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**SUMMARY** Through a reflection on the causes of hunger and scriptures that call us to respond to the needs of hungry people, participants will consider how they might actively live the scriptures in their lives.

**LENGTH** 45 minutes

- MATERIALS**
- Candle
  - Matches
  - Quiet music
  - Bible
  - Copy of the *Prayer Service* handout for each participant
  - Music player
  - Small bowl of chopped celery

**PREPARATION** Before beginning this reflection, divide the readings up among participants and allow them to become familiar with their readings. Encourage them to read slowly and loud enough that the entire group can hear. Ask the entire group before the prayer service to allow a moment of silence for reflection between each of the readings.

**PROCESS Gathering:** Sit in a circle around the candle. Distribute reflection sheets. Play the quiet music and ask participants to begin with the sign of the cross, close their eyes, get comfortable, and listen.

**Reading: James 1:22-25**

*(allow for a moment of silent reflection)*

**Leader:** Scripture calls us again and again to feed the hungry, to respond to the needs of those who are oppressed or treated unjustly. In the reading we just heard, James encourages us to be “doers of the word,” to act on what scripture asks, not to simply hear and forget. Listen now as we share with you some causes of hunger in the world and scriptures that call us to action. Prayerfully reflect on how you might be a ‘doer of the word’ by considering how you can respond to scripture and on behalf of those who live with hunger through concrete action that acknowledges the causes of hunger.

## **Reading of Handouts**

### **Reflection:**

*(After the reflections on the handout are read, invite the participants to find a place where they can sit quietly alone and consider the causes of hunger and the scriptures that accompany them. Ask them to consider one scripture they can respond to in their lives as doers of the word. Invite participants to write a brief description of how they will respond in a way that acknowledges or addresses the causes of hunger. Continue to play reflective music while the participants reflect.*

*Allow about 15 minutes. When all have finished, invite individuals to share their responses with the group. Ask them to note how their response might address one of the causes of hunger)*

### **Closing Prayer:**

*(After all have shared, close with the Lord's Prayer and a sign of peace)*

**Reader 1:** Some people today suffer from hunger because they are victims of war or political unrest. Such conflict destroys land and homes, disrupts farming, and brings poverty and death to the people who are its victims. **Hunger can be caused by war.**

**Reader 2:** If possible on your part, live at peace with all. Beloved, do not look for revenge but leave room for the wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord, “Rather, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good. (Romans 12:18-21)  
*(pause for reflection)*

**Reader 3:** Human-created and natural disasters like famine, drought, flooding, and earthquakes cause hunger. People whose lives are directly dependent upon the food they themselves produce are at great risk of experiencing extreme hunger if a disaster destroys the crops they are raising. **Hunger can be caused by disaster.**

**Reader 4:** When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not be so thorough that you reap the field to its very edge, nor shall you glean the stray ears of grain. Likewise, you shall not pick your vineyard bare, nor gather up the grapes that have fallen. These things you shall leave for the poor and the alien. I, the Lord, am your God. (Leviticus 19:9-10)  
*(pause for reflection)*

**Reader 5:** Hunger accompanies diseases like HIV and AIDS. In some places, people living with HIV and AIDS are shunned from their communities, denied care and compassion. They are placed in the precarious position of providing for themselves even while struggling with illness. If the sick person is a parent, the children in the family will suffer too. **Hunger can be caused by disease.**

**Reader 6:** If you bestow your bread on the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted, then light shall rise for you in the darkness and the gloom shall become for you like midday; then the Lord will guide you always and give you plenty even on the parched land. He will renew your strength, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails. (Isaiah 58:10-11)  
*(pause for reflection)*

*Continued*

**Reader 7:** Agricultural practices in the developing world are simple and intensive. Work is done by people, not machines, on a scale that is small enough for people to handle. Maintaining soil fertility, preventing soil loss, dealing with insect pests, producing food and seed for the next year, and providing water to crops in a timely fashion can be challenges to such small scale agriculture - challenges that make it difficult for a farmer to produce enough food. **Hunger can be caused by agricultural practices.**

**Reader 8:** This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own. (Isaiah 58:6-7)  
*(pause for reflection)*

**Reader 9:** When people are forced to move from their homes, whether by war, disaster, or some other cause, they are at risk of experiencing hunger. Refugees can carry only so much with them. They must depend on finding food as they move or when they come to the place where they will settle. When large numbers of people move into an area already struggling to provide for its own, food becomes difficult to find. **Hunger can be caused by migration or displacement.**

**Reader 10:** What good is it . . . if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (James 2:14-16)  
*(pause for reflection)*

**Reader 11:** Poverty is closely connected to hunger. If people do not have access to jobs and cannot earn a living, they will not be able to purchase food. Without money to purchase seed or livestock, even those who would raise their own food would go hungry. **Hunger can be caused by the lack of a job or other financial support.**

**Reader 12:** Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like. But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-2)

**Reflection Activity:**

Consider the causes of hunger as they are presented above and the scriptures that accompany them. Choose one of the scripture passages that calls for a response from you. Write a brief description of how you will respond to that scripture in your life. Also, make a note about how your response might address one of the causes of hunger. Be prepared to share your responses with the group.