

LESSON
PLAN



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LENGTH
OBJECTIVES

3 hours

Through this activity participants will:

- ❖ Understand the concept of food security
- ❖ Become familiar with circumstances that threaten food security both in the U.S. and throughout the world
- ❖ Learn about the needs of people in their own community by visiting a shelter, soup kitchen or food pantry

SUMMARY

This activity begins with a group discussion of food security. Participants then visit a local agency that serves the poor in their community to understand the needs of those in your area. Following the visit, the group will discuss ways to assist people around the world who are food insecure.

MATERIALS

- Flip chart
- Markers
- Bible
- Pre-arranged visit to local shelter or soup kitchen

PROCESS

Part 1: What Is Food Security (45 minutes)

Begin this activity by discussing the following questions to review the concept of food security. Note responses on a flip chart or newsprint so that you can return to them later.

1. Where did the food you last ate come from? Was it a domestic product or something that was imported? What route did it take to get to you?
2. Are you ever concerned that food will not be there when you are hungry? (*Note: Consider the situations of participants in your group when asking this question. If you feel that this question might be uncomfortable for a participant, skip the question and read the statements to introduce the concept of food security.*)

- If you have no need to be concerned about getting enough food, you have food security.
 - When individuals cannot be assured that food will be available when they need it, or when a country cannot produce enough food to meet the caloric needs of its people, those individuals and that country lack food security.
3. Consider the process of food traveling to you and name the factors that affect whether or not the food reaches you.
 - a. Agricultural production: land availability, knowledge, seed, weather, soil fertility, etc.
 - b. Transportation: vehicles, gasoline, roads, drivers, weather
 - c. Processing: processing facilities, water, electricity, workers,
 - d. Knowledge of processing
 - e. Retail sales: transportation, facility, staff, roads
 - f. Individual purchase: money, transportation, roads
 4. What factors are of greatest concern to most Americans in directly determining their level of food security?
 5. What factors impact food security for our world? (e.g., drought, war, fuel costs, transportation, etc.)
 6. How might the current economic and global food crisis be playing a role in people's food security around the world? Are people generally more food secure or less?

When the discussion ends, explain to the group that you are going to take a trip to learn about meet, and visit with some of their neighbors who are struggling to attain food security. Encourage them to ask questions during the visit while being sensitive to the stories they are hearing.

Part 2: Visit to Local Agency (1 hour, 45 minutes)

Before departing for the local agency, read Matthew 25: 37, 40.

Ask participants to stand in a circle. Remind them that they are going as part of a community of faith. Ask them to watch you as you do something very familiar. Make the sign of the cross while saying as you touch your forehead, "God, open my mind", as you touch your heart, "my heart", as you touch your shoulders, "and my hands to reach out to my brothers and sisters". Ask participants to make the sign of the cross in this way as well.

Depart for the agency to meet and visit with people being served.

When you arrive, tour the facility to learn about the services that are provided. If possible, have one of the staff talk to the group about his/her responsibilities and some of his/her personal experiences on the job.

Ask if it is appropriate for your group to interact with people being assisted who might be willing share with the group their own experiences. You might also break your group into smaller groups and take them to local agencies providing a variety of services in your community.

Option: Arrange with the volunteer coordinator or other personnel from the agency, prior to your visit, to provide a task that your group can work on with one of the people served by the facility. Working together is a great way to visit and get to know people.

Part 3: Debrief

After the experience at the agency, have a discussion about what participants saw and learned.

- What surprised you about the local agency and the people there?
- What inspired you?
- What troubled you?
- How is this agency helping people in our community be food secure?
- What services are available for members of our global community who are not food secure?
- How can you, through this Food Fast, help people in both our local and global community be more food secure?

As time allows, invite the group to consider the following scenarios and to determine what impact these would have on the poor around the world.

- In an effort to cut federal spending, Congress votes to reduce food stamp benefits.
- A fire destroys the local health and gourmet food store.
- A local farm offers its excess produce to low income families who are willing to come pick it.
- Catholic Relief Services staff shares ideas with farmers on how to maintain soil fertility.
- A change in weather patterns creates a long period without rain.
- A soup kitchen opens in the neighborhood, providing free meals to anyone who comes.
- Contaminated water causes severe diarrhea and dehydration, making work impossible.
- The car will not start and repairs are costly, making it difficult to get to the store for groceries.
- Catholic Relief Services provides corn to families affected by a drought.