the second season; each episode runs an average of 60 minutes and is available on DVD. *The following episodes specifically highlight values or connections made through B1.*

The Fire and the Wood: Season 1, Episode 2

Original Air Date: 10/03/03

Joan is having a difficult time understanding why God asks her to perform tasks that seem off the wall, such as enrolling in Advanced Placement chemistry when she's typically a C student. In this episode Joan learns that each of her choices causes a reaction. This episode raises awareness to the connectedness of our choices and actions.

- How do we know when our actions are catalysts?
- Can we or should we purposely try to be a catalyst?
- What are the pros and cons to being a catalyst?
- When in your life have you been, or experienced someone else being, a catalyst?

Touch Move: Season 1, Episode 3

Original Air Date: 10/10/03

God teaches Joan about the importance of thinking before she acts via a rule in chess called touch move. Once you touch a piece, you have to play that piece. God suggests that Joan needs a strategy to play chess (and in life). This episode highlights the effects our choices have on future choices and opportunities we have.

- Is it possible that when you make or start a move you can't really go back?
- Is it possible to see four or even 12 steps ahead of our actions?
- How much can you reasonably protect yourself by thinking about future moves and courses of action?
- Following the dinner where the family discusses psychics, a song plays that says: "Can you see the light ahead, can you hear what Jesus said?...Well it's just hard to see with the world moving." Do you think Jesus was seen in his time as a type of psychic—a guy who would see into the future what others couldn't (or didn't want to)?

The Uncertainty Principle: Season 1, Episode 11

Original Air Date: 12/21/03

God asks Joan to be present and observe what is taking place around her. She is asked to look for the light in others, but this challenge intensifies when she's looking for light in the school bully. This episode highlights how the uncertainty principle plays out in our lives; how our presence and observation of events always affects what will happen next.

- How is Joan changed by observing Ramsey?
- How is Ramsey changed by observing Joan?
- How were the town and community changed by Joan's observation?
- How do you know when it is appropriate to observe someone? For example, Joan was put in danger when she went in the truck with Ramsey. Was that a good choice?
- What effects might our observation of poverty and its affects have on our community? Church? World?

Only Connect: Season 2, Episode 1**Original Air Date: 09/24/04**

At the end of the first season Joan was diagnosed with Lyme disease. One symptom of Lyme disease is hallucinations. The diagnosis causes Joan to question whether her visits from God were real or the result of the disease. Joan spends the summer at a rehabilitation camp and returns to Arcadia to establish a normal life. While she seeks to ignore God, God keeps popping up asking Joan to build, create, and connect.

- How and where did Joan see God in this episode?
- How and where do you see God?
- What was Joan asked to do in this episode?
- What ways are you asked to connect?
- How do you connect with God? Other people? The environment?
- God could (and does) ask Joan to do many things. While Joan doesn't believe in God, why do you think God asks her to connect?

Wealth of the Nations: Season 2, Episode 6**Original Air Date: 10/29/04**

After scoring an A+ on her economics test, God asks Joan what she will do with the knowledge that seems to work on paper. Joan helps her mom with a church clothing drive. Based on theories learned in economics, Joan and Judith sell some of the clothing drive clothes to buy five times more clothes for the homeless, and buy themselves matching belly rings and a computer for Adam (Joan's boyfriend), as incentive for their good work. Joan's choices have negative effects on both the church's clothing drive and her body. In the end, Joan learns that the way you see and deal with the world determines your true wealth.

- God suggests that Joan make sure everyone gets a piece of the pie. What pie might God be talking about?
- Does Joan respond with charity or justice or both? What are other ways Joan could make sure everyone gets a piece of the pie?
- Joan and Judith's plan of selling the clothing to buy more clothing seemed harmless; what went wrong? Would it have been okay if they had sold the clothing without getting the belly rings and computer?
- At the end of the episode, God says that your wealth is determined by how you see and deal with the world. Do you think this is true?

Queen of the Zombies: Season 2, Episode 13**Original Air Date: 01/14/05**

Joan wants to know what everything means when God challenges her to be in the school play. As the Queen of the Zombie uprising, Joan learns that out of chaos often comes joy and relationships.

- The director of the play changes the title and songs in the play throughout the episode. What is the main message of the play? How does the play or the message change throughout the episode?
- The school musical actors are challenged to stay open to the creative process. What would this look like in your youth group? What creative processes might we need to stay open to as we work for justice?
- One action always has a chorus of consequences. What are some notes in the chorus of consequences to your actions during the B1 fasting event? What moment in your life or choice that you made affected what happened in your life?
- God says we can't control everything. What has come out of some of the chaos in your life?



About the Authors

Bridget Nelson

Bridget Nelson was born and raised in Wisconsin. She has a B.S.W. from the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, and an M.S.W. from Wayne State University in Detroit. She has worked as a community organizer in the Detroit area, focusing on issues of poverty, hunger, and peace. She has worked for Hunger Action Coalition of Michigan, Bread for the World, and Gleaners Community Food Bank. Bridget also supervises macro social work students, in community organizing internships and toward macro practice licensure.

Bridget is active at Birmingham First United Methodist Church, where her husband serves as an associate pastor. She has worked with different committees on issues of poverty and peace, and has also given significant time to the high school youth group. Bridget has been an adult leader in the student-led Penny Project, an effort to collect 23 million pennies, one for every person in sub-Saharan Africa with HIV/AIDS. The project was born in June of 2005, and was completed in November 2008.

Bridget enjoys all types of music and photography. She and her husband Jeff have two sons, Casey and Sam.

April McGlothlin-Eller

Rev. April McGlothlin-Eller is a deacon of the Detroit Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, and is a graduate of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. From 1999 to 2001 April served as a US-2 missionary, working with the NOAH Project through Central United Methodist Church in Detroit, Mich. April has a passion for social justice ministry and seeks to empower young people in their social justice ministries in the church and the world.

April currently serves as the student programs coordinator at Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) in Chicago, Ill. IWJ's mission is to educate, organize, and mobilize the religious community in the US on issues and campaigns that will improve wages, benefits, and working conditions for workers, especially low-wage workers. April is responsible for developing a comprehensive, strategic program that nurtures and develops the vocational focus and gifts of graduate and undergraduate students, in fulfilling IWJ's mission. This includes providing summer internships for students of faith, as well as alternative break immersions.

April lives in Chicago with her husband Vince and their three pets, Pandora, Luna, and Gumbo.

April and Bridget have been friends for 10 years and are members of the folk duo, The Urban Tumbleweeds.