“They committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles, the life together, the common meal, and the prayers.”

(Acts 2:42, from “The Message”)
Table of contents

How to use
Faith practices
Planning your event
Materials needed
Time and format
Congregational collaboration

Getting started
Fasting
The Oasis
Covenant
Giving

Session One: Teaching
Invite – The Uninvited
Oasis – Invite
Encourage – All You Need
Oasis – Encourage
Give/Study – “Daily Bread”
Oasis – Give/Study

Session Two: Life Together
Worship – Setting the Table
Oasis – Worship
Serve – Fighting Hunger, Together
Oasis – Serve
Play – Monopoly
Oasis – Play

Session Three: Common Meal
Serve – Companion
Oasis – Serve
Study/Play – Food for a Week
Oasis – Study/Play
Invite – Hunger Scavenger Hunt
Oasis – Invite

Session Four: Prayers
Pray – Good News, Bad News
Oasis – Pray
Serve – Service Learning
Oasis – Serve
Encourage – Break the Fast!

Stories for Oasis activities
Other resources you can use
How to use

The activities in Act 2Day 4Tomorrow are divided into the four parts of Acts 2:42: Teaching, life together, common meal, and prayers. Within each area there are three choices for activities. Choose at least one activity from each area and spread them out over your time together.

Look Out, Look In – Each activity in this program is designed to help youth look out to their world and their community. In these activities, they will learn about hunger, redlining, food and much more! Each activity is accompanied by an “Oasis,” an intentional space for reflection, prayer and conversation – a chance to “look in.” See page 7 for more information about building your Oasis space.

Faith practices

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus teaches us that if we want to seek God, we need look no farther than our neighbors:

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” (Matthew 25:35)

This Scripture puts an emphasis on Christian action – things we do because we are following Jesus’ example and teaching. When we do these things we are not perfect, and we are never finished. For those reasons, it is helpful to think of service as “practice” – actions we do that shape us into who we are and that help train our eyes to see Christ in our neighbors. If you dance or play sports or perform, you know how important practice is; it’s the time you figure out where to stand, how to move your body, what to say, and the extent to which you can trust your teammates and coach. Games and performances are fun, but without a whole lot of practice they can be more than just play. Christian life is like that. There’s sometimes a lot of emphasis on a big presentation or a huge service project, but with regular practices of feeding and being fed, listening to one another, and welcoming each other, those bigger moments can have a much larger impact.

Being Christian involves activities that meet the neighbor as though the neighbor is Christ. Through these actions we experience God’s grace as sanctifying grace – grace that makes everyday life holy. As Martin Luther wrote in the preface to “The Commentary on Romans,” “Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace.” In the ELCA we dare confidence in God through seven practices: worship, prayer, encouragement, study, invitation, service and giving.

In Act 2Day 4 Tomorrow, you will find activities based on each of these practices, with one more added. In the Spirit, all are given gifts for the good of all. Because of that, Act 2Day adds an eighth practice: play – which is an exercise of joy that increases our capacity to receive and give joy. May all eight practices be meaningful to you in your time together!
Planning your event

**Materials needed**
(Note: Your needs may vary depending on which activities you choose to do.)

**Craft items**
- yarn or string
- other craft items as desired
- markers, pens, and pencils
- construction paper
- poster board
- glue or tape
- scissors

**ELCA World Hunger resources**
(available at www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources)
- Digging In: A Leader’s Guide to Service Learning
  (includes ELCA World Hunger placemats)
- Food for a Week Leader’s Guide and Helps and Handouts

**Technology**
- computer for viewing Web-based videos & slideshows
- projector or television

**Other materials**
- handouts from this guide
- recipe for bread and ingredients
- bowls, pans, utensils, etc. for making bread
- Monopoly game
- a variety of local print media: newspapers, church newsletters, school newsletters, bulletin inserts, etc.

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**Time and format**

Act 2Day is, first and foremost, a comprehensive curriculum for an overnight experience that focuses on issues of food and hunger throughout the United States and the world. If you are using this as an overnight program, fasting is recommended as a spiritual practice of solidarity with those who are hungry and as a reminder of our dependence on God. (See page 6 for more on fasting and an activity to reflect on fasting with youth in your group.) An overnight experience can provide an intense, focused time together, building community and trust among youth while digging deeper into issues of hunger and faith.

This curriculum may also be used for a four- to six-week study during Lent, Advent, the Season of Creation or anytime. In this format, information and study about food and hunger is stretched over a longer period of time. Such an approach offers a different kind of focus – one that allows time 1) to develop relationships among the participants and in the community; 2) to share across the congregation and involve members of different ages; and 3) to allow a service project to emerge.

Finally, any of the activities here can be used as stand-alone sessions for use as study or devotion in youth group, Sunday school, leadership training, adult forum or Congregation Council.
Congregational collaboration

Where possible, it is great to involve the congregation in what you are doing. No matter what format you use, it can be very meaningful to have members of the congregation praying for the youth during their experience, especially during an overnight event. Of course you can also report what you did in worship or during an educational hour, too. But you might want to consider involving adults to be part of the planning or serving activities, too. Below are a few possibilities to get you started.

PRAYER
If you use Act 2Day 4 Tomorrow as an overnight event, create a “prayer chart” for adults to sign up to pray during each hour of the event. During worship, offer prayers as a congregation for the youth who will be participating. Prayer can be a great way to focus the congregation’s attention on the youth’s experiences!

GIVE
Stewarding the gifts God has given us means sharing those gifts with those in need when we are able. This is an important part of Act 2Day. In addition to using the pledge envelopes and sheets, collect a “noisy offering” one Sunday to support ELCA World Hunger. Simply place a metal bowl near the exit of your sanctuary and ask folks to toss their coins into it as they leave.

PLANNING
Some folks in your congregations might have employment or connections in city or county agencies that address local hunger or help provide other services in the community. You might consider asking them to introduce you to community partners or to volunteer during some of the activities.
Use Act2Day 4 Tomorrow as part of your confirmation curriculum. It incorporates Bible study, lessons from Martin Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and lots of fun. Confirmands and friends in faith are sure to enjoy these hands-on experiences together.

SERVING
Service learning is a key part of Act 2Day, and this is a great opportunity for people of all ages to work and learn together. Of course you can invite parents and youth counselors; how about making personal invitations to other members of the congregation to join you in service at a food bank or homeless shelter?
Does your congregation have a kitchen? Chances are you have bakers who would be glad to join you in baking bread for communion during one of the activities.

LEARNING
Use the activities and lessons here to plan one to four mission moments during worship. This works especially well if you’ve chosen the four- to six-week study format, but it also works as a lead-up to your event. Use some of the curriculum to prepare for your event. Use two minutes in worship to focus on kitchen table solidarity, daily bread or other themes. It is possible you’re going to learn or experience something in Act2Day that you will want to share. Offer a youth-led adult forum to share information about your community, ideas for your church, and your own experiences.
Act 2Day 4 Tomorrow is an overnight event (with flexibility for other schedules) that combines service and learning to help us understand how we can work together to end hunger and poverty in the world. The name Act 2Day 4 Tomorrow serves as an invitation to respond to the gospel of Christ and reflect on how our actions can make a difference. The name is drawn from Acts 2:42, a verse that describes the life of the early Christian church:

“They committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles, the life together, the common meal and the prayers.” (from “The Message”)

Before we turn to the activities, here are some things to get your group started.

Fasting

As an overnight activity, Act 2Day uses the practice of fasting to help focus attention on the group’s experiences. Fasting is one of the oldest practices of people of faith. Going without food for a period of time is meant to help focus our attention on other ways we are fed—spiritually, emotionally and socially. For people of faith, fasting has often been used to focus attention on God and to recognize our dependence on God and God’s creation. For Jesus, going without food while he was in the wilderness was part of his journey through temptation before beginning his ministry (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). Fasting can also be a sign of solidarity with those who hunger and a protest against a world in which many people go hungry.

As you start your fast, you may want to pose these questions for discussion:

- What does a fast mean to you?
- What would be the hardest thing to give up, if you had to fast? (ex: food, technology, etc.)
- What do you hope to learn about yourself as you fast?
- How can a fast help focus our attention on God?
- (Read Luke 4:1-13) How did Jesus’ fast make his temptation harder to face?
- How might his fast have strengthened him against temptation?
- How can our fast together make us stronger?
The Oasis

The “Oasis” in Act 2Day 4Tomorrow refers to both a physical space and a recurring activity throughout the event. If you are using the activities here in a multi-week format, rather than an overnight, it will be great to set up the Oasis in a space where it can remain throughout the weeks. The physical Oasis space is a table or “altar” area that is set up by youth and leaders together as an intentional gathering space. This area remains in place throughout the time together. The Oasis activity refers to the times within the program when the group returns to this space to reflect on the activities they have just completed, providing an intentional space of rest and renewal as a part of the time of reflection.

The building of the physical Oasis space comes from Exodus 20:24: “Build my altar wherever I cause my name to be remembered, and I will come to you and bless you.” In the context of Act 2Day 4Tomorrow, this reminds the group that they are taking part in an experience where they are seeking God’s presence in their midst. This also reminds them that while they may build an altar in that space, the group must take what they learn from that space and apply it elsewhere.

Exodus 20 also contains the Ten Commandments, the key laws of the covenant between God and Israel. Discussion during the set-up time will focus on how the group will covenant to spend its time together as part of the “fast preparing for the feast.” If fasting will be part of your event, this space will also be introduced as a place that the group will return to for an intentional time of partaking of juice or other special beverages. A cooler can be placed on the table containing juice containers and cups, decorated with the “covenant” agreed upon by the youth, thus turning the cooler into an “Ark of the Covenant” for the group for the duration of the fast. (Whereas the Hebrew Ark of the Covenant carried the Ten Commandments, the altar and ark for this group will carry the commitments the group covenants with each other.) You may want to compare the Oasis, with the beverage available there, to the sacrament of Holy Communion. Martin Luther believed that one purpose of Communion was to strengthen the relationships between people in the church (Martin Luther, “The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body and Blood of Christ and the Brotherhods,” 1519). By taking Communion together, Lutherans agree to support each other in their faith journeys. While the drink at the Oasis is not a “sacrament,” it is a reminder of the commitment each youth makes to the others and a reminder of God’s presence in their midst (Matthew 18:20).

Some of the Oasis times will include reading a story written by a youth or young adult about their experiences of faith, service and community. Whenever you see this symbol 📚, you will know that there is a story to be shared. All of the stories can be found on pages 48-59.

Covenant

As part of the Oasis, invite the participants to write a covenant on a piece of poster board. This covenant will remind them of their commitment to one another and to their experience together.

Have the group agree on a covenant they can follow during their time together (possible ideas include making your own “ten commandments of the lock-in”). It could also be a simple statement, with the group dividing up and each writing a sentence and then putting them together. Leaders should make sure that all relevant points are covered, such as lights out, boundaries within or outside the building, where sleeping locations will be, how the group will listen and interact with each other, etc. It should also include a plan for how the group will remain attentive to seeking God’s presence in their midst.

Following discussion and creation of the covenant, invite youth to create, decorate and build the Oasis as an “altar” space (Exodus 20:24) as a reminder of the covenant they are making to be present in the time together and an invitation for God to be present in their time together. The decoration and design of the space should be youth-led, with incorporation of the covenant, and all youth and leaders should sign or make a mark (ex. paint fingerprints) somewhere on the altar signifying their commitment. Incorporation of a cooler as the “Ark of the Covenant” can be described and encouraged by leaders, as it will be important for beverages to come from the cooler during the rest of the visits to the Oasis as a sign of renewing commitment to the covenant of the time together.
Have the youth consider ways they can incorporate visual signs in the Oasis that they are together to learn about ways they can help end hunger and poverty in their community and the world. What are the things they can incorporate into the space as visual reminders of this reason they are together?

When complete, remind youth that this will be a place they return to throughout the event as an “Oasis” for reflection, rest, and recommitment to each other and the experience as they continue this fast and faith journey together. Bring some designated “special beverages” (a certain type or flavor of juice or soda that will only be available to drink during Oasis trips), and have the youth all come forward.

As each youth takes a cup of the drink, ask them to offer a silent prayer to God reflecting on the covenant they are making with God and each other for the duration of this time together. The prayer can be a thanksgiving for the blessing of the beverages that are provided to renew and sustain them through the time of fasting and a request that God might help them remain open to the Holy Spirit and each other and a guide in the group’s time together. When some time has been given, have a leader or youth close the time of prayer. Have the youth drink their beverage as a physical reminder of God’s promise to be present with the group and the group’s covenant together.

Examples of covenant principles:

1) I will value myself and others.
2) I will behave in a way that keeps myself and others safe.
3) I will work with the group to achieve our goals together.
4) Try hard. Give the other people in the group your full attention and participate fully in all the activities.
5) Play safe. Create an atmosphere so that everyone feels comfortable and safe.
6) Be fair. Make sure everyone is included and feels like part of the group.
7) Be here. Be present mentally, physically and emotionally.
8) Pay attention. Listen to what others say and focus on their ideas or questions.
9) Speak the truth. Share your thoughts openly and honestly.

Giving

Building community and learning together can be powerful motivators for loving and just action in the world. This doesn’t just start after Act 2Day 4Tomorrow, though. Youth in your group can be part of our mission together as the ELCA now in important ways. From food pantries in the Midwest to refugee camps in Africa, our church supports hundreds of communities through ELCA World Hunger. This support is made possible by generous gifts from individuals across the ELCA. By joining together, we can make a difference in our world.

This packet includes a pledge form for each participant that they can use to invite friends and family to be part of the work God is doing through our church. After your event, these gifts can be mailed to ELCA World Hunger at the address on the pledge form. Or, if you prefer, an online giving page can be found at www.ELCA.org/act2day. Encourage youth in your congregation to share the work of ELCA World Hunger and to invite others to participate before your overnight event or during your multi-week session.
Session One: Teaching

Invite - The Uninvited

Getting started

“But what good am I?” So often, we feel like we don’t have the status or the power or the knowledge to be part of important work. Yet, grace is the ultimate invitation from God, even and especially to those whom the world has made to feel unwelcome. In this activity, participants will discuss a parable about invitations to God’s banquet and affirm each other for the gifts they do bring to the table.

Activity instructions

Read Luke 14:1-24 together

The man planning the party invited the people, but they did not come. These were the cool people, the busy ones who were probably invited to lots of things. And yet, when it was time to come, they all had something else to do.

Discussion questions

1) What stood out to you in the story?
2) Why did Jesus tell them the story?
3) What excuses did the people give for not attending the banquet?
4) Who ended up with invitations?
5) What does this say about God? What does this say about the church?
6) How does your church invite and welcome new people?
7) Have you ever felt “out of place” at a party or an event?
8) Jesus tells the people to invite people who are poor, people who probably didn’t get invited to many events. Who are the people who are uninvited in your community or in your school? Where would it be shocking for them to show up?

Sit in a large circle. Give one person the ball of yarn. This game will be played in three rounds. In this first round, each person will affirm one thing about someone else in the circle. In the second round, each person will lift up one thing they like about themselves. In the final round, each person will share a story about an invitation that didn’t go as planned.

Materials needed

• ball of yarn or string
• Bible
SESSION ONE: TEACHING • Invite - The Uninvited

For the first round, have each youth throw the yarn to someone else and answer the question, “Why would you invite this person to the banquet?” Some examples might be: She has a good sense of humor, or he plays guitar well.

Once everyone has had a chance to play, leave the yarn stretched across your circle, but start again. This time, have the person holding the yarn answer the question, “Why would I be a good person to have at the banquet? What talents or gifts do I bring?” before throwing the yarn to another person.

Leave the yarn in place for the third and final round. This time, before throwing the yarn, ask each person to share a time when an invitation didn’t turn out the way they expected. Perhaps a party they were invited to turned out to be a bust. Or, maybe they went to something they thought would be boring that ended up being a fantastic experience.

When you finish all three rounds, head to the Oasis space.

OASIS - Invite

Once back at the Oasis space, tell the group to close their eyes and take a silent moment of rest. Ask them to think silently about how they feel physically as they get deeper into their fast from physical food. How do they feel spiritually as they are fed in that way?

Following a few moments of rest, have the youth grab their cups and have a volunteer (or a few volunteers) fill the cups of the others from the beverage at the Oasis. Have the youth drink their beverage as a physical reminder of God’s promise to be present with them and the group’s covenant together. After they have finished, turn to the stories or activities in this Oasis. (Stories for each Oasis can be found on pages 48-59.)

Meet Peter Severson and discover that it matters “I was there”

Peter found God everywhere he wasn’t expecting. He had plans and pursued them, and yet the most meaningful experiences seemed to be the ones he didn’t plan. Has this happened to you? How do you balance your plans and responding to God’s call when you least expect it?

Meet Kristen Wall and reflect on unexpected invitations

Kristen wanted to work overseas, but she was not expecting to be called to Hungary. While there, she discovered new ways of answering the question “Who is my neighbor?” How did her experiences change what it meant to be a neighbor and to see others as her neighbors? Who are your “neighbors”? Are there ways that unexpected “invitations” have brought you new surprises?
Getting started

This activity is designed as an opportunity for youth to work together in small groups and problem solve creatively. The object of the game is for youth to realize that when they all contribute their individual gifts the group will have everything they need to complete the task they are given. Individuals will contribute items to a team’s collective assets without knowing what task they will be given. The groups will then be asked to create a variety of “things” using only the assembled items. Groups will be able to show each other the creative and different ways that they were able to solve the problem.

Often ministries and service aimed at ending hunger begin with the problem – hunger and poverty – and then try to respond to the problem. The ministries supported by ELCA World Hunger, on the other hand, begin by looking at a community’s assets, rather than its problems. This allows people in a community to think creatively about the gifts they do have, even in the midst of challenges like hunger. This “asset-based” approach reflects our faith in a God who provides abundantly and loves lavishly. It also reflects the dignity and worth with which God has created every individual and every community. Everyone has something to contribute!

Activity instructions

Bring youth together in a space large enough to divide the large group into smaller groups or teams for this activity. Participants should be divided into groups of about the same size. Teams should have a minimum of four members and no more than eight.

Before explaining any rules or discussing what youth will be asked to do in this activity, have each participant (including leaders taking part) bring five random items that can be used in the activity. Give youth a set amount of time to collect items and bring them back. Any items will work, however, it might be best to advise youth not to bring anything fragile and to only bring things that are their own or meant for consumption. It will be best for each team to have a wide variety of items to expand their options throughout the game and to highlight the value of all individual contributions.

When all participants have returned and teams are together, have them place all items in the middle of the group in a pile. Explain that these are the items from which the group may create during the game. They may not switch out any items from this point forward, though they can use any items they are wearing (and even their bodies!) as well.
1. Using the suggestions below or your own ideas, call out a “thing” or “item” for the groups to make (for example, a pizza).

2. Using only the items they have assembled, the groups must make their best version of the item requested in an allotted amount of time. Time may vary by the item requested, but usually between 45 seconds and 2 minutes is sufficient.

3. Invite a member from each group to present to the rest of the large group the “item” they have created. The members presenting should rotate each round so each person has a chance to present a creation.

4. Successive rounds may continue as long as facilitators desire. About 10 rounds should be completed to give a variety of challenges to the teams.

Some possible items and ideas for challenges:
- slice of pizza
- sandwich
- Teddy bear or stuffed animal
- robot
- smiley face
- nativity scene
- Halloween costume
- car
- prom dress
- obstacle course
- animal you find at a zoo
- musical instrument
- most jewelry worn by one person
- book
- map
- birthday cake
- mousetrap
- mystery item (make whatever they want and have other groups guess what it is)
- piece of art

Tips

- It is best to have a prepared list of items you will have the youth create. As you make the list, it is best to start out with less elaborate things and build to more intricate challenges as youth understand the game more and get more into it.

- It is also good to vary the types of items and challenges to keep youth interested and to give different individuals chances to contribute. For example, you may have some small items you have them create, while others may involve dressing up a participant or having the group perform a simple task like singing their favorite Christmas carol.

- The more you can customize the items being made and make them relevant to your specific youth group the better. For example, have them make a local mascot or refer to an inside joke of the youth group. Be creative!

- Use more than the items. Invite the youth to make some items that require them to use their own bodies, like a life-size nativity. The more participants can move around, the more engaged they will be.

Discussion questions

1) What was the hardest thing to make?
2) What was the easiest thing to make?
3) What item was the most useful?
4) Were there any items that were not helpful for any of the challenges?
5) How would this have been different with fewer items? With more items?

After you have had time to talk about the questions, return to the Oasis space.
OASIS - Encourage

(This activity may work best in a room with a screen or TV to show the video. If so, gather at the Oasis, invite youth to grab their drinks and then move to the room for viewing the video.)

Once back at the Oasis space, tell the group to close their eyes and take a silent moment of rest. Ask them to think silently about how they feel physically as they get deeper into their fast from physical food. How do they feel spiritually as they are fed in that way?

Following a few moments of rest, have the youth grab their cups and have a volunteer (or a few volunteers) fill the cups of the others from the beverage at the Oasis. Have the youth drink their beverage as a physical reminder of God’s promise to be present with them and the group’s covenant together. After they have finished, turn to the stories or activities in this Oasis. (Stories for each Oasis can be found on pages 48-59.)

Watch the Lingson Family Story video from ELCA World Hunger, available at www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources (click on the “Stories and Videos” tab and scroll about halfway down.)

Discussion questions

1) What gifts, talents or assets did the Lingsons’ community have to start their farm? (ex: farming skills, land)

2) At one point in the video, Telina Lingson says, “In the past we did not live as a community.” How might this have made it harder to address their needs? How did the farm help them come together? How did coming together as a community make facing the challenge of hunger easier?

3) Think back to the activity you just did (All You Need). How might this have been harder if you were not working together? How would it have been harder if you were in smaller groups?

4) What gifts do you have that can be shared with communities like the Lingsons’ community in Malawi? What might we be able to learn from their gifts?

Read Romans 12:1-8 together

Discussion questions

1) What gifts does Paul list? How would each of these gifts help a community?

2) How do other people in your church use their gifts to help the church? How are you invited to use yours?

3) How can we encourage one another to use and grow our gifts?
Give/Study - “Daily Bread”

Getting started

The purpose of this activity is to think more deeply about “giving thanks for daily bread” with the help of Martin Luther’s description of “daily bread” in The Small Catechism. Luther sees “daily bread” as much more than food. God provides for all of our needs, and equips us to share with one another. This activity will help youth think more deeply about how their needs are met and how we can live a life of thanksgiving for God’s gifts.

Draw a large piece of bread on one large sheet of paper or posterboard. At the top of the paper, write “Daily Bread.” On another sheet of paper, draw another piece of bread and write “Giving Thanks” at the top. On a third sheet of paper, draw another slice of bread and leave the top blank.

Tip: For larger groups, you may want to give each youth several sheets of paper to use on their own. Rather than drawing directly on the posterboard, they can tape their drawings to it once they are finished.

Activity instructions

Pray together the Lord’s Prayer.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Invite youth to think about the Fourth Petition – “give us this day our daily bread” – and to consider what might be included in this. Invite each youth to draw pictures on the first sheet of paper all of the things they think are included in “daily bread.”
Read together the following from Luther’s Small Catechism:

“Give us this day our daily bread.” What does this mean?

God gives daily bread, even without our prayer, to all wicked men; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to know it, and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread?

Everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as meat, drink, clothing, shoes, house, homestead, field, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful magistrates, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.” (Martin Luther, The Small Catechism, The Lord’s Prayer, Fourth Petition)

Ask: Are there other things you would add to the first sheet of paper after hearing Luther’s description? (Allow time for the youth to add new pictures to the first sheet.)

Ask: How do we give thanks for each of these things? Whom do we thank for these?

After some time for reflection and discussion of this question, invite youth to draw pictures of how they give thanks on the second sheet of paper. Ask them to describe what they drew to the group.

Ask: Now that we have thought about our needs, how our needs are met and how we give thanks, let’s think about other people’s needs. What other needs do you see in your community or in the world? How can you help other people meet their needs?

After some time for reflection and discussion, invite youth to draw pictures of how they can help meet the needs of their neighbors on the third sheet of paper. Ask them to describe what they drew to the group.

Ask: Living a life of faith, for Lutherans, means living a life of thanksgiving or gratitude. How might this change our perspective or our actions? What does it mean to live a life of gratitude?

After some time for discussion, return to the Oasis space.
Once back at the Oasis space, tell the group to close their eyes and take a silent moment of rest. Ask them to think silently about how they feel physically as they get deeper into their fast from physical food. How do they feel spiritually as they are fed in that way?

Following a few moments of rest, have the youth grab their cups and have a volunteer (or a few volunteers) fill the cups of the others from the beverage at the Oasis. Have the youth drink their beverage as a physical reminder of God’s promise to be present with them and the group’s covenant together. After they have finished, turn to the stories or activities in this Oasis. (Stories for each Oasis can be found on pages 48-59.)

Meet Kendra Wilde and take the journey from believing to following
Kendra talks honestly about the challenges of Christian discipleship and her efforts to be a disciple in everyday modern life. From gardens to bicycle riding, Kendra finds herself following Jesus and not just proclaiming belief in him. What are some of the challenges Kendra describes? What is the difference between “believing in Jesus” and “following Jesus”?

How did Kendra show thanksgiving for the gifts she had been given?

Meet Karis Ailabouni and be “immersed”
Karis’ desire to see the world through different eyes took her to Madagascar to live with and learn from the Lutheran community there. How does she describe what it means to be in relationship with people who are different from her? What gifts did she bring to the community? What gifts did she receive from the community?

 Invite each youth to offer a prayer of thanksgiving for one particular thing, experience, person, etc. that they are grateful for. Conclude your Oasis time with the Lord’s Prayer.
Getting started

Food is one way we come to understand people who are different from us – their culture, their history, and sometimes the places they come from. In this activity, youth will share some of their favorite foods and describe meaningful meals to one another. They will also look at Time magazine’s photojournal of the groceries of families from around the world. This activity sets up a reflection on Holy Communion and table fellowship in the Oasis time.

Assemble the group around a table (or tables) with the construction paper, markers and craft items spread out.

Activity instructions

Tell youth about a time you encountered an unfamiliar food from a different culture (for example, the first time you ate at a particular restaurant or a meal during a trip abroad.) Invite them to share their own stories of encountering unfamiliar foods, some of which they may have liked, some that they didn’t enjoy as much. (Note: Remember that the purpose of this activity is to gain a respect for each person’s cultural or family heritage as it is shared through food. You may need to guide the discussion more carefully if some participants talk in ways that are culturally disrespectful. Remind them of their covenant to one another.)

Each youth will use the paper, markers and other craft items to make a piece of art representing a traditional food from their family. Perhaps it will be a special cookie made at Christmas or a grandparent’s special salad. No answer is wrong; creativity and reflection on their family’s traditions is key!

Invite each youth to share their creation with the group. Ask them to describe what it is, what makes it special, and what others can learn about their family from it.

On a projector or other screen open Time magazine’s “Hungry Planet: What the World Eats” at http://time.com/8515/hungry-planet-what-the-world-eats/. This photo series shows a family’s weekly groceries and includes families from all over the world. Ask the youth to think about what each picture says about each family. Spend a sufficient amount of time on each picture so everyone has a chance to see the groceries displayed.

Materials needed

- construction paper of different colors
- markers and/or pens
- yarn, string or other craft items
- computer to view images
- bread and wine as visual symbols during conversation
Discussion questions

1) What do the pictures tell us about each family?
2) What can we learn about the kinds of food available in each country from the pictures?
3) What items are most common in each picture?
4) What do you think the meals are like in each household?
5) What do the differences between the pictures tell us about the differences between the families?

After time for reflection and discussion, return to the Oasis space.

OASIS - Worship

Once back at the Oasis space, tell the group to close their eyes and take a silent moment of rest. Ask them to think silently about how they feel physically as they get deeper into their fast from physical food. How do they feel spiritually as they are fed in that way?

Following a few moments of rest, have the youth grab their cups and have a volunteer (or a few volunteers) fill the cups of the others from the beverage at the Oasis. Have the youth drink their beverage as a physical reminder of God’s promise to be present with them and the group’s covenant together. After they have finished, turn to the stories or activities in this Oasis. (Stories for each Oasis can be found on pages 48-59.)

Read together the following quote from Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

The Scriptures speak of three kinds of table fellowship that Jesus keeps with his own: daily fellowship at table, the table fellowship of the Lord’s Supper, and the final table fellowship in the Kingdom of God. But in all three the one thing that counts is that ‘their eyes were opened, and they knew him.’

To know Jesus Christ in the presence of these gifts—what does this mean?

It means, first, to know him as the giver of all gifts ...

Second, the fellowship acknowledges that all earthly gifts are given to it only for Christ’s sake, as this whole world is sustained only for the sake of Jesus Christ, his Word, and his message. He is the true bread of life. He is not only the giver but the gift itself ...

Third, the congregation of Jesus believes that its Lord wills to be present when it prays for his presence. So it prays: “Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest”—and thereby confesses the gracious omnipresence of Jesus Christ. Every mealtime fills Christians with gratitude for the living present Lord and God, Jesus Christ” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “Life Together,” 66-67).

“Table fellowship” is the way Bonhoeffer and others describe the ministry of Jesus and the life of discipleship.

Discussion questions

1) How is Jesus made known around the tables you share with others?
2) How do you experience Jesus around meal time?
Read together Luke 22:14-27

Discussion questions
1) How do we experience Jesus during Holy Communion?
2) What does this meal tell others about our church?
3) Who is invited to come to the “table” for Holy Communion?

Read together I Corinthians 11:17-22

Discussion questions
1) Paul finds fault with some of the Corinthians going ahead with their own meals while others go hungry. For Paul, this was not what Jesus had taught, and it actually made it harder for the community to come together. How does this practice differ from the description of the meal in the Gospel of Luke?
2) What “tables” are we not invited to? Who is not invited to be part of the “tables” in our communities?
3) How can our church extend our “tables”?

Meet Emily Ewing and join her in saying “No more crumbs” (Matthew 15:21-28)
Emily takes a tough story from the Bible and finds in it a word of grace: God accepts us whole and calls us to extend our table, even when it is hard or not at all obvious.

How do you hear God calling Emily?: “God was calling me into ordained ministry—all of me. This call was not a regular or spectacular call. It is a call to the margins—to ministry and life with those who find themselves in the margins of society.”

How is God calling you to extend your table, or to share new tables with other people?
Serve - Fighting Hunger, Together

Getting started

The purpose of this activity is to introduce youth to the work our church does together through ELCA World Hunger. The placemats list the areas in which ELCA World Hunger supports anti-hunger work: relief, education, advocacy and sustainable development. Some examples of each are given below.

Remind youth that the gifts they have collected on pledge sheets or during special offerings will help support these ministries.

Pass out the placemats to each youth, and give them some time to look them over.

Activity instructions

As they look them over, you can read the following:

ELCA World Hunger is a comprehensive and sustainable program that uses the four tools of relief, education, advocacy and development to provide opportunities for international companions, domestic ministries and partners to address complex issues related to both global and domestic hunger and poverty in their own varied contexts. Specific activities fall into five categories (food, water, income, health and education) and are carried out through relationships with partner organizations and companion churches domestically and in more than 50 countries around the world. In the international context, ELCA Global Mission stewards the relationships that the ELCA has with over 90 companion churches.

Through its commitment to sustainable development, the ELCA seeks to create lasting changes in vulnerable communities by increasing access to food and economic opportunities. ELCA World Hunger’s holistic response provides a framework to encourage congregational youth groups to engage in service activities that alleviate symptoms and address root causes of hunger and poverty – whether within their own neighborhood, in the surrounding community, or around the globe.

Tell youth to look at the utensils on the placemat and describe each category of work to them, along with some of the examples below.
RELIEF

Through relief efforts, ELCA World Hunger responds to the immediate needs of people who are homeless, living in poverty, or who otherwise do not have the means to provide adequate nutrition for themselves or their families. This involves recognizing urgent needs and providing immediate access to food, clothing, shelter, medical supplies, medical care and other basic essentials.

Examples of relief efforts your group might consider:
- Prepare and serve a meal at a local shelter
- Organize a food drive
- Sponsor a refugee family
- Join a house-building project in your community
- Create healthy food baskets for emergency shelters
- Collect clothing for a local clothing bank
- Collect school supplies for low-income families (at home or across the globe)
- Make health kits for an international relief agency

Organize a group to take part in a project through Lutheran Disaster Response:
- Sort food at a food bank distribution warehouse
- Collect socks or gloves for the homeless
- Provide help with household chores for elderly people

EDUCATION

Education is the tool ELCA World Hunger uses to help raise the church’s awareness of the root causes of and solutions to global hunger and poverty. Education-related service activities and resources like Taking Root and the Hunger Toolkits from ELCA World Hunger often involve researching an issue or educating others about local, regional, national or global issues, including an invitation to respond in concrete ways.

Examples of education activities your group might consider:
- Attend a community forum related to hunger, poverty, homelessness, public health or the environment
- Share insights from your group’s service experience with members of the congregation or community
- Commit to making a change in personal behavior, such as using public transportation or taking shorter showers
- Use ELCA World Hunger’s overnight lock-in curriculum to explore hunger and poverty issues
- Organize and lead a Bible study series at your church related to food, hunger, poverty or justice
- Hold an educational event utilizing ELCA World Hunger Hunger Toolkits to explore issues related to hunger and poverty
- Learn more about issues related to racism and cultural competence by participating in a training and then organize your own to share what you’ve learned with others
- Participate in an educational/immersion trip to another country, such as an ELCA companion synod

ADVOCACY

Advocacy is how the ELCA works to overcome the effects and systemic root causes of hunger and poverty through administrative, legislative and judicial actions in the public sphere, as well as through corporate actions in the private sphere. Service activities focused on advocacy involve working with and on behalf of others or empowering others to use their voice, such as proposing laws, challenging policies and shaping public opinion around critical human-needs and environmental issues. Efforts in advocacy often are directed at root causes and attempt to address long-term, complex issues.
Examples of advocacy efforts your group might consider:

- Host a prayer gathering to lift up global concerns
- Write letters to state and/or federal legislators concerning an international or domestic issue
- Distribute flyers calling for action on a current political or social issue
- Create a website or blog that provides links to legislators and policymakers
- Write a “letter to the editor” of a local newspaper
- Attend a city council meeting and speak with and on behalf of citizens in your community
- Plan a visit to meet with government leaders or legislators concerning a local, national or global issue
- Organize a meeting of community leaders and residents to address an issue related to hunger, food, poverty or housing
- Organize a peace march or rally
- Create an advocacy group at your church or in your youth group to continually address community issues as they emerge
- Act on justice issues that emerged during your group’s service experience
- Organize opportunities to empower individuals or groups to do any of the above

**Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development is the critical element of work done during and after relief to ensure the long-term viability of a community that currently experiences hunger, poverty or widespread health issues. Development leads to increased access to food and sustainable livelihoods through means such as sustainable agriculture, care for the environment, appropriate technology, adequate housing, jobs, primary health care and disease prevention, job training, child care, elder care, nutrition education, literacy training, sanitation, safe water supplies, below-market loans, and just land use and distribution. Service activities focused on sustainable development might provide participants with limited interaction with people affected, but the lasting impact on individuals and communities can be significant.

Examples of activities your group might consider to promote sustainable development:

- Organize, plant and tend a community garden
- Develop an after-school tutoring program for local children
- Restore a wetland habitat by planting new vegetation
- Organize a medical clinic for low-income children and families
- Create a recycling program for your church or neighborhood
- Build houses for working families in Central America
- Install fresh-water wells in Africa
- Visit an ELCA companion to learn how ELCA World Hunger funds are being used to make a difference
- Write letters of encouragement to ELCA missionaries or Young Adults in Global Mission participants
- Organize a fundraiser to support ELCA World Hunger

On the placemat, have youth explain why they think certain words appear in the word cloud for ELCA World Hunger (middle panel in the far left column.) Encourage them to test each other with the “Hunger Quiz” questions in the lower left corner of the placemat. (There are three versions of the placemat, with different questions for each.)

Ask them to think of ministries or activities in their area that fall into one of the categories (relief, education, advocacy and sustainable development.) Hint: Remind them that they are actually in the middle of one – education!

When you are finished, return to the Oasis space.
Once back at the Oasis space, tell the group to close their eyes and take a silent moment of rest. Ask them to think silently about how they feel physically as they get deeper into their fast from physical food. How do they feel spiritually as they are fed in that way?

Following a few moments of rest, have the youth grab their cups and have a volunteer (or a few volunteers) fill the cups of the others from the beverage at the Oasis. Have the youth drink their beverage as a physical reminder of God’s promise to be present with them and the group’s covenant together. After they have finished, turn to the stories or activities in this Oasis. (Stories for each Oasis can be found on pages 48-59.)

Meet Jen Engquist and focus on how you serve
There are so many ways to do the things we do in this life. We do school, do church, do volunteer work, do jobs. But how do we do them? Jen talks about making sure that the services offered by employees and volunteers are filled with love, grace, hospitality and service. Is there someone who does that reminding in your group? Could you?
Getting started

This activity is an opportunity for your group to look more closely at the ways public policies—especially the discriminatory policy of redlining—can leave lasting effects on communities facing poverty. Playing the popular board game Monopoly (with a few changes) opens up the discussion. You may also want to watch “The House We Live In,” part of the PBS documentary series, “Race: The Power of an Illusion.” (Information on this is below.) A goal is understanding how policies—even policies from decades ago—can make a community more vulnerable to poverty still today.

Redlining is the practice of denying or limiting services to a specific neighborhood. As you can learn from the video in this activity, the term “redlining” comes from the color used by the Federal Housing Administration to mark neighborhoods in which they would not invest or insure loans. These were often communities of color. Today, the term can refer to denying financial services, health services, insurance or educational services to a neighborhood. A home is often the most valuable asset a family has. Without access to the means to buy a home, a family is more likely to have financial difficulties and is less likely to have significant assets to help future generations avoid poverty.

Activity instructions

Set up the Monopoly board and divide the group into teams. (Depending on the size of your group, you can also play individually.) Distribute the money from the “bank” according to the game instructions. The game will be played with the normal rules, with these exceptions:

1. Players can only acquire properties by landing on them and purchasing them from the bank.
2. Team One is able to purchase all properties except the light-blue properties (Oriental, Vermont and Connecticut avenues).
3. Team Two cannot purchase the railroad stations, the purple properties (St. Charles Place, States Avenue and Virginia Avenue), the red properties (Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois avenues), the green properties (Pacific, North Carolina and Pennsylvania avenues), or the dark-blue properties (Park Place and Boardwalk).
4. Team Three is only able to purchase the dark-purple properties (Baltic and Mediterranean avenues) and the light-blue properties (Oriental, Vermont and Connecticut avenues).
5. Neither Team Two nor Team Three can develop properties by buying houses or hotels.

Materials needed

- Monopoly game
- Computer to access documentary
- A projector, if possible, for showing the video
Allow the game to go on until each team has gone around the board several times and most properties have been purchased. Once you reach this point, end the restrictions on which properties each team can buy. Now, any team can purchase any un-owned property they land on! The game can go on with the standard rules until one team goes bankrupt or until a set time limit has been reached.

Discussion questions

1) How did the rule changes affect your experience of the game? (possible answers: less fair, frustrated at restrictions, created segregated area of the board for Teams Two and Three)

2) How did ending the restrictions on which property your team could buy change the game? Did it improve your chances of winning? Why or why not? (possible responses: getting rid of restrictions did not change the game much – still few properties to buy; lifting the restrictions gave some more options but still not completely fair)

3) What could (or did) Teams Two and Three do to improve their chances of surviving or winning the game? (possible responses: joined together to create a “non-traditional” team; given each other discounts on rent)

4) (For Team One) What was your experience of the game? As you got more properties and money, how did the game change? Did getting rid of the restrictions affect the way you played or your experience of the game? (possible responses: enjoyed having the privileges; felt bad for the other teams; ending the other teams’ restrictions made Team One less likely to give the other teams breaks on rent)

Option 1:

Read the description of redlining below. Use the questions to help guide your discussion.

A family’s home was – and still is – the largest asset they own. Having a home often means stability. It is an investment that a family can expect to grow over time. It can be used as collateral to secure loans for college, a car and other necessities. And, if needed, a house can be sold, usually for more than the original purchase price.

In the 1930s, the U.S. federal government started the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to provide low-interest loans to help Americans buy houses. When soldiers returned from World War II, many tried to use FHA loans to buy homes. These loans helped many veterans – and many other Americans – start families and build wealth. Unfortunately, for the nearly 1 million African American veterans returning from World War II, buying a home was much more difficult for two reasons.

First, the FHA evaluated cities around the country and color-coded maps of neighborhoods based on whether mortgage loans would be available for people moving there. Neighborhoods that had fewer White residents and more minority residents were marked in red, and the FHA would not provide loans in these neighborhoods. This is how we get the term “redlining.” FHA loans were often denied to people of color because of these policies. In fact, less than 2 percent of FHA loans between 1934 and 1962 went to non-White applicants.

Second, many communities had “restrictive covenants.” As more and more housing developments were built for returning veterans, many of them had rules about who could purchase homes. Jewish people, African Americans, Asian Americans, and people of Hispanic descent were often unable to purchase homes, even if they could get a loan. The neighborhoods where they could buy homes were often older, with fewer amenities.

In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Fair Housing Act that prohibited discrimination in housing, opening up FHA loans to all borrowers, regardless of race. This changed everything, right?

In 2003, White Americans had assets (savings accounts, stocks and homes) that were 11 times greater than Latino Americans and 14 times greater than African Americans. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2000, more than 70 percent of White Americans owned their own homes. For African Americans and Hispanic Americans, it was 46 percent.
Option 2:
Watch “The House We Live In” together and use the questions below to help guide your discussion.

You can rent the episode from Vimeo for $2.99. Visit https://vimeo.com/ondemand/race to find the episode. Begin the episode from the 26:15 mark. (The remainder of the episode will take about 30 minutes to watch.)

Discussion questions

1) How did federal policies influence segregation and wealth disparities between Americans of different races?

2) Part of the American Dream is the notion that anyone who works hard enough will be rewarded – that anyone can “pull themselves up by their bootstraps.” How has this been made more difficult for people not defined as White? What is the long-term impact of that denial? What difference might access to financial resources make in terms of your life opportunities?

3) Cartoonist Bill Griffith comments on the all-White suburb where he grew up: “It certainly doesn’t promote a feeling of a wider world to live in a place where there are only people who look like you.” Do you agree? What does your neighborhood, workplace or school look like? Who is missing from the “tables” you sit at – at school, at home or at church?

4) Psychologist Beverly Daniel Tatum says this about the impact of racial policies like FHA loan practices: “To the child of that parent, it looks like, ‘My father worked hard, bought a house, passed his wealth on to me, made it possible for me to go to school. ... How come your father didn’t do that?’” How would you answer the child of that privileged parent? How would you explain the situation to the child of the parent who was disadvantaged by government policies?

5) What were the similarities between the Monopoly game you played and the story you read or watched about redlining and home ownership? Did your chances of winning the game change when the rules changed? Did the rates of home ownership change when President Johnson and Congress changed the law in 1964?

6) If we are to end hunger and poverty in the United States, what factors besides access to food do we need to address?

After you have had time for discussion and reflection, invite the group to return to the Oasis space.
OASIS - Play

Once back at the Oasis space, tell the group to close their eyes and take a silent moment of rest. Ask them to think silently about how they feel physically as they get deeper into their fast from physical food. How do they feel spiritually as they are fed in that way?

Following a few moments of rest, have the youth grab their cups and have a volunteer (or a few volunteers) fill the cups of the others from the beverage at the Oasis. Have the youth drink their beverage as a physical reminder of God’s promise to be present with them and the group’s covenant together. After they have finished, turn to the stories or activities in this Oasis. (Stories for each Oasis can be found on pages 48-59.)

Read together Isaiah 58:6-12 together.

Discussion questions

1) How does Isaiah change what we usually think of when we hear the term “fasting”?
2) What is a fast that is acceptable to God?
3) Why is God so concerned with “the oppressed,” “the hungry” and “the homeless poor”?

Meet Jason Bense and discover that “Jesus is something bigger”!

Jason’s calling took him from Washington, D.C., to Sacramento, Calif., working with people in politics and in communities. His work with immigration policies happened during difficult times. How did Jason’s faith call him to work on immigration policies? What injustices does our faith call us to correct?
Getting started

When you eat with someone or work with them to prepare a meal, there is room for stories. Eating and preparing to eat takes time, and time gets people talking about themselves and what is important to them. You can’t plan ahead of time what you’ll hear or share, but if you show up, you’re likely to see connections between you and God in your neighbor.

If you know Spanish you might be able to see bread in the word “companion.” It’s right in the middle – “pan” – because a companion is someone you share bread with. You share so much more than bread, though. You might have lots of different food, of course, but people you eat with also tend to be people you share life with: your family and friends. Bread, then, is not just a food; it’s a symbol of community, of people sharing life together.

In this activity, the youth will gather together to bake bread for Holy Communion for your congregation. This is easiest if your church has a kitchen, but even if you do not have one, you can still do this activity. Simply prepare the dough together and ask someone from the church to bake it at home.

Materials needed

- recipe for communion bread
- ingredients from the recipe
- bowls, pans and utensils
  (Aprons might also be helpful!)

This is a great occasion to invite adults from the congregation to join in! Working together and praying together can help show mutual support and build community.

Prepare the area for baking so that everyone can participate. It may help to divide the youth into smaller groups.

After the activity is finished, join together in a prayer of thanksgiving for bread, for God’s gift of grace through Holy Communion and for each other. Then, return to the Oasis space.
OASIS - Serve

Once back at the Oasis space, tell the group to close their eyes and take a silent moment of rest. Ask them to think silently about how they feel physically as they get deeper into their fast from physical food. How do they feel spiritually as they are fed in that way?

Following a few moments of rest, have the youth grab their cups and have a volunteer (or a few volunteers) fill the cups of the others from the beverage at the Oasis. Have the youth drink their beverage as a physical reminder of God’s promise to be present with them and the group’s covenant together. After they have finished, turn to the stories or activities in this Oasis. (Stories for each Oasis can be found on pages 48-59.)

This Oasis is a bit more active. Place the cards on a table. (If you have a group larger than 10, you may want to have two sets of cards and divide the youth into teams.) Explain that each card represents one “step” in making a hamburger with lettuce and tomato. The goal of the activity is to put each of the steps in order, from the start to a finished burger. There are no “right” answers; some of the steps may occur multiple times throughout the process of making a burger. The goal is to be creative and to think about all the things and people that are needed to produce our food. Invite each team to explain the order of steps as they see it.

Once the activity is finished, sit together on the floor or around a table at the Oasis.

Materials needed

- printed cards from page 31

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planting plant</th>
<th>Feedlot</th>
<th>Tomatoes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fertilizer and pesticide</td>
<td>Meat-packing plant</td>
<td>Scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck/truck/airplane</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>Hamburger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Workers</td>
<td>Pickles</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Lettuce</td>
<td>Jars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuff</td>
<td>Flour bag</td>
<td>Mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>Seeds and soil</td>
<td>Harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting plant</td>
<td>Feedlot</td>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertilizer and pesticide</td>
<td>Meat-packing plant</td>
<td>Scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck/train/airplane</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>Hamburger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Lettuce</td>
<td>Jars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calf</td>
<td>Flour bag</td>
<td>Mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>Seeds and soil</td>
<td>Harvest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Getting started

In this activity, your group will play the ELCA World Hunger simulation Food for a Week. This simulation allows participants the experience of planning a food budget for a family that is food insecure. Each participant or family group will assume the identity of one of several profiles based on real people ELCA World Hunger has encountered in ministries around the United States.

This activity also includes a customizable PowerPoint that can be used to give more information on food insecurity in your community.

Materials needed

(available at www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources. Click on the “Hunger Education” tab.)

- Food for a Week Leader’s Guide
- Food for a Week Helps and Handouts
- scrap paper for meal planning
- pens and pencils

Tips

- This simulation can be run within 90 minutes, but depending on the size of your group, you may want to use as much as 2½ hours.

- Invite adults from the congregation to play agents at the Human Services office, volunteers at the food pantry or clerks at the grocery store. The more they get into the roles, the better the experience is for everyone involved. (For example, they can be a bit gruff if working in the Human Services office, or they can act suspicious of the youth if they are volunteers at the food pantry.)

- Be sure to print enough cards. A good rule of thumb is that every family group should be able to purchase at least two to three of each kind of food at the grocery store.

- To save time, you can “pre-package” food at the food pantry by putting a set number of cards in an envelope for each family. This is a technique that some pantries use in real life for fairness and efficiency.

- Use the discussion questions in the Leader’s Guide to facilitate conversation. When finished, return to the Oasis.
Once back at the Oasis space, tell the group to close their eyes and take a silent moment of rest. Ask them to think silently about how they feel physically as they get deeper into their fast from physical food. How do they feel spiritually as they are fed in that way?

Following a few moments of rest, have the youth grab their cups and have a volunteer (or a few volunteers) fill the cups of the others from the beverage at the Oasis. Have the youth drink their beverage as a physical reminder of God’s promise to be present with them and the group’s covenant together. After they have finished, turn to the stories or activities in this Oasis. (Stories for each Oasis can be found on pages 48-59.)

Meet Maria Rose Belding and learn about food banks

Maria Rose began as a volunteer at a food bank and soon discovered so much more. She connected food banks in her community to each other through a databank and helped them reach out for help. How do community responses like food pantries and food banks help communities? What other things could help solve hunger in the long run?
Getting started

The purpose of this activity is to discover the ways your congregation invites people to think about hunger and to remember people who are hungry. In this activity, youth will go throughout the church as teams to find things that remind them of hunger, people who are hungry and their own hunger during their fast. The nearly 10,000 congregations in the ELCA are deeply engaged in ministries with people who are hungry, and many of the things we find in the congregations’ buildings call attention to hunger, from songs in hymnals to bulletin board announcements about hunger-related events.

Activity instructions

Ask the youth to divide themselves into teams of two to four people. Remind them that hunger has been a focus of Christian congregations since the earliest days of the church. Lutheran congregations, in particular, have often been sites for ministries with and among people who face hunger. Martin Luther, in fact, encouraged congregations to have a “common chest” of donations that could be used to help anyone in need who came to the church for help.

Tell youth that they will have a certain amount of time (about 20 minutes should be sufficient) to go throughout the church to find things that invite the congregation to think about hunger. These can include hymns in the hymnals, posters around the church, announcements in the bulletins, or brochures from ELCA World Hunger or other hunger-related ministries. Ask them to bring what they have found (if possible) back to the group when the time is done. Once everyone is back together, invite each team to explain what they have found. Then ask them what other ways the church might help invite people to remember their neighbors who are hungry.

Once you are finished, return to the Oasis space.

Tips

- Offer a non-edible prize to the team with the most items.
- Be sure to let youth know if any areas in the church are “off-limits,” such as offices.
- Encourage youth to be creative. Evangelical Lutheran Worship books are a storehouse of hymns and prayers about hunger and ministry among people who are hungry. These can be great sources of things to bring back to the group.
- Remind youth to remember where their items came from and to put them back at the end of the activity.
- You may want to place some things around the church beforehand for youth to find. For example, an empty bowl in a conspicuous place might help generate a good discussion after the scavenger hunt is over. Or a poster from ELCA World Hunger (available at www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources) can help connect your discussion to the ministries ELCA congregations support together.
Once back at the Oasis space, tell the group to close their eyes and take a silent moment of rest. Ask them to think silently about how they feel physically as they get deeper into their fast from physical food. How do they feel spiritually as they are fed in that way?

Following a few moments of rest, have the youth grab their cups and have a volunteer (or a few volunteers) fill the cups of the others from the beverage at the Oasis. Have the youth drink their beverage as a physical reminder of God's promise to be present with them and the group's covenant together. After they have finished, turn to the stories or activities in this Oasis. (Stories for each Oasis can be found on pages 48-59.)

Meet Rebecca Duerst and get connected!
Rebecca used maps and news to feel connected to people beyond herself. She pursued passions in science and allowed those passions to take her all over the world and then right back to the United States again. Check out how she talks about her vocation—her chance to respond to the call of God and her neighbor through her job: “1) I love it; 2) it’s a challenge; and 3) I’m honored to do this work.”

How did Rebecca feel invited to be part of the work of the church?
Who encouraged her in her vocation?
Activity instructions

Arrange the news sources at each table, along with scissors and glue sticks for each table. There will be two sets of clippings. The first set will illustrate challenges we face in our communities, church and world. These clippings will go on the board or paper with the heading “Bad News.” The second set will illustrate hope, togetherness, joy and active faith. These will go on the board or paper with the heading “Good News.”


In this passage, Jesus has just returned from his temptation and fast in the wilderness to start his ministry. He says he “is sent” by God back into the world this time not to be tempted but to proclaim a message. He is sent to give good news to the poor, release to captives, sight to the blind, and freedom for people who are oppressed. That’s a pretty important message!

But why do people need to hear this from him? We can get a few clues by looking at the prophecy Jesus quoted, which originally comes from Isaiah. The people in Isaiah’s time had been taken as prisoners to live in Babylon for many years. Finally, they had returned to their homeland, but it wasn’t easy to start their lives again. There wasn’t much money in the country, a lot of folks were poor and the people were divided. Into all of this came Isaiah, proclaiming God’s “good news” to those who suffer. What would it be like to hear someone saying that God had “good news” in the midst of all this?
For the first part of this activity, look through the news sources for two or three stories or pictures of people who might be the poor, the captives and the oppressed today. Look especially for stories or pictures about hunger and poverty. Once everyone has found a few stories or pictures, cut them out and then post them to a board with the heading “Bad News.”

Allow enough time for everyone to choose their stories or pictures.

**Discussion questions**

1) Why did you choose the story or picture?
2) What is happening in the picture?
3) What do all of these say about our community?
4) Who are the poor, the captives, and the oppressed today?

**After each youth has had a turn, read together the “Bad News” handout**

Return to the news sources and media. This time, invite youth to find two or three stories or pictures that show “good news”: hope, joy, people working together and helping each other. Look for these especially in congregational newsletters or bulletins! In what ways is God proclaiming “good news” today?

Allow enough time for each person to choose a story or picture.

**Discussion questions**

1) Why did you choose the story or picture?
2) What is happening in the story or picture?
3) What do these pictures say about our community?

**After each youth has had a turn to share, read together the “Good News” handout.**

**Discussion questions**

1) How does our congregation participate in God’s “good news” in our community?
2) In what ways might we share in God’s “good news” in school? In our workplaces?
3. What makes it hard to share in God’s good news in your school?

After your discussion, return to the Oasis space.
**Over 49 million Americans** do not have access to enough food to meet their basic needs.

**Every county in the United States** has people who are food insecure, which means they do not have consistent, dependable access to the food they need for a healthy life.

A family of three that receives help from the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as “food stamps”) received an average of $397 per month in 2011. That’s only $4.41 for each person per day or **about $1.47 per meal**.

As of November 2013, this same family of three receives $319 per month or about $3.54 per day. That’s **only $1.18 per meal**.

In 2013, federal funding that helps poor families heat their homes **fell by $600 million**. That means “more families facing that choice: heat or eat.”

As of 2007, **nearly 18,000 children worldwide die** from hunger each day. A child dies from hunger every four seconds.

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“Good News” about Hunger

In 2012, ELCA World Hunger received over $18 million in gifts from individuals, congregations and synods.

Through the Domestic Hunger Grants program, the ELCA supported 350 congregations and nonprofit organizations working to respond to hunger and poverty in the United States.

My Friend’s House, an ELCA ministry in Los Angeles, provided food to more than 10,000 people from January to July 2011.

Through gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran Social Services in New York and New Jersey have been able to help families who lost their homes to Hurricane Sandy.

The first year that it was opened (2011), the Community Resource Center at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi, Minn., helped more than 750 families, provided more than 5,312 shelter beds, served more than 10,200 meals, and gave more than 26,466 pounds of food to families in poverty.

At the Community Lunch on Capitol Hill, volunteers and members of Central Lutheran Church in Seattle, Wash., serve meals to 360 homeless people each week.

Our ELCA advocacy network in 13 states, in Washington, D.C., and in New York City at the United Nations encourages people to “speak out [and] defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:8-9) on school breakfasts for children, care for creation, health care for low-income people and numerous other issues.
Once back at the Oasis space, tell the group to close their eyes and take a silent moment of rest. Ask them to think silently about how they feel physically as they get deeper into their fast from physical food. How do they feel spiritually as they are fed in that way?

Following a few moments of rest, have the youth grab their cups and have a volunteer (or a few volunteers) fill the cups of the others from the beverage at the Oasis. Have the youth drink their beverage as a physical reminder of God’s promise to be present with them and the group’s covenant together. After they have finished, turn to the stories or activities in this Oasis. (Stories for each Oasis can be found on pages 48-59.)

Read together the following prayer, usually attributed to Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

(from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p.87)

Discussion questions
After praying, ask the group to think about times they have experienced good news. Who gave them the good news? How did it make them feel? How do they feel when they share good news with others? How do they think they are called to share the good news of grace and peace with others?
Service learning is a key part of Act 2Day 4Tomorrow. As Lutherans, we believe we are freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbor. It is in that freedom that God has given us the Spirit to a life where we are called, as our baptismal covenant directs, “to strive for justice and peace in all the Earth.” This includes, as Jesus says in Matthew 25, feeding those who hunger, giving drink to those who thirst, welcoming strangers, clothing the naked, and providing company in times of illness and imprisonment.

Service learning is a process to create service activities with deeper and lasting meaning. It is an ongoing process that includes preparation, action, reflection and celebration. The instructions below and to Oasis time that follow are meant to help your group get the most out of their experience while living out the faith that calls us to both serve the neighbor and to look for Christ in our neighbors.

This activity requires that you have chosen and planned a service activity ahead of time. Use the ELCA World Hunger resource “Digging In: A Leader’s Guide to Service Learning” and the ELCA World Hunger placemats to help plan and guide your service project. Plan for about 45 minutes both to prepare participants for logistics and to prepare them for a learning experience, both physically and spiritually.

Getting started

Begin by explaining to participants where you are going (or what you are doing) and a little bit about the organization or people with whom you will work. Also talk about why that location or project was chosen.

Take some notes or designate someone else to take notes while you talk.

Discussion questions

1) What do you know about the place we are going to?
2) What would you like to learn more about? What do we hope to learn? (Take some time to write down learning objectives for the group.)
3) What gifts and passions can you contribute to this project?
4) What is the difference between doing service for someone and doing service with someone?
5) What impact do you think this project will have, both on the people with whom we will serve and on ourselves? How long will the impact last, for them and for us? Help the participants understand the “shelf life” of impact. How can a short-term impact on a community still be valuable?
6) What will we do if things don’t go as expected? How will we react if our faith or beliefs are challenged?
7) How can we keep our focus on God and our spirituality during the activity?

Materials needed

- “Digging In: A Leader’s Guide to Service Learning” (available at www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources. Click on the “Hunger Education” tab.”
- ELCA World Hunger placemats (These are included in the “Digging In” folder.
- large piece of paper
- markers or pens
Following this initial discussion, you can have participants begin to fill out the individual worksheets provided on the ELCA World Hunger placemats.

1. Give each youth a copy of one ELCA World Hunger placemat. (They may already have a copy from another activity.) The back side of this placemat has a worksheet that explains both the process of service learning as well as space for youth to fill in the customizable work of their specific project.

2. Using information from the “Digging In: A Leader’s Guide to Service Learning” walk youth through what each step in the service learning process is and why it is important (Preparation, Action, Reflection, Celebration.)

3. Discuss each step of the process, asking what each step outlined on the worksheet looks like for the project they will do. This is a good time to review some of the things you have talked about, especially the learning objectives for the activity.

4. For the reflection and celebration stages, have the group plan out how they will live out these steps. As the leader it will be important for you to make sure that these plans are carried out as a wrap-up to the service activity. (The Oasis for this activity may be a good space for your group to decide how best to reflect on their experience.)

5. Have at least one youth bring their copy of the worksheet along to the service activity. As activity progresses, you may wish to have this sheet as a reminder. (For example, if things are not all happening according to plan, you can help remind the group of how they have agreed to respond in this situation.)

6. Invite the participants to make another covenant (in addition to their covenant from the Oasis space) so they can commit to the project together with the same expectations. Take a large piece of paper and have each participant draw a picture on the paper that represents either one of the learning objectives for the activity or one of the expectations that members of the group have for themselves and for each other. Once complete, have each participant sign their name by their picture to show their commitment to this service learning experience and to each other.

7. Invite one of the youth to close in a prayer to bless your project.

OASIS - Serve

Split participants into three groups. Using the “What? So What? Now What?” model (found in “Digging in: A Leader’s Guide to Service Learning”) each group will journal about the experience and then discuss as a group to hear different perspectives. The journaling will give each participant a chance to think and then have something in front of them, so encourage full participation.

Tell youth that part of doing service is reflecting on our experience. This helps us put our time serving into context in our larger lives and also learn more about the work we did and the people we served with. Invite them to take some time to journal about what you did today and then discuss their responses as a larger group.

Materials needed

- paper (Small notebooks work really well; otherwise, you can use scrap paper.)
- pens or pencils
- copies of the journal prompts (Individual copies for each person are recommended, but these can also be projected or copied to a board everyone can see.)
Journal time: 6 minutes

WHAT? Journal prompts:
Answer as many of these as you can, or choose one and write a more in-depth answer.

• What was the best part of the service experience? What was the worst?
• What was challenging today?
• What were the interactions you had? What relationships were formed?
• What gifts were you able to use?

SO WHAT? Journal prompts:
Answer as many of these as you can, or choose one and write a more in-depth answer.

• What did you learn today?
• How were your previous assumptions, stereotypes or beliefs challenged?
• What did this time of service make you think about? What emotions did it prompt?
• Who determines what is best for people? How did our time today affect your answer?

NOW WHAT? Journal prompts:
Answer as many of these as you can, or choose one and write a more in-depth answer.

• How did our work today affect social change efforts?
• What is the next step? How will you alter your lifestyle or take further action?
• How will you share this experience with others?
• In what ways may God multiply the service we took part in?

Discussion time: 7 minutes

Have each group talk about some of the things they wrote. Allow time for others to respond. This discussion could go much longer, so be open to letting it run a bit over time if good conversation is happening.

Choose one of the following stories:

Meet Nick Bates to explore subtle nudges and questions that move people forward
Nick’s experience on urban plunge showed him the poverty and need in his own community. His response? Not to “save” them (that’s Jesus’s job), but to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God” (Micah 6:8). What is the difference between “serving” and “saving”? How can we change our perspective on service from being “saviors” to being “servants”?

Meet Will Lourcey: gather friends and change the world!
Will’s story unfolds right in his own community with a classic Lutheran question: What does this mean? He discovers people in his community who do not have what they need and he resolves to help. When you think about your community, what are the needs that you see? What are the assets of your community?

To close the Oasis, invite one of the youth to offer thanks to God for your experience together and to ask for guidance in discerning where, when and how to serve in the future.
ENCOURAGE - Break the Fast!

After a long period of fasting, it is time to break your group’s fast together! You can order food in, invite other people from the congregation to provide a potluck or, if possible, head out to a meal together.

Having fun at the break-fast meal together is important, but this is also meant to be an intentional time for reflection on the group’s experiences. Use the discussion questions below to help guide your time together.

**Discussion questions**

1) Was the fast what you expected? Why or why not?
2) What did you learn about your own dependence on food?
3) How did the fast help you focus on God?
4) How did fasting affect you spiritually? Physically? Mentally?
5) What did you learn or think about hunger from your experience of fasting?

Conclude your time together by reading:

**Meredith Harber’s story**

Her story is like that of the couple walking to Emmaus after Jesus’s death (Luke 24:13-35). They were moved by his teaching but didn’t know what it all meant. They showed up, were open to a stranger, and shared a meal with him. Their eyes were opened and they saw Jesus. Where can you or your group show up, even if you don’t know what it means?

Ask the youth to think about what is next for them. A service learning experience? A movie night with “A Place at the Table” or another movie about hunger? The resources on the following pages can help you as you brainstorm.
Stories for Oasis activities
Sometimes a call takes you everywhere you didn’t plan to go. I was always involved in the youth group at my church, going on mission trips, studying the Bible and having a good time. At the same time, I had always been interested in government and public service, so when I went off to college, I thought I would major in one of those areas. But I found myself wanting to learn more about how people’s religious beliefs influenced their understanding of what good government should look like. So I ended up majoring in religion – not what I planned!

Then I had to decide what to do after college. Should I get a job in finance or investment banking like many of my classmates? Should I go to graduate school? Thanks to a well-timed campus visit by a former Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM), I decided on neither of those paths. Instead, I applied to YAGM and was invited to a year of service through the ELCA. I initially expected to be sent to the Middle East because I had studied Islam and the Arabic language in college, but instead, I was sent to Mexico – not what I planned!

During my year in Cuernavaca, Mexico, I worked in two places. One was a human rights organization that did social justice action around the city and state. This meant writing letters, meeting with government officials, planning marches and protests, and holding events to celebrate the work of human rights activists. The other place I worked was a wheelchair-making workshop for people with physical disabilities. It was a place for people who would usually have a hard time finding a job because of their disability. It was also a place for people to socialize, to be creative and artistic, and to engage elected leaders about improving public spaces to be wheelchair-accessible. I ended up doing a lot of things that year, but it was all about learning a new skill. No one cared where I went to college, or where I grew up – what mattered was that I was there, accompanying people on their journey and learning about their daily life. Everything that happened was not what I planned!

I came back to the United States and ended up going to graduate school in Chicago to study religion and politics. When I finished that program, I didn’t know where I would go next. It turned out that the ELCA Churchwide Office needed someone to help with projects related to the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. After a few months there, they hired me to work full-time with campus ministry and renewing congregations – not what I planned!

While I worked there, I learned about the ELCA’s involvement in state and national public policy. It turned out there was a place in the church where people could connect their faith with government and public service, and that place was advocacy! When an opening appeared in the Colorado office for a new director, I jumped at the chance to apply. As the director of this office, my job is to represent the church’s positions on hunger and poverty at the state Capitol in Denver. I also travel around Colorado to help Lutherans to be advocates on these issues and to understand why it’s important to our faith to be involved in public policy. I finally understood that I had been called to serve in this unique field, to bring together faith and public life. God met me in those “not what I planned” moments and turned them into a calling I never could have anticipated!

Peter Severson lives in Denver and is the director of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-Colorado. He served as a Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, from 2009-2010. YAGM volunteers are ages 21-29 and serve in countries on four continents.
“I could never do that,” I thought. “Living abroad is for other people.” This was my response to the suggestion of a high school social studies teacher that I might like to study abroad during college and to the affirmation of a college religion professor that I might be a good candidate for the YAGM program. As a young woman from Minnesota who had never been to Canada, much less across an ocean, I was sure that I was not brave or strong enough. Today I praise God for endless patience with my doubts and for the movement of the Holy Spirit calling me to new and challenging service. Despite my many hesitations, I did study global studies and Spanish in college and spent a semester in Spain. I enjoyed the experiences so much that I decided to apply to YAGM after all. I was convinced that I should serve in Latin America in preparation for a career in poverty reduction in the Americas. I was shocked at the end of the interview process to learn that I had been placed instead in Hungary. I was disappointed, terrified of learning the Hungarian language, and uncertain of what to do next. I wish I could say that I came to a nobler conclusion, but in reality it came down to a very simple question, “Why not?” I could spend all day listing worries and doubts, but in the end they were dwarfed by the opportunity for a new adventure in life and faith. I did not understand why God was calling me to serve in Hungary but I was willing to give it a try. Throughout the year in Nyíregyháza, Hungary, I encountered God in new and surprising ways. The lessons of Sunday school and confirmation about God’s love and grace came alive in the community all around me. I felt the abundance of God’s undeserving love through the many Hungarian Lutheran families who invited me, a complete stranger, into their homes for wonderful meals and conversation. I experienced God’s grace and forgiveness over and over in the homeless shelter staff who gently corrected me and taught me the Hungarian language while we washed dishes together. I was constantly challenged to rethink my answer to the question “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10) as many of my Hungarian friends carried labels: unemployed, homeless, Roma or gypsy, elderly, poor and outsider. There were times when I grew frustrated or discouraged, especially living far from home in such a foreign and confusing context, but my eyes were opened to God’s presence all around me in creation, community, joy, sorrow, vulnerability, stillness and song. In the end it was terribly difficult to say good-bye to the community that had become my home and to be open once again to a new call to serve. It took a few months to discover where God could use my hands, but I eventually came across a program similar to YAGM closer to my family in Minnesota. One of the coolest parts of this program is that I get to live with Franciscan sisters, or nuns, who tell amazing stories of living out their faith all over the world. I work in a tiny non-profit organization that helps Latino immigrant families with anything from making doctor appointments to organizing a youth group. The immigrant families help me see the place where I grew up through new eyes, and the Catholic sisters and volunteers teach me about Mass, saints and feast days. As a volunteer, I am also part of a team that is working to find new ways to use the gifts and stories of YAGM alumni to serve, challenge and strengthen our communities and the church. God’s dreams for us as individuals and communities are larger than we could ever imagine, and God shares these dreams with us through prayer, Scripture, friends and trusted advisors. God often calls us to “ventures of which we cannot see the ending” and then builds our capacity to serve in the ways God has asked (ELW, p. 317). Our most important task is to remain humble enough to listen, knowing that God often flips our ideas of possible and impossible, home and foreign, giver and recipient, upside down.
Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24).

I confess. I like clothes. And I like shoes, too. Pastors, of course, should not be tied to such worldly things that only promote vanity, but there it is. The most recent acquisitions to my wardrobe, however, have not been cute little ballet flats or fashionable suits. Instead, I have spent a lot of my annual clothing budget on tight little spandex shorts with a sewn-in cushion (that, yes, makes them feel very much like a diaper), microfiber shirts with pockets along the small of my back and a pair of shoes that have a giant cleat under the ball of my foot. Yep. I’ve become a road biker—for ELCA World Hunger.

This last year I organized and rode in a four-day, 160-mile bike ride with 30 other riders who ranged in age from 11 to 86 through the heart of Montana to raise money for ELCA World Hunger and to educate congregations about hunger in our communities and around the world. We have raised $13,755 so far, which delights me. It was an amazing experience and not one I could have imagined myself participating in, much less organizing, when I was in high school. One friendship changed all of that.

My friend’s name is Kelly. Kelly is one of those remarkable people who can speak eloquently and with humor about world politics and faith and bathroom habits (yes, all in the same conversation) and she is deeply passionate about social justice. While many people and experiences through the years have taught me about poverty, hunger and food, it was Kelly who first moved me from believing in Jesus to following Jesus—or, at least, trying to follow Jesus the best I am able.

Kelly and I had been talking about a community garden that provided space for people to grow their own fresh produce. We agreed a community garden would be great at our school. Yep, someone should definitely start a garden here. “Kelly would be great at that,” I thought. “Why not you?” she asked. I balked, I stammered, I changed the subject. “Me?! Kelly thinks I could do that?” I marveled to myself. Eventually, her confidence in me, my own growing passion for feeding a hungry world, and a strong nudge from God was enough to convince me that I needed to make that garden happen. So I did. Alongside community leaders, I established a community garden that grew fresh produce for the local food bank and became a place of learning for a Montessori school.

Building that community garden was my first experience in being a hunger leader and a more dedicated follower of Jesus. I still have much to learn. I am still learning how to help my congregation follow Jesus’ call to justice (guilt-free!); I am still gaining courage to be a stronger public witness, and I am daily endeavoring to live more simply. I have come to understand my calling as a pastor is not for my own glory but so that I may be of service to my neighbor. I have learned that you are never too young to feed Jesus’ people, even if your palms sweat when you speak in public or even if you have just become a Christian. Jesus has work to do in every community, and every person can help. I’ve learned that being a follower of Jesus does not require one to have all the answers or to be the most savvy or eloquent or smartest person in the room. All it requires is a humble willingness to follow him and, on occasion, to wear spandex diaper shorts.

Kendra Wilde’s story:
Session One: Teaching - Give/Study

Kendra Wilde currently serves as an associate pastor at Our Redeemer’s Lutheran Church in Helena, Mont.. She was deeply formed by an ELCA World Hunger leader’s travel experience to Haiti. Our Redeemer’s has a community garden that provided more than a ton of fresh produce to the local food bank this year and just raised $10,000 for a program that feeds hungry kids on the weekends.
Kendra Wilde’s story:
Session One: Teaching - Give/Study

My call to engage in global service developed from a young age. I was raised in a multicultural family and so grew up with an interest in global issues, traveling and other cultures. I also grew up in an upper-middle-class area without much diversity, and a life of privilege was the norm. As I grew older, I realized how blessed I am to have a college education, minimal financial anxieties, a life of peace and security and a whole world of opportunities before me. With this growing awareness of my privilege came a growing desire to serve under-privileged communities abroad. As I neared graduation from Valparaiso University, I had no clear sense of my career path. However, I felt an undeniable nudge to go live and serve in another part of the world. I didn’t want to just visit a place but truly immerse myself in a new culture, develop friendships and share in joys and struggles. I wanted to challenge my worldview, explore my faith, and strengthen my self-understanding. And I wanted to serve while doing it. My faith has taught me that we are called to be a living sacrifice, serving one another using the gifts God gave to us. In this way, God called me, little by little, to serve in God’s mission overseas.

God placed many people in my life to encourage me and give me confidence in my call. There were two young women from my home church who had participated in the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program who came home telling stories of vulnerability, learning, serving and being served, amazing friendship and transformation. I knew from their testimony that I wanted to experience that too. I wanted to feel those struggles and joys and experience the world, in all of its broken beauty, through different eyes. I also had the opportunity to intern with the ELCA Global Mission unit during college, where I was able to hear more stories from missionaries serving around the world. As I began to understand how formative a global mission experience could be in one’s faith, worldview and self-understanding, I knew I had to respond to that nudge, which had become stronger with time. My parents supported me and gave me advice all along the journey, always engaging me in conversation about discernment so that I could best follow where God was calling me in the world. In the end, it was prayer, conversation and the power of stories that encouraged me in my own call to YAGM.

Throughout my YAGM year, I lived out my call in various ways. The Malagasy Lutheran Church asked me to teach English in a Lutheran community in Fianarantsoa, Madagascar. My gift as a native English speaker was the greatest gift I could give, since it is so rare to find a native English speaker in Madagascar who is ready and willing to teach. However, I also lived out my calling by simply being present in relationship with my community. I was a daughter, sister, friend and granddaughter. I spent hours at my best friend’s house every day cooking rice, sharing meals, and doing devotions. I went to the market to buy fresh fruit and chat with my favorite seller. I spent entire days slowly strolling around town with friends, stopping into homes, drinking some coffee, and strolling some more. I learned and received so much by walking alongside the Malagasy people. I have been blessed and transformed by all of these simple, extraordinary, challenging and joyful moments along the journey.

Karis Ailabouni is an alumna of the ELCA’s Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program. In this program, young adults (ages 21-29) spend one year in international service. These young adults serve on four continents and are an important part of the global mission of the ELCA.

Karis Ailabouni’s story:
Session One: Teaching - Give/Study

Karis Ailabouni is an alumna of the ELCA’s Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program. In this program, young adults (ages 21-29) spend one year in international service. These young adults serve on four continents and are an important part of the global mission of the ELCA.
Thanks to mission trips and service projects growing up, stories and travel have always been connected in my life. My experiences in different cultures have been so meaningful because people have been willing to share their stories with me. Through our stories we have gotten to know each other and our cultures and have even lived new stories together.

When I was in my third year at Luther College, an old, yet somehow new story pulled me into the call to ordained ministry that I am now living out. I spent the fall semester in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where I realized that I didn’t identify as “straight.” This led me to triple major in Spanish, religion, and women and gender studies. Over the semester, I realized that these majors were not just interests, but represented parts of my identity. As I began the spring semester, I felt a pull toward ordained ministry but couldn’t figure out how it could work with my majors—my whole self.

That is when I heard the Rev. Heidi Neumark share the story of a woman whom Jesus called a dog, who begged for crumbs from his table, and I heard of Mujeres en Progreso, the Latina women’s support group at her church, that made dinner for the youth at Trinity Place, a transitional housing shelter for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning youth. After hearing her, I knew. God was calling me into ordained ministry—all of me. This call was not a regular or spectacular call. It is a call to the margins—to ministry and life with those who find themselves in the margins of society.

As God’s call began to settle in, I also felt pulled and called out of my country and out of my comfort zone. When I heard about the ELCA’s Young Adults in Global Mission program, it sounded perfect for me. I couldn’t describe why the program had so captured me, but I knew that God was involved. Spending a year in another country, meeting new people, receiving, sharing, and making new stories were the challenges and opportunity I needed.

When I interviewed with the Central Europe program, I shared my experience of the power and importance of stories and the many ways we can share our stories. In response, I heard about a piece of clothing that had become the vehicle for a Roma woman to share her own story. Roma are an ethnic minority living largely in Central Europe but spread throughout the world.

Again my fate was sealed. I could feel God pulling me to Slovakia for a year of being with Roma and non-Roma, a year of ups and downs, laughter and tears. While in Slovakia that year, I learned the importance of safe space and brave space and the other people I needed in my community to help create that. I also met many women and men who had been called dogs while looking for crumbs from the table, and yet together we received coffee and conversation, feeding each other and being fed by the bread of life.

When I returned from Slovakia, I deepened my exploration and understanding of my call to ministry by learning from and about marginalized communities. In my final year of seminary I served a bilingual congregation that so well understood the story of the woman looking for crumbs that they extended their table after worship into a free lunch for all who were hungry. No more crumbs. Instead: food and love in abundance.

As I graduated from seminary, I found myself in a new and unexpected place for my first call. Back in the Rocky Mountain Synod, my home synod, I ended up in Utah, at Christ the King Lutheran Church, a small, 7-year-old congregation. On my second Sunday, I joined others from Christ the King and from throughout the Salt Lake City area in the CROP/Hunger Walk. We walked with each other, and we walked with God to turn breadcrumbs into feasts for all people. God has called me here—all of me, into ministry so that all may be fed with a feast.
I believe that we all have a call to care about what we call “social justice.” My understanding of that call started when I was just a little girl in North Dakota. I learned in church that there were places in the world where war and poverty left many children to grow up without parents, nutrition or access to education. I knew then that I was called to serve people. As I grew, I wanted to see what Christ, people and government had to do with this whole justice thing. That was when I decided to do work in international development. So I worked in different countries in orphanages, schools, refugee villages and in women’s empowerment programs. I went to college to study international development, political science and Spanish.

My pastor told me about the ELCA’s Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program. She said it was like the Peace Corps, but it was based on Lutheran faith. Through YAGM, I was sent to Resistencia, Argentina, where I worked alongside organic subsistence farmers, indigenous people, and women and children who lived in impoverished urban areas.

Over the years, I encountered many people whom I came to see as “Christ in the margins.” The people who had the least were often most generous and the most forgiving. It was easy to find the light of Christ in a small child whose smile beamed, even in the midst of huge challenges. So when I found myself on a plane headed back to North Dakota, I was asking God, “Now that you have let me see and know these incredible people, how can I live my life in a way that honors all that they have given and shown me?”

Stepping off the plane, I knew that I needed to go to a homeless shelter where I used to volunteer. My pastor was on the board of the shelter at the time, and she greeted me at the airport and told me they were hiring.

I took my nicest clothes out of my suitcase (which, by then, were pretty much rags), and I went to Churches United for the Homeless in Moorhead, Minn. After working there for a short time, I became the Community Center director. This meant that it was my job to make sure that our services to the community reflect love, grace, hospitality and service. My role in church and community in caring for those who struggle with poverty caught the eye of one of the local ELCA World Hunger leaders. She invited me to a conference with other leaders, and I was hooked. Now I had work and a faith community that reflected the image of Christ that I had seen in other parts of the world.

ELCA World Hunger has been my link to caring for people living in poverty around the world, while my hands are busy here working with people in poverty in the United States. I now work with 58 congregations that partner with Churches United, and many of them are ELCA, so we share a common language about faith and justice.

Through ELCA World Hunger, I was able to work hard with a small team to make sure young volunteers at the shelter were having an authentic service learning experience that connected them to the work we do together as the ELCA. I think it is always important to look at how young people learn what poverty is and what they can do about it. But that wasn’t all. ELCA World Hunger understands how complex issues of poverty and injustice create hunger in the world. For example, many girls around the globe aren’t able to go to school because their families can’t afford school fees. People who don’t go to school often struggle with poverty. That is one example of how gender justice is a hunger issue. So, I have joined with other women and men from the ELCA through ELCA World Hunger to participate in the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations. There, we as people of faith can listen, learn and speak up through our calling to create a peaceful and just world, one where the “Christ in the margins” is simply our neighbor.
I can recall being “stuck.” Maybe you have felt “stuck” at times. I was living with my parents. I had no car, and while a friend hooked me up with a job, the limited pay for assembling meals in the hospital basement would not pay the big bills. Sure, I had been stuck before, like times when I felt alone without friends in school, when I lived in the silent pain, or when I quit seminary uncertain where I would go next.

But in the hospital assembling the meals for the patients was not my calling. There were some people in the hospital basement who had patiently been there for decades, but singing at the top of my lungs over the sound of the loud dishwasher was not even close to the “calling” I had imagined.

This was in the good-old days prior to me having a cell phone, so calling from the hospital “pay phone,” I had a lunch conversation with Greg, a classmate and friend. “Jason,” Greg said, “you need to do something totally new.” I agreed with Greg, but what? I had no car, house or job.

“Just join a program where it is all provided,” Greg comforted me, but I was still lost. He suggested some organizations, including the Lutheran Volunteer Corps. I called.

The secretary informed me that they were mostly full and started in one week, but I was curious, so I asked for an interview with the director. After interviewing, the director told me of one remaining position in Baltimore, coordinating the Detention Watch Network for Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. “Would you be interested?”

Would I be interested! The year was 2002, and the entire previous year was a politically tense situation for the country attempting to respond to the 9-11 attacks on New York City. Airports heightened security, and we were at war and still defining what a terrorist was. I had watched the news closely and feared that America was repeating the same history of rounding up and confining ethnic groups out of fear, like the United States did to the Japanese during World War II.

So while Congress passed laws overnight to keep the country safe, waves of terror hit immigrants and those of Middle Eastern descent. I began working with a national network to implement standards of jail conditions and had national meetings with the former Immigration and Naturalization Service as it became the Department of Homeland Security. But even as I sat in large conference rooms doing work I clearly felt called to do, I saw something bigger at play in my life. As great as my work in immigration was, I kept being drawn to the ideas of God’s word and sacraments. Jesus is something bigger. The story of Jesus spoke to the injustices of life, which seemed to be mounting, and touched refugees and so many aspects of life.

I had great fun working a lot of different jobs – from camp counselor to advocating in Washington, D.C., for laws to protect people who are vulnerable – where I had been most called was telling the Jesus story from and comforting and empowering other disciples of Christ. I felt called to be a pastor.

Today, I celebrate my fifth-year anniversary as an ordained pastor in the Lutheran church. I am fully supported by my church to be the unique person God has made me to be. I still get stuck. I still get lost. But I’ve learned God keeps taking me where I need to be.

At five years, we have developed a community garden on the church property that feeds the community; we are leading cultural orientation and language instruction for new refugees to Sacramento. I daily meet and find peace in bringing the story of Jesus to people of all walks of life to help them be who God has called them to be in their baptism.
Other people I know who work in the social justice field can tell fantastic, inspirational stories about their “aha” moment, the shining memory that sparked their passion. Me? Not so much. I have not seen the light in a single blinding flash but perhaps in a slow sunrise. Enough Psalms, Proverbs and prayer has told me over and over that this is where I’m called to be. I’m not quite sure why yet, or how – but I was made with a plan in mind, and I think this may be it.

Through high school and into college, I have worked on all sides of hunger in the United States. I started volunteering on the ground at my local food shelf and eventually found myself advocating to reform anti-poverty programs at the state and national level, researching hunger’s social and political implications, developing an online database to reduce waste and improve communication between food pantries, speaking at conferences for youth and adults, and co-authoring a guide for other high school students that want to run food drives based on my own experiences coordinating such campaigns. I do not actively log the hours I spend on these endeavors, for I do not want to measure what I do by how long I do it instead of results. However, I can estimate that I have spent at least a thousand hours in the past calendar year on these projects, amongst others. I may not be able to distinctly define why I do what I do, but I can say with certainty that it is what I forever shall love.

I had much help along the way, from Melissa, who runs the food shelf in my town, to Cory, director of Iowa’s food bank association, to Tony, who spent thirty years in Congress and the State Department before heading up a hunger nonprofit. When I first got to know these wonderful individuals, they were “Mrs. Zula,” “Mr. Berkenes” and “Ambassador Hall.” Now they are not only my mentors, encouragers and inspirations, but my friends with whom I share a faith and a fire for feeding those not in a position to feed themselves. We all started in hunger for different reasons, but we stayed for the same: God has called us to serve in this way, and who are we to say no? My teenaged “lifelong” commitment to fighting hunger pales in comparison to the legacies of these three, whose lifetime commitments are decades long and will resonate for generations to come.

These heroes of mine have impressed upon me an important aspect of working in the name of Jesus. In the Christian faith and in American society at large, we tend to set up litmus tests for those we serve, saying they only “deserve” our help if they’ve “done everything right” – that they’re not addicts or have more children than they can afford, that they spend within their means and have only recently found themselves in hard times.

Guess what? It doesn’t matter where someone is in their life, how they got to the position they’re in, or what choices they’ve made. All that matters is who they are – a child of God, created in God’s image. Every person on this planet deserves to be loved and treated with respect, regardless of whatever else is going on in their life. If there is any part of my call I can articulate, it’s this. With judgment we get nowhere, with love we can go anywhere. Keep an open heart and the Holy Spirit tends to find its way in. Do all you can for all you can with all you have. Service can be emotionally, physically and spiritually exhausting, but I promise you that it is absolutely worth it.
For as long as I can remember, I’ve liked science – and I have always been especially interested in infectious disease. And as long as I can remember, even at 4 or 5 years old, I’ve wanted to know what is happening with and among people in the world. I studied world maps, and I watched the world news. I wanted to be connected.

During college, three intense majors – art, biology and chemistry – meant I missed the opportunity to take advantage of study abroad programs that St. Olaf College offers. When I was “deciding what I wanted to do with my life” during my senior year, a Ph.D. in microbiology and immunology seemed like a logical choice. While I ended up not being fond of work in the laboratory, I did have the opportunity to teach, which I loved.

But that yearning for a global perspective and global engagement would not go away. When I finished my master’s degree in education, I looked for jobs teaching abroad. Luckily, one of the first openings I found was “science teacher – Namibia,” with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Science! Namibia! My church! Perfect! From there, I was blessed to serve with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia as a science teacher for two years.

Still, I felt drawn to work more directly in the health field itself. Just before leaving for Kenya for six months to do research, I saw a job opening for program director – Healthcare with ELCA Global Mission. (Had I been routinely checking ELCA’s website and had I stayed in touch with ELCA colleagues over the years? Yes.) Part way through the summer, one of my former ELCA colleagues pointed the posting out to me. It was still open! I applied, was offered the position, and accepted immediately (all from Kenya).

I started a week after returning to the U.S.

I have been told by some that the career path I have taken is … unexpected. Yet there is no other job in the world – not even one – that I would rather have.

At nearly two years into this position, I reiterate three things I noted after one year: 1) I love it; 2) it’s a challenge; and 3) I am honored to do this work. I am also grateful for the encouragement I have received along the winding way: to pastors and members of First Lutheran Church in New Richmond, Wis., for early opportunities to start along this path; to colleagues in the Global Mission unit of the ELCA for taking a chance by inviting me to begin the journey in full; and to my family, for always supporting me through whatever adventure I’m led to undertake.

I am honored to serve my church in this way, honored to represent my church in this way, and honored that God is using me and the gifts and training I have in this way. I am also honored to have the opportunity to learn and grow and develop into a fuller, more complete person in this way, and most honored to live my life in a way in which I can be part of something bigger – God’s mission of reconciliation. Working in accompaniment with people around the world affects my whole sense of self, and I could not be the person I am without the connections I have with others.
Some people have call stories where Jesus smacks them with a two-by-four calling them into ministry. For me, it was a lot of subtle nudges along the way. The final nudge began my sophomore year in college during an urban plunge retreat. These types of events in middle school, high school and college were really important in shaping my faith – even though I didn’t realize it at the time. The urban plunge was an event designed by Capital University’s Campus Ministry to help us connect and learn about the city and social issues of Columbus. Poverty is just down the road and not limited to far-off countries.

We visited different service agencies, learned about different issues, and volunteered our time during the weekend. One of the most surprising things during the event was the beauty that exists in these extremely poor neighborhoods. Many residents took great pride in their homes, neighbors came together to support each other, and there was so much love among the communities. Many suffered not from laziness, drugs, or bad upbringings – they suffered from an economic reality that rewards some and not others. I soon realized that I couldn’t “save” everyone in a weekend. This realization, at first, made me feel uncomfortable. But then I heard the words of Micah calling us to do justice. I knew the church is called to advocacy and justice ministries in addition to our charity work.

During the weekend, we met with the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP), a group of homeless teenagers who advocated on behalf of themselves and other homeless youth. These young people worked to change public policies to create equal opportunity in our state and country. I immediately volunteered for a four-month internship with the group. I grew in community with the youth. We accompanied each other toward a shared goal. I learned more from them than they learned from me. While they were victims of the harsh reality of poverty, they were talented and hard-working individuals who didn’t want to be seen as victims. I remained with the program for five more years as a staff member.

Politicians, those in authority, and we ourselves often ignore young people. Yet, Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.” All people have value to our society. Not only were the YEP members kids, but they were poor. Society often treated them as “the least of these.” But they knew they were more. They continued to break stereotypes and assert their dignity as humans – as children of God.

During this time, I realized that I was called to attend seminary and study what it means to do justice in our world. I have recently been consecrated as a diaconal minister in the ELCA called to advocacy and justice ministries. It was young people – middle school and high school students experiencing homelessness, who taught me about the love of God and showed me the way forward. As the body of Christ, we are all called to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8) and sometimes we need the young people to ask the difficult questions to push everyone else forward.
My name is Will Lourcey, and I am 11 years old. I am a sixth-grader in Fort Worth, Texas. When I was in first-grade, I saw something that would change the way I saw the world.

I played baseball, and every night after games we would go home the same way. We exited the highway and came to a red light. I saw a man on the street corner holding a sign that said: “NEED A MEAL.”

I asked my parents what it meant. They told me there are people in my city who do not have enough food to eat. It made me really sad inside, and I knew I needed to do something about it. A few weeks later, my parents asked me what I wanted to do for the summer, something other than being a couch potato and playing video games. I knew what I needed to do. I told them I wanted to help the man on the street corner.

I told them I wanted to start a charity group that helped feed hungry people and helped end hunger in my city and the world! I wanted to have a group that was run by kids, with fun events for everyone.

My dad took me to the food bank so I could ask the employees how we could help. The lady was really nice and told me raising awareness about hunger was a big part of it. So I decided to gather my friends and start creating events that would get lots of attention and get a lot of kids involved.

I founded the non-profit FROGs: Friends Reaching Our Goals. The goal of the group is to raise awareness and donations for the hungry. Our motto is: Having Fun while Helping Others. We design fun activities like dodge ball events, baseball and soccer events, and video game parties to fight hunger.

So far we have provided over 150,000 meals for the hungry, helped pack over 50,000 backpacks with food for kids to eat on weekends and helped serve over 10,000 families through the mobile food pantry – all while having fun!

How many people saw the man on the street corner and kept on driving? How many people locked their car doors and looked the other way? Nothing will change if this is how everyone acts. Jesus wouldn’t have looked the other way. Jesus would have helped feed the man. So that’s what I’m doing.

I feel this is my purpose. My purpose is to help change the world and make it a better place. I want to inspire others to “Be doers ... not watchers.”

I hope that when people hear my story about me and my friends they are inspired to be doers! We all have the ability to help change the world. All we need to do is act.

No matter how tall or small you are, YOU can make a big difference!
I grew up in Pennsylvania and was part of one of those Lutheran families that stands in the sanctuary long after services are over chatting with our church family. I worked at Lutherlyn, an ELCA summer camp, and I have had quite a few adventures in the last few years.

When I was about to start my senior year in college, where I had been working toward a psychology degree, along with an elementary and special education certification, I realized that my path might be changing. I had always wanted to be a teacher. Really. How many sixth-graders buy bulletin board decorating materials and store them under their bed for when they have their own classroom someday?!

After some discerning, I realized that teaching wasn’t for me. The obvious choice, for me, when trying to change the direction I am heading, is running hard into a new direction. Don’t think you’ll graduate and become a teacher in Pennsylvania? How about you sign up for the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) through the ELCA and move across the world to figure out who you are now? And that is precisely what I did. I was a girl heading east.

After a year of teaching kindergarten, English and even swimming lessons at Dar al-Kalima School in Bethlehem, Palestine, I realized that my faith wasn’t about whom I knew in the sanctuary, but it was that we are called to be in relationship with people all over the world. Soon after returning to the United States from Palestine, I found myself arguing with several pastors. I had considered the idea of seminary during my time in Palestine, but I always came up with excuses. Some were silly: “I’m single. How do pastors date?!” Some were serious: “I don’t feel like I have enough faith to be a pastor.” Every conversation with each pastor, mentor, teacher and friend quashed each one of these excuses and questions. I realized that, while I didn’t quite know what it all meant, I knew that everything I wanted to do in my life I could and should do through the church.

I dipped my toes in the water of the whole pastor thing, since I told all of my college friends that I was “studying theology” at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. During my time there, I did a year-long internship on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. While in Pine Ridge, it became far greater than simply “studying theology.” I was driving home from worship one day and saw the scene of a car accident. Without thinking, I parked my car and walked over to the police. I said, “I’m a pastor. How can I help?” I didn’t know what I was doing, and they certainly didn’t know what to do with me, but I found myself sitting on the side of the road, holding the young children who were in the accident. Regardless of the title, being a Christian is when we show up and offer our hands and hearts to God through relationship with one another. Our vocation is when we figure out where we feel called to offer our hands.

After heading east to Palestine, north to Chicago, west to Pine Ridge, I have headed south for my first call as pastor to Eben Ezer Lutheran Church and the Oaks Indian Mission in the Cherokee Nation, in Oaks, Okla. I am offering my hands as a non-Native pastor in a Native community, where I am learning how to sit on the side of the road, even when I don’t know what I’m supposed to do.

This life that God has created us for is not always what we expect it to be. The paths that we take and the directions that we go teach us things along the way about ourselves. Whether you head north, south, east or west, know that God has gone before you, preparing the way and bringing people into your life to help reason with you about it all.
Other resources you can use

ELCA World Hunger resources

Want to learn more about hunger or find other ways to get involved? Check out these great resources from ELCA World Hunger. All are available for download or order from www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources, unless otherwise noted.

ELCA World Hunger Resource Packet A collection of resources designed to raise funds and awareness for ELCA World Hunger that is made available in a packet twice per year.

ELCA World Hunger Video Series Stories of individuals and communities impacted by the work of ELCA World Hunger. Watch online or order the video series from www.ELCA.org/hunger/video.

Digging In: A Leader’s Guide to Service Learning A comprehensive guide to getting the most out of your service experience, whether it is short-term or long-term. Developed in partnership with leading experts in service learning.

Road Map to Food Drives: A By-Youth, For-Youth Guide to Feeding Communities A step-by-step guide to effective, meaningful food drives written by youth with input from community agencies. Contains easy-to-use sections for youth to lead the drive themselves.

Taking Root A comprehensive curriculum available in four age-level courses, designed to teach the root causes and solutions to world hunger. Includes curriculum, leader’s guide, handouts and videos.

Hunger Education Toolkits Activities, prayers, lessons and songs to create local education experiences on many themes related to hunger and poverty.

ELCA Good Gifts Catalog A catalog of global gift-giving opportunities that represent areas the ELCA supports domestically and internationally. View online at www.ELCA.org/goodgifts.

For Lenten activities, try:

Into the Wild: A Lenten Liturgy and Intergenerational Study on Hunger A set of five sessions with liturgies, prayers and activities to help congregational groups from children to adults learn more about hunger and faith. Perfect for a weekly Lenten series!

40 Days of Wonderings: A Family Discussion Guide for Lent A 40-day calendar of discussion starters, prayers and activities for parents and caregivers to use with children and youth.

Lenten Meals A series of activities, stories, recipes and prayers suitable for all ages and perfect for a Lenten series or a single session. Each meal focuses on one country or region with ministries supported by ELCA World Hunger.

Other Web-based resources:

Advocacy:
ELCA Advocacy – www.ELCA.org/advocacy
Bread for the World – www.bread.org

Breads around the world:
www.foodrepublic.com/2012/11/05/8-breads-around-world
www.whats4eats.com/breads

Fasting as a religious practice:
www.ucg.org/bible-faq/what-fasting-and-why-should-i-do-it

Food in the Bible:
christianity.about.com/od/biblefactsandlists/qt/foodsofthebible.htm
www.openbible.info/topics/food

Food deserts:
americanutritionassociation.org/newsletter/usda-defines-food-deserts

Food security:

Food miles
www.foodmiles.com/
www.pbs.org/e2/teachers/teacher_food_miles_project.html

Food waste statistics
Society of St. Andrew – www.endhunger.org/food_waste.htm

Global policy
www.oxfam.org/
www.oxfamamerica.org/

Young Adults in Global Mission
www.ELCA.org/yagm
**SPONSOR PLEDGE FORM**

**THINGS TO REMEMBER:**

1. Print all information
2. Make checks payable to your congregation or organization
3. Collect all checks, make one check out to ELCA World Hunger for the total amount and mail to: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Gifts Processing Center, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009
4. Make a copy of the pledge form if needed
5. When making a gift, the check is the receipt

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Money collected and donated to ELCA World Hunger will be used to reach communities in need throughout the United States and around the world. ELCA World Hunger works by listening to our neighbors and then working alongside them to address the root causes of hunger and poverty.