

New!

Road Map to Food Drives

**A By-Youth, For-Youth Guide
to Feeding Communities**



**Written by Maria Belding and Tariro Makoni
with ELCA World Hunger**



ELCA World Hunger
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



Dear Friend in Christ,

THANK YOU FOR HELPING YOUTH in your congregation learn about – and respond to – hunger in your community! This guide is intended to assist youth groups in leading a thoughtful and well-informed campaign for a local food assistance organization. In writing this, we have drawn on our own experiences and conversations with staff at dozens of food pantries and food banks to make sure that it is based on best practices for food drives.

We have also written this guide with the hopes that your food drive will help youth use and develop their leadership skills to serve their communities. You will find here some things that are meant for an organizer of the drive and some things that are meant for youth in other roles. The first few pages will help you introduce the activity to youth and get them started; the rest of the guide will help the members of your youth group understand their roles in the food drive and how they can work to make it a success! Each youth will take on a role – or join a team, depending on the size of your group – with a particular set of responsibilities for the food drive, including contacting local food pantries, coordinating the food drive with your congregation, and leading the group in prayers and biblical reflections in preparation for the experience.

Every youth group is different, just like every congregation is different. Feel free to adapt this guide in ways that suit your particular needs. Some youth groups, for example, might not have enough participants to fill each of the roles, so it might be best to combine roles or for you to take on some tasks. You can also ask adults in your congregation to take on some roles, to make the food

drive intergenerational! Or, you may know of other activities or discussions that would be best for your youth group. While this guide contains the information groups in general need, please feel free to use it as best fits your group. For example, your congregation may already have its own food pantry or shelf. If so, that's great! Instead of contacting local agencies to receive your donations, it would be great for you to support your own congregation's feeding ministries.

We are a church that rolls up our sleeves and gets to work. This activity can be an opportunity to work together with your community and congregation, whether it is your first or 15th hunger-related experience. This guide was developed in cooperation with ELCA World Hunger, a ministry of the ELCA dedicated to solving hunger and poverty in the United States and around the world, so it is a great chance to learn more about what our whole church is doing about both domestic and international hunger and poverty. ELCA World Hunger would love to share your stories and/or pictures from your food drive with the whole church, so please consider telling us how your drive went! If you have feedback on this guide, that would be great to hear, too! You can contact ELCA World Hunger staff at hunger@ELCA.org.

Thank you again for answering the call to love and serve the neighbor!

In Christ,

Maria Belding, Tariro Makoni

WITH ELCA WORLD HUNGER

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About the authors

Tariro's story



I WAS BORN IN ZIMBABWE and raised in the United States. Because my parents were adamant about exposing their children to Zimbabwean heritage, I spent many childhood summers in the heart of Zimbabwean villages. These times became the foundation for my work in hunger and poverty relief efforts. The summer before eighth grade, I founded my charity organization, A Hoping Friend. Our mission is to sustainably rebuild Zimbabwean village schools, leaving them with the tools needed for success. While my background comes from poverty development and education, my passion for hunger-related efforts only started during the summer of my sophomore year. During a flight, I started talking to the man seated next to me. We began to discuss sustainable development, public policy and global health. Our conversation eventually led to a mentor/mentee relationship. I credit him with my affiliation with the World Food Prize Foundation, as he introduced me to the staff. The following October, I was at the World Food Prize Foundation's Global Youth Institute. It was here that I met Maria Belding. Maria and I went on to design our prototype for the Matching Excess and Need for Stability (M.E.A.N.S.) Database while I went on to become a World Food Prize Borlaug-Ruan International Intern to India. While conducting research on childhood malnutrition, my passion for ending hunger was strengthened once again. In India, Maria and I (through numerous Skype conversations), decided to write "Fighting for Food" (our first guide for food drives). As I look at the events that have been woven together throughout my life, I am always awe-struck by the divine providence of the Lord. My greatest tidbit of advice that I give to those coming after me is always follow your passion, and follow the Lord.

Maria's story



MY WORK IN HUNGER BEGAN in second grade, when my family began attending a new church in small-town Iowa. This particular congregation housed the local food shelf, and each Sunday school class would help sort donations and move boxes. I helped now and then through middle school and my first few years of high school, spending more time outside of Sunday mornings sifting through cartons and checking expiration dates. My first foray into hunger policy came at age 15, when several teachers encouraged me to enter the World Food Prize Foundation's Iowa Youth Institute, a hunger education program and competition designed to bridge bright young minds with experienced older ones. I was selected to move onto the organization's Global Youth Institute the following fall, and ended up in the same group as a talkative, bubbly student from North Dakota named Tariro. The rest, as they say, is history. We became business partners and launched M.E.A.N.S., a database program that allows food shelves to communicate with each other about waste and surplus. I continued with the World Food Prize the summer after my junior year, working in Athens, Georgia, to study hunger issues from a biology angle as a Wallace-Carver Fellow. It was during this time that Tariro and I developed "Fighting for Food," the original document upon which this resource is based. Much of my work is now in advocacy, and I frequently travel to speak on domestic hunger issues and meet with other charities to see how we can help youth make an impact. This journey has shown me just how important it is to trust God and follow God's lead – I wasn't always sure what I was doing or if it was going to work, but somehow it has all turned out just fine.

About ELCA World Hunger

Photo: Paul Jeffrey/ACT Alliance.

ELCA World Hunger

ELCA WORLD HUNGER is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) collective response to hunger and poverty around the world and here in the United States. By working through Lutheran connections in the United States and around the world, we start by listening to the needs of our neighbors and getting their ideas to help break the cycle of hunger and poverty. Then we partner with them to make their dreams a reality. From health care to microloans, water wells to farms, food pantries to community gardens, the ELCA is committed to creatively and courageously addressing the root causes of hunger and poverty and building a world of justice in which all are fed.¹

ELCA World Hunger supports work primarily in five areas: Relief, Education, Advocacy, Community Organizing and Sustainable Development. This approach reflects the ELCA's commitment to ending hunger by accompanying and empowering our neighbors and companions. **Relief** efforts respond to immediate needs in communities; through **educational efforts**, Lutherans learn about the causes and solutions to hunger and poverty; **advocacy** includes being voices of truth and justice – in the halls of government (through public policy advocacy) and in the “halls” of workplaces,

schools and community centers; through **community organizing** efforts, neighbors join together to raise their voices for justice and fairness in their communities; and through **sustainable development** projects, the ELCA equips people living in poverty and hunger to feed themselves – sustainably and sufficiently.

The projects supported by gifts to ELCA World Hunger are diverse. They include a project in Liberia that helps women learn to read; a job-training service for recent immigrants in Minnesota; a gardening project in Egypt that will help people feed themselves if future conflicts shut down local markets; and scholarships to Lutheran youth to attend anti-hunger training events. In 2013, Lutherans supported over 350 projects in the United States and over 250 projects around the world through gifts to ELCA World Hunger. By learning about hunger and poverty and joining with one another in the struggle against hunger and poverty, we can work together through ELCA World Hunger to make a significant and sustainable impact on the lives of our neighbors and ourselves.



ELCA World Hunger
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¹ From Case Statement for ELCA World Hunger, *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*.

It's very tempting just to talk about social justice. After all, it's much easier to simply have a discussion about why people are poor or hungry than it is to invest our time, resources and ourselves into changing the systems that keep them that way. But as John's letter indicates, we are called to move beyond

1 John 3:18:
"Children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action."
(NRSV)

words to service. As Christians, we enter into the complex issues that plague God's creation with more than an occasional prayer—we enter as agents of God's love and truth. This guide can help you dig into service to learn about hunger, explore what strategies have worked for other groups around the country and develop your own ideas on how to best impact your local and global community. We hope this resource will offer new ideas and renewed fervor for love in action among youth and adults alike.

Why food drives?

THERE ARE LOTS OF WAYS TO fight hunger. Why did we decide to focus on food drives? Food drives serve immediate needs in the local community,



but sometimes, canned food is donated without a thought about the person who receives it or about long-term solutions to hunger. Knowing that the cans you're digging through will be going to

your neighbors has the potential for inspiring a more robust response to hunger. Many anti-hunger campaigns send funds to groups overseas or across the country, no doubt doing good but also leaving little cementing image of social service on youth. Spending time sorting donations and learning together about hunger and justice allows youth to visualize the impact they are helping to make and also prevents the "it doesn't happen here" attitude. We've included tips from our own experiences plus those of dozens of others to help you pull off the most successful food drive you can.

Why a guide?

ELCA CONGREGATIONS and, especially, youth groups have been major supporters of anti-hunger work in their communities. Food drives, fundraising efforts and



educational activities are just some of the ways that Lutheran youth have responded to hunger in the world around them. This guide is written with input and advice from service providers, community agencies and

youth to help you plan a unique leadership experience for youth in your congregation. In fact, it was written by youth, for youth to join the fight against hunger.

It was also written to help your group use "best practices" for your food drive. According to Feeding America, a national network of food pantries and food banks, "A hastily-organized local food drive can actually put more strain on your local food bank than you imagine." By guiding your planning and preparation, this guide will help your group act both lovingly and wisely as you fight hunger in your community.



**Organizer helps
and handouts**

Food drive timeline

ONE MONTH BEFORE

(this may differ, depending on the date the group chooses):

- > **Introduce the idea to youth group participants and congregants**
 - You may want to use the “Opening discussion guide” (found on page 11) and other handouts to help introduce the topic to the group.
 - Other resources you can use from ELCA World Hunger (all are available for free download from www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources):
 - “Food for a Week” – an interactive hunger simulation
 - Toolkits – intergenerational activities about a variety of issues related to hunger
 - “Digging In: A Leader’s Guide to Service Learning”
 - You can also use this food drive guide as the service activity with “Act 2Day 4Tomorrow,” an overnight program for youth from ELCA World Hunger. Just use the time during the overnight to set up the teams and start talking about your food drive!
- > **Ask youth to choose which role (or team) they would like to serve:**
 - **Church Contact** – This person or team will contact your congregation council, outreach committee, etc. to ensure that the whole congregation can be involved; they will also be responsible for making announcements to the congregation about the food drive.
 - **Community Contact** – This person or team will reach out to local food pantries to find the most effective ways your food drive can help.
 - **Teacher** – This person or team will visit websites to learn more about hunger and poverty in your community and share what they find with the youth group.
 - **Spiritual Leader** – This person or team will find Bible verses, prayers or songs to enrich the spiritual experience of the group during the food drive.
 - **Promoter** – This person or team will create posters and write advertisements to include in church bulletins and newsletters; they can also find other local places to advertise (for example, school newspapers, social media, etc.).
 - **Coordinator** – This person or team will help run the drive the day it happens by organizing donations and delivering the donations to the food pantry (with the help of the youth minister/director).
- > **Ask the Church Contact to talk with the congregation about the drive and possible dates. They should be ready to share what they have learned at the next meeting.**
- > **Ask the Community Contact to contact local food pantries. They should be ready to tell the group what they have learned at your next meeting.**

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Food drive timeline (continued)

THREE WEEKS BEFORE

- > Plan an activity for the youth group to learn more about hunger at this week's meeting. If they haven't yet, consider using "Act 2Day 4Tomorrow," an overnight program from ELCA World Hunger! Or, check out the section of this guide called "Activities for understanding hunger" for ideas!
- > Ask the Church and Community Contacts to share what they have learned with the group. Set the dates for your food drive and determine if you will collect food or financial donations.**
- > Ask the Teacher and Spiritual Leader to prepare to share their material at the next youth group meeting.
- > Work with the Promoter to brainstorm ideas for publicizing your drive and submit blurbs for the church bulletin and other announcement outlets for the congregation.

**If you collect monetary donations and want to send a portion to ELCA World Hunger to help pantries, kitchens and other ministries around the world, make your check payable to "ELCA World Hunger" and mail it to ELCA Gift Processing Center P.O. Box 1809 Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE

- > Start publicizing your drive! Make posters to hang up around church and in the community. Ask the Church Contact or Promoter to make an announcement in church.
- > Ask the Teacher to share what they have learned about hunger in your community with the youth group.
- > Ask the Spiritual Leader to offer a prayer and/or Bible reflection at your meeting.



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Food drive timeline (continued)

ONE WEEK BEFORE

- > Keep publicizing the drive!
- > Ask the Coordinator to find a place to store food. They can be really creative, too – if you would like to make a sculpture of canned goods, find a location where everyone can see it.
- > If they haven't yet, ask the Teacher and Spiritual Leader to share with the group.
- > Help the Coordinator arrange transportation for the food.



DURING THE FOOD DRIVE:

- > Keep promoting your drive.
- > When sorting food, check for expiration dates.
- > Chat with the Coordinator to make sure everything is running smoothly.
- > Check in with youth to make sure that everyone is able to participate. This is a team effort!
- > Keep all the youth and the congregation updated on progress.



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Food drive timeline (continued)

**AFTER THE DRIVE
HAS ENDED**

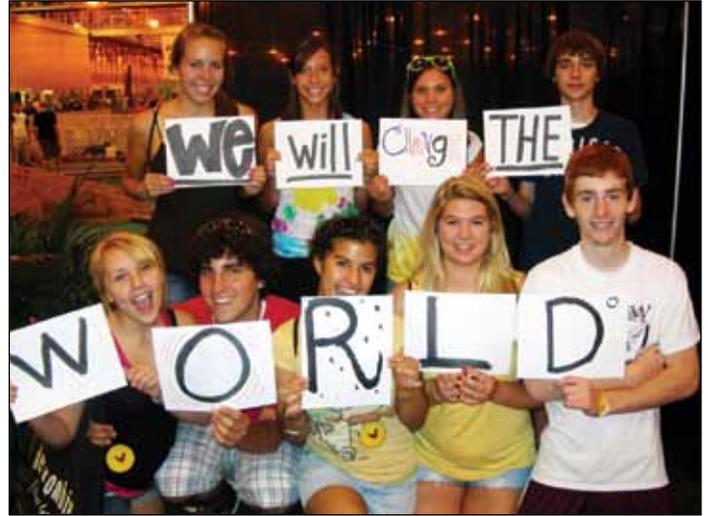
- > **Help the Coordinator sort the food.**
- > **Deliver the food to the food pantry.**
- > **Offer to help the food pantry in any way possible as they take in your donations.**
- > **Celebrate a successful food drive!**
 - Let the congregation know how much food was donated.
 - Celebrate as a group – share a meal together or have a party to end the food drive!
 - Talk about what you learned about yourselves and your community during the drive. There are discussion questions on the “Celebrate!” page.



Opening discussion guide

PHOTOCOPY AND SHARE THE HANDOUTS on pages 12–14 with your youth group. Then ask the following discussion questions:

1. What does it mean to be hungry? How is this different from “suffering from hunger”?
2. How do you think being hungry affects someone’s life? What other things might be affected besides their access to food?
3. What might make hunger and poverty especially difficult for kids?
4. What information on the “Youth and hunger” page did you find surprising or shocking?
5. What would you do to get food if you were living in poverty? Take a look at “Where would you go?” page.
6. How does our community or church fight hunger?
7. How does the ELCA fight hunger? (Check out the short summary on page 5 in the author bios; you can also download and order ELCA World Hunger placemats from www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources.)
8. How do food pantries get food for people facing hunger? What challenges do you think food pantries face?
9. When thinking about service projects, how have you served the community in the past? What is your favorite way to serve?
10. How do you feel doing a food drive will affect you and/or the congregation? What do you hope to learn from this experience?



11. What skills or talents do you think you can bring to a food drive or other service projects?
12. For this food drive, each person will be able to take a part in leading. Which role do you think best suits you? Who do you think would be best in each role?

Note: share the roles with youth; allow them time to go over the responsibilities of each; allow time for brainstorming about which person best fits each role

If youth ask about dates, point them to the community and church contacts. As a group, you can (and probably should!) plan tentative dates, but remind them how important it is to make sure that the congregation and the food pantry are both “on board.”

It does happen here: An intro to domestic hunger

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT HUNGER, it's easy to think that it is only a problem in distant places in the world. Our memories recall stirring photographs of famine and starving masses, and we think of people far away from us.

While this nearly automatic mental image of poverty and famine is certainly accurate, it is not the only painful portrait of hunger in our world. Hunger does not always look like a sickly, small child with a distended stomach. Hunger can also look like obesity, when the only affordable foods available in poor communities are high-calorie, processed and lacking nutritional value. Hunger can look like mothers going days without substantial food to ensure their kids can eat at the end of the month, children unable to focus on their schoolwork after going without breakfast yet again, and families frequently forced to decide between rent, health care or food.

Hunger, often referred to by its technical term "food insecurity," is not always obvious in this country, but it is always devastating. Households with elderly, disabled or child members account for more than 83 percent of all Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly food stamps) recipients, and one in two American kids born today will be on some sort of food assistance at some point in their lives.

Hunger does not discriminate by your address. A 2011 study by Feeding America revealed a horrifying truth about U.S. hunger – 100 percent of counties in the U.S. have food insecurity. It really is everywhere and affects anyone. These researchers could not find a single pocket of population that did not have citizens struggling to put food on the table. Sometimes, that struggle can prove to be too much. That's where you come in.

Jesus said, "Then the Lord will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'"

Matthew 25:34-37 (NRSV)

Food insecurity is "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways" (Life Sciences Research Office, S.A. Anderson, ed., "Core Indicators of Nutritional State for Difficult to Sample Populations," *The Journal of Nutrition* 120: 1557S-1600S, 1990).

Hunger stats

- > **49 million people** in the U.S. were food insecure in 2012
- > Almost **16 million** of these people were children
- > About **half of all Americans** will go on food stamps at some point between the ages of 18 and 65
- > Worldwide, more than **842 million people** suffer from chronic hunger
- > **Every county in the U.S. has people who are food insecure.**

Youth and hunger

IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2012, 15.9 million children were “food insecure,” which means they didn’t have reliable, consistent access to the healthy foods they need to grow.² Growing up in hunger can have some serious effects on children:

- > Almost 22 percent of children under the age of 18 in the U.S. live in households whose income is below the federal poverty guideline (\$23,550 per year for a family of four).³
- > Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to:
 - experience depression, anxiety, violence, asthma, and pneumonia;⁴
 - have frequent colds and stomachaches;⁵
 - repeat a grade in school and score lower on tests and assignments than their classmates;⁶
 - face poverty and hunger after they become adults;⁷
 - And, they are more likely to have poor health even 10 or 15 years after their first experience of hunger, even if they never experience it again.⁸

There’s no doubt: hunger is a youth problem.

But youth are also part of the solution. We can:

SPEAK: Sharing what you learn about hunger can help other youth and adults understand the realities of poverty and hunger. Challenge misconceptions about hunger by writing letters to local or school newspapers or even by joining conversations with friends at school.

ACT: Participating in this food drive is a great way to start addressing hunger in your community. Volunteering at local pantries and shelters can be a great next step!

LEAD: Help your church or school learn more about hunger by hosting an event like a fundraising with a presenter from a local service agency. Or, after the food drive, talk with your congregation about starting a pantry or food shelf at your church. Read Maria and Tariro’s stories to see how they have become leaders in fighting hunger!



² A. Coleman-Jensen, M. Nord, and A. Singh. “Household Food Security in the United States in 2012.” USDA ERS, 2013.

³ ASPE Office of Human Services Policy. “Information on Poverty and Income Statistics: A Summary of 2013 Current Population Survey Data.” Department of Health and Human Services, September 17, 2013.

⁴ American Psychological Association, “Effects of Poverty, Hunger, and Homelessness on Children and Youth” (2012), Available at www.apa.org/pi/families/poverty.aspx#.

⁵ K. Alaimo, C.M. Olson, and E.A. Frongillo Jr. (July 2001). “Food Insecurity and American School-aged Children’s Cognitive, Academic, and Psychosocial Development.” *Pediatrics* 108(1), 44-53. Abstract available at: www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/abstract/108/1/44.

⁶ Donald S. Shepard, Elizabeth Setren and Donna Cooper. “Hunger in America: Suffering We All Pay For” (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2011): 11. See also J. Winicki, and K. Jemison. “Food Insecurity and Hunger in the Kindergarten Classroom: Its Effect on Learning and Growth” (Mimeograph). Washington, D.C.: Economic Research Service, USDA, 2001.

⁷ Robert Lee Wagmiller and Robert M. Adelman, “Childhood and Intergenerational Poverty: The Long-Term Consequences of Growing Up Poor,” National Center for Children in Poverty (Nov 2009). Available at www.nccp.org/publications/pub_909.html.

⁸ Sharon I. Kirkpatrick, Lynn McIntyre, and Melissa L. Potestio, “Child Hunger and Long-term Adverse Consequences for Health,” *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* 164, 8 (August 2010): 754-762.

“Where would you go?”



TANF provides temporary cash assistance to families with children to pay for heat, shelter, and food. Only about 25% of poor families receive TANF benefits.



WIC benefits help low-income women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or who have a child under age five purchase food and other supplies. The average monthly benefit per person was \$43.23 in 2013.



National School Lunch Program

School breakfast and lunch programs ensure that over 30 million children from low-income families are able to get the nutrition they need to learn and grow during the school year.

Where would you go if your family was food insecure?

Government programs (those in blue boxes) help provide a safety net for people who are facing hunger and poverty. They include programs that are meant for particularly vulnerable people, like children and pregnant or new mothers. Some government programs, like TEFAP, provide food. Others, like SNAP, provide money to purchase food.

Community programs help serve immediate needs and often help communities build relationships that can lead to meeting other needs. In local emergency feeding systems, a network of food banks, food pantries and shelves, soup kitchens, meal centers and outreach missions work on the ground to get those who are struggling through the month. Found in some form in nearly every community in the country, emergency feeding systems work with nearby grocery stores, farmers and restaurants to distribute food to those in need. Food drives help local organizations that provide people in poverty with access to food. (This is where you and your food drive come in!) Unlike SNAP or other government programs, many of these charities do not receive governmental funding and only turn away those in need when their resources have nearly run out. This means that organizations count entirely or primarily on donations and grants. When the economy takes a downward turn, so can donations. This makes food assistance harder to come by when it is needed most. When this happens, a sudden push from a big donation like a food drive can be the difference between running out of goods and being able to serve each family.



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Once known as “food stamps,” SNAP helps low-income families buy food at local stores. SNAP recipients receive an average of \$4.41 per person per day.



Backpack Buddy programs at churches provide nutritious food to children on weekends and during the summer.



Community kitchens (also called “soup kitchens”) provide hot meals and, often other services.



Some agencies deliver hot meals or packaged goods to people who do not have reliable transportation, especially people who are elderly or disabled.



Food pantries take many forms, but all distribute food to people in need. They are really busy at the end of each month, when SNAP benefits often run out.



Local farms and community gardens help pantries provide clients with fresh food, a much-needed staple.



YOUR FOOD DRIVE!!



Restaurants and other retailers provide unused food to pantries and kitchens.



Food banks are large warehouses that store donated food for local pantries, kitchens, and shelters.



The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

TEFAP gives nonprofit or public food distribution programs staple items to help serve low-income clients.

Next steps

Learn

- > “Act 2Day 4Tomorrow” is an overnight program from ELCA World Hunger that youth groups can use to learn about how our Lutheran faith calls us to respond to hunger and poverty. You can order this resource from ELCA World Hunger.
- > If you haven’t yet, try “Food for a Week,” an interactive simulation that your group can use to learn about the choices facing people in poverty. It is available for free from ELCA World Hunger (www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources).
- > Bread for the World publishes an annual Hunger Report that has lots of detailed statistics and stories about people facing hunger and poverty in the United States (www.bread.org/hungerreport).
- > ELCA World Hunger’s video series has short clips that show some of our church’s work in the U.S. and around the world. Visit www.youtube.com/elcavideo.

Give

- > ELCA World Hunger supports work across the U.S. and in nearly 60 countries through the generous gifts of Lutherans. Give online at www.ELCA.org/hunger/donate or visit resources.elca.org to order free coin boxes, offering envelopes and other materials to get started.
- > Consider hosting an ELCA Good Gifts Fair at your church – especially around Easter or Christmas – to support this work and to help your congregation learn more about what the ELCA is doing around the world. Find a planning guide and more at www.ELCA.org/goodgifts.
- > Host a fundraising dinner to raise money to support ELCA World Hunger and your local hunger-related ministries. Take advantage of the time to help your congregation learn more about hunger in the U.S. and your community.

Advocate

- > Contact your synod to see if they have an annual “Day on the Hill,” a day when Lutherans come together to learn about local and state issues and to talk with state legislators about their concerns. Many of these events are related to issues of poverty and hunger.

- > Join the ELCA e-Advocacy Network and join a network of ELCA members who reach out to officials on relevant, timely issues that matter to those living with hunger and poverty. Visit www.ELCA.org/advocacy.
- > Bread for the World’s annual letter writing campaign is a great way for the whole congregation to be involved in speaking up for justice in the U.S.. You can find more information at www.bread.org.
- > Talk with your school about hosting a guest speaker to talk about hunger in your area. Learning about the realities of hunger can help change the conversations we have in classrooms, churches and school hallways about people who face hunger.

Lead

- > Listen! “Tune In to Your Neighborhood” is a short, helpful guide that offers practical advice on learning about needs and opportunities in your community while building strong relationships between your congregation and the neighborhood outside its doors. Download it for free: <http://waytolead.org/resource/resources-for-neighborhood/>.
- > If your school does not already have one, consider starting a hunger awareness club. There are lots of organizations that help students raise awareness about hunger and take action to end hunger in their communities. Try searching online for a national organization that meets your needs.
- > Talk with the adults you met through your food drive about having an annual (or monthly!) day of prayer for people who are hungry or living in poverty. Praying together is a powerful way to keep our attention focused on the needs of our neighbors.
- > Interested in doing a service-learning project but need some support? Download “Digging In: A Leader’s Guide to Service Learning” from www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources.
- > ELCA World Hunger also has education grants that can be used to help youth groups and congregations learn more about hunger. If you would like to organize a larger project, the Domestic Hunger Grant program can help, too! Email hunger@ELCA.org to learn more!

Role descriptions and handouts





Church Contact

Welcome to the Church Contact team! The best food drives have the whole congregation involved. Obviously, churches have a lot of things going on at any time. Your responsibility is to make sure that the congregation is onboard with your food drive and ready to help! The tips below will tell you a bit more about your role in the food drive and can help make this easy for you.

Key things to do:

- > Get in touch with the committee or council that helps plan activities in the community. This might be the congregation council, an outreach committee, a social concerns committee, or the like. Try to attend a meeting, if they have one scheduled. Or, you can talk to a member over the phone or at church.
- > If there is someone who would like to help, it would be great to work together with an adult in the church. They can help your group as you plan for your food drive!
- > When you talk with them, be sure to ask:
 - Do the dates you are considering for the food drive work in the church calendar? Are there other things going on during that time that might make it difficult to get everyone involved?
 - Are there spaces where you can store the food you collect (or the money people donate)?
 - Whom should you contact to get an announcement about the food drive in the bulletin and/or the church newsletter? When do these announcements need to be turned in?
- > Either you or the Promoter can make announcements in church, starting about two weeks before your food drive.



Helpful hints

- > Your food drive might work well with other things the congregation has planned. Be open to suggestions that they might offer.
- > Remember, your goal is to get the whole congregation involved, so don't be afraid to ask for help from committees or members to get more people onboard.



Community Contact

Welcome to the Community Contact team! You have a very important role in the food drive. Successful food drives depend a lot on knowing what your community needs and the best ways that your group can help. Your job is to help find a local food pantry to work with and to talk with their staff about your food drive. The tips below can help with this.

Key things to do:

- > Start by searching the Internet for local food pantries and shelters. Look for places that are nearby and have pages on their website where they ask for donations. Some might have links like “How can I help?”
- > Once you find a food pantry, look for their contact information. If they have a general email address or phone number, that might be the best way to get in touch with them.
- > After you talk with them, be sure to share what you find out with your group.
- > Help your group decide which organization you will partner with and how you’ll make a difference.

Questions to ask:

- > How did the food pantry start?
- > How many people do they serve?
- > Which foods or items are most needed?
- > Are there any items they DO NOT need or cannot accept?
- > Do they have any ongoing programs you can help promote?
- > How should your group sort out all of the donations?
- > When and where should you drop it off?
- > Do they have any suggestions for helping you make your food drive a success?
- > Who should you contact with further questions?
- > Do they have any other questions for you?



Helpful hints

- > Staff at food pantries are often pretty busy. It may be a good idea to set up an appointment to talk over the phone or to communicate through email.
- > Be prepared to contact more than one agency. Some food pantries may not need donations, or they may get their donations from a larger depository or food bank.
- > Some food pantries prefer cash donations over food donations. Because they receive donations from a variety of places, they can often use money to get more food than a group can donate through a drive.
- > Try to think of your conversation with them as the start of a relationship between your group and the agency. If everything goes well for everyone involved, there may be other ways that your youth group can stay involved with the food pantry or food bank.
- > If your youth group would like to do so, ask the staff person if there is someone who can speak to your group to help you learn about hunger in your community and what they are doing to help!



Teacher

Welcome to the Teacher team! Your job is to help your group learn about hunger in your area. Learning about the reality of hunger – or food insecurity – is the first step in doing anything about it. Have you ever heard people say, “Hunger only happens in other countries”? Or, “No one is poor in OUR city”? **People in every county in the United States have difficulty accessing the healthy food they need.** Most of us just never hear about it. Your job is to change that.

Key things to do:

- > Start with the websites listed below to find information about hunger in the U.S. and in your state and county.
- > Look through some local newspapers for stories about hunger – and what other people are doing to end it – and cut them out or print them.
- > Write down the most interesting or surprising things that you learned online or in other sources.
- > Take a look at some of the “Activities for understanding hunger” on the next few pages for ideas to help your group learn about hunger.
- > Be ready to share with the group what you learned at your meeting two weeks before the food drive starts. This doesn’t have to be fancy, but a Power Point presentation, Prezi, or other tool might help you share what you learned more easily. Plus, with a presentation, you can show the group graphs, maps and other visuals.

Websites to visit

- > **Slate** – find out how many people receive SNAP (food stamps) in your county. Visit tinyurl.com/HungerByCounty and type your county and state in the box to get the stats!
- > **Feeding America** – lots of good information, including some maps that show hunger across the country. Try tinyurl.com/USHungerMaps for a really helpful interactive tool. Bread for the World – graphs, charts, pictures, videos – this site has it all: www.bread.org/hunger/us/.

- > **Society of St. Andrew** – some surprising information about much food goes to waste in the US and around the world: www.endhunger.org/food_waste.htm

Helpful hints

- > Search online for other websites about hunger!
- > Make sure you tell your group where you found your facts, in case they want to look, too.
- > Be creative! Try to think of interesting ways to share what you learned.
- > Think about what you would want to know. That might help you decide what to share.
- > Keep your notes. Other people in your congregation might want to hear what you learned, too.
- > Want to use an activity? Visit www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources and click on the “Hunger Education” tab. “Food for a Week” is one of the activities you will find there. This is a hunger simulation where everyone in the group gets a profile of someone who is food insecure, and they have to try to get enough food to feed their family for one week. You can find videos on the site, too!

Activities for understanding hunger – Teacher

- 1. Listen.** Talk with the Community Contact about inviting a local leader or someone from the food pantry willing to meet with your group about hunger in your area. Reach out to local food shelves or homeless shelters and see if a staff member would be willing to speak about their experiences and the need in your community.
- 2. Engage.** Sometimes, we aren't sure what we think about poverty and hunger, because nobody's ever asked. Activities like this one can help change that by helping your group see how their views match with the realities of hunger.

Put signs that span a single wall of your space that read “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree.” The “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” should be in opposite corners of the wall. Explain that this activity is about being honest and having opinions, and “no opinion” is not an opinion.

CAUTION: Statistically speaking, you probably have at least one youth in your group who has or is struggling with food insecurity – and you may or may not know which one(s). Allow your students to honestly voice their opinions, but be wary of harsh judgments or condemnations. Heavily emphasize the empathy urged in Ephesians 4:29 – “Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need that it may give grace to those who hear.” (NRSV)

Tell youth to stand up and assume a random spot on the wall. Once they've arranged themselves, read the following statements about poverty and hunger and ask them to move according to their thoughts on the subject:

- 1) Hunger and poverty are only problems in urban areas.
- 2) Ending hunger is too expensive, so we can't afford to do more to stop it.
- 3) The single biggest cause of hunger is too little food produced in the world.
- 4) People who receive food stamps are lazy and don't work.
- 5) Poor nutrition causes nearly half of all deaths of children under 5 years old around the world.
- 6) More than 30 percent of food in the United States is wasted.
- 7) There is nothing that we can do to end hunger.
(Feel free to add others!)

Once students have settled themselves, ask them why they stood where they did. You might get some lively debate – and that's what you want. After students have defended their original positions, read the “hunger facts” on page 22 that may surprise them. Ask the students how the new information might affect their opinions. The goal is not to make everyone “right” but to talk honestly about our beliefs and challenging realities.

continued on next page



3. **Simulate.** According to the USDA, the average SNAP, or food stamp, benefit is \$1.47 per person per meal. This is not very much. Take your students to a local grocery store and have them explore trying to buy three or four days' worth of meals for their families on such a budget. Can they do it? How healthy are the foods they are able to "purchase"? How has this activity changed their thoughts on those receiving food stamps?

For an activity you can do without leaving your meeting space, check out ELCA World Hunger's interactive hunger simulation "Food for a Week," which is available at www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources. There is also a PowerPoint presentation that can be used during the activity.

4. **Click.** Got computers? Try "Spent" (PlaySpent.org), an online poverty simulation that challenges participants to try to get by on minimum wage. Facing a sudden job loss and dwindled savings, you have to make choices regarding work, bills and food to make it through a month on \$1000. It's very difficult to go 30 days without defaulting on a loan, skipping key medical care or skimping on necessities for your child – further illustrating how hard the choices can be for someone living in poverty.

After everyone has had a chance to play a few times, bring the group back together. Keep a whiteboard where they can write their best scores or longest amount of time they could go before running out of money. Ask your group what the most difficult decisions were for them, and what they think life would be like if this were their reality. What are resources they found themselves wishing for? Then, transition into a different conversation – how can we get the resources on this "wish list" to the people who need them?

5. **View.** Host a movie night and screen the documentary "A Place at the Table," available on Netflix or iTunes. This film is an excellent teaching tool that makes the complex subject of hunger and poverty accessible to lots of viewers.

Similar but shorter is the 40-minute short film "Hunger Hits Home." Produced by the Food Network and available on YouTube, this mini-documentary also does a great job of looking at food insecurity in a variety of settings – urban and rural, single- and two-parent households. Regardless of which you choose, take time after the movie is over to talk about it. What surprised you? How do you feel about what you saw?

"The Line" is another great movie to help youth and adults understand food insecurity in the United States. You can find more information at www.thelinemovie.com.

You can also see some of the work the ELCA is doing to fight hunger and poverty in the U.S. and around the world in the short videos available at www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources. Each short video has a discussion guide to accompany it.

6. **Host!** The staff at ELCA World Hunger is available to visit with your group to help you learn about the reality of hunger in the U.S. and the ways that the ELCA is working to accompany people living in poverty and hunger. Many synods in the ELCA also have hunger teams that can help you "dig deeper" into hunger in your synod. Ask your youth group leader for help getting in touch with ELCA World Hunger staff or your synod's hunger team.

Hunger facts

1. 100 percent of counties in the US have households that are food insecure.⁹
2. 17.7 percent of Americans living in rural areas live below the federal poverty line (\$23,550 per year for a family of four). That's about 8.5 million people.¹⁰
3. The United Nations estimates that it would cost about \$3.2 billion a year to provide food for all the 66 million hungry school-age children in the developing year.¹¹
4. In 2013, Americans spent \$21.57 billion on pet food.¹²
5. According to the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization, the world produces enough food to provide everyone on the planet with over 2,500 calories per day. That's 500 calories more than the average person needs!¹³
6. In the United States, 133 billion pounds of the 430 billion pounds of food available at the retail and consumer levels is wasted every year.¹⁴
7. More than 58 percent of households receiving SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps) had at least one working adult during the month they received benefits.¹⁵
8. Poor nutrition is responsible for 45 percent of the deaths of children less than 5 years old worldwide. That's over 3 million children each year.¹⁶
9. Global hunger rates have declined over the last two decades, from 18.6 percent of the world's population to 12.5 percent.¹⁷
10. Food pantries and banks help food insecure families and individuals meet daily needs that cannot be met merely through government programs like SNAP.

Once you've run through the facts, ask the group questions about the activity: What was surprising? Do stereotypes of people in poverty match reality? Have you ever been stereotyped, maybe because of your age? Do stereotypes about youth match reality? How might stereotypes make people feel about themselves and the world around them? How does God call us to treat people who face poverty and hunger? (Feel free to add your own, too!)

⁹ Feeding America, <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-studies/map-the-meal-gap.aspx>.

¹⁰ C. DeNavas-Walt, B.D. Proctor, and J.C. Smith. "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2012." US Census Bureau, 2013.

¹¹ World Food Programme, "Hunger Statistics," www.wfp.org/hunger/stats.

¹² American Pet Products Association, "US Pet Industry Spending Figures and Future Outlook," 2013, www.americanpetproducts.org/press_industrytrends.asp.

¹³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, www.fao.org/docrep/x0262e/x0262e05.htm

¹⁴ Society of St. Andrew, www.endhunger.org/food_waste.htm

¹⁵ Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3894

¹⁶ World Food Programme, www.wfp.org/hunger/stats

¹⁷ Voice of America, www.voanews.com/content/almost-870-million-people-chronically-undernourished-fao-says/1522979.html



Spiritual Leader

Welcome to the Spiritual Leader team! Fighting hunger for Lutherans means living out our faith among people living in poverty. In faith, God calls us to love and serve our neighbors in lots of ways. The author of the First Letter of John wrote to the church, “let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action” (1 John 3:18). Food drives are an important way we can answer this call and be a loving and serving presence in our communities. Your role in the food drive is to remind the group of God’s call to love and service in our communities and to help them see that Lutheran faith sends us out into the world – to love, to serve, and to walk with our neighbors.

Key things to do

- > On the next page, there are some verses from the Bible and some questions to help you get started. You can feel free to use these or change them, if you like.
- > Evangelical Lutheran Worship and Lutheran Book of Worship have some great prayers listed in the front pages. Look for prayers about ministry among people in poverty or people who hunger that you can share with your group.
- > Look through the Bible, listen to music from Christian bands and watch movies or video clips that show people of faith doing service in their communities. Write down verses, lyrics or scenes from movies that you find meaningful.
- > Be ready to share with the group what you learned at your meeting two weeks before the food drive starts. Read together verses from the Bible, watch a clip from a video, or listen to music that helps your group see how their faith connects with the fight to end hunger. Have a prayer ready to offer after you talk about the verses, lyrics, or clips with the group.

Places to look

- > The next page can help you get started, but you might also want to search online or in an index of a Bible for more verses. There’s a lot about hunger and a lot about helping the neighbor in the Bible – over 2000 verses! Try looking for words like “poor,” “hunger,” “neighbor,” “justice” and “service.”

- > If you can find a copy, The Poverty and Justice Bible is a great version of the Bible that has some helpful suggestions for how to talk about verses in the Bible.
- > Bread for the World has some excellent suggestions for songs and prayers on its website: www.bread.org/help/church/worship/.

Helpful hints

- > Plan on preparing something for the group that is about 10-15 minutes long. Leaving time for questions and discussions is important, too!
- > Be sure to check with your youth group leader about videos or music before sharing them with the group. They can help you find things that are appropriate and most helpful for the group. (They can also make sure you have the technology there to listen or watch!)
- > If you can’t find a prayer that you like, try writing your own. Or, if you plan ahead, you can ask everyone to write a short prayer to share.
- > If you feel comfortable, ask your youth group leader or pastor if you can pray the prayer with the whole congregation on Sunday. Or, if you find a song that everyone can sing, ask if it can be included in the service some Sunday. This will get the whole congregation involved!

Ideas for Bible verses and discussions – Spiritual Leader

Genesis 41:46b–49

Because a famine is predicted for the future, Joseph is given the task of storing up grain in years when the harvest is plentiful.

Discussion questions

1. How is Joseph's food gathering effort like a modern day food drive? How is it different?
2. What are some difficulties Joseph could have faced in this effort?
3. What could be some difficulties we might face in our food collection efforts?

Micah 6:6–8

The prophet considers what God requires of the faithful.

Discussion questions

1. Is participating in a food drive most associated with justice, kindness or humility?
2. Why do you think God wants us to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly”? (Living in community? Individual spirituality? Salvation?)

Acts 6:1–4

The Greek widows complain to Jesus' disciples about being left out of the daily food distribution. The community selects a group that will oversee the food distribution process.

Discussion questions

1. What picture comes to mind of this “daily distribution of food”? How is it similar to or different from the food pantries we are familiar with?
2. What are some reasons why people would be left out of a food distribution?
3. Does a food drive help people in the short-term or the long-term? What else might be needed in the fight against hunger? What are other ways we can end hunger in our community?

2 Corinthians 8:1-4

The apostle Paul is taking a collection for the poor in Jerusalem. He is trying to get the believers in Corinth to donate to the collection as well.

Discussion questions

1. What is Paul's general message about giving?
2. What characteristics do the people who are giving possess?
3. Do you think Paul will convince the people? Why or why not?

Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus tells his disciples about the difference between people who love God and people who don't.

Discussion questions

1. What is the difference between the “sheep” and the “goats”?
2. What does it mean to call people “the least of these”?
3. If Jesus was saying this today, who else might be included in his list of “the least of these”?
4. Where does Jesus seem to say that we come close to God? How do we serve God?



Promoter

Welcome to the Promoter team! Do you know what's just as important as the food or money you collect? The people who can bring it! Your job is to make sure as many people know about your food drive as possible. You can also get pretty creative with the food drive by coming up with a theme or tying it to a holiday or other special day for your congregation.

Key things to do

- > Once your group starts planning your food drive, think of themes that might help get people involved. You can find some ideas on the next two pages.
 - > Design posters that you can hang in your church, around the neighborhood, or at your school. Make sure they have the dates and times for the food drive, the kinds of food (or money, if you are collecting money instead) that your local food pantry most needs, and the location where you will be collecting it. You might want to talk with the Teacher team about statistics about hunger that you can put on posters, too!
 - > Start hanging posters up about two weeks before the food drive. If you hang them too soon, people will forget about it. If you put them up too late, then people won't be ready to donate.
 - > Write short blurbs about the food drive that you can put in the church bulletin or newsletter and in the school newspaper, if you like.
 - > Find out from your youth group leader or pastor who puts the bulletins and newsletters together for your church. They can let you know how long the blurb can be and when you need to turn them in to make sure they get printed.
- #### Helpful hints
- > If your group decides to do a drive for money for your food pantry, try a "noisy offering." All you need is a few large metal bowls that people can throw coins in as they leave the church. (Toss a few quarters in, and you'll see why it's called a "noisy" offering!)
 - > Before you hang posters, make sure that you have permission. Schools, churches and neighborhoods often have guidelines about where posters can be hung.
 - > After your food drive is over, be sure to take down the posters, especially if you hung them up around your community.
 - > You might want to check with local stores or coffee shops to see if you can hang posters there. Some of them have community bulletin boards that you can use.
 - > If you want to find some posters that are about hunger in general, check out www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources for free posters from ELCA World Hunger. You can also email ELCA World Hunger at hunger@ELCA.org, if you would like them mailed to you.
 - > Have fun! Your job is really creative, so talk with some friends about how to design posters that can stand out from the crowd!
 - > Remind your congregation of your food drive in as many ways as possible: bulletins, newsletters, announcements, social media, etc.
 - > Use what you know works for your particular church – do you have a heavy social media presence? Does your church send out a weekly email or blog? Where do posters in your church get the most traffic?
 - > Communicate in the ways you know will be effective for your audience. Also be aware of demographics – youth and young adults may always see Facebook updates, but older attendees may rely faithfully on the announcements handed out every Sunday morning.

It's that time of year: Holiday-specific drives – Promoter

HOLIDAY SPECIFIC DRIVES are a great way to boost momentum in a congregation. Common themes include: Trick-or-Treat, Christmas in July (since most shelves receive the fewest donations during this time), or the Turkey Trot.

Trick-or-Treat and the Turkey Trot are the same idea (just different names for different holidays). The drive goes as follows:

1. Food Drive committee organizers construct a map of residential areas close to the church.
2. Flyers detailing the mission of the food drive, relevant hunger statistics to your area or state (ask the Teacher team for help!), and explaining that representatives from your church organization will be stopping by at a predetermined time on Wednesday night the following week to collect canned/ boxed food items left in a plastic bag on their doorstep. The flier should have a contact number or email address of the drive's coordinator to answer any questions that may arise.

3. Split up your youth group into teams of 3–5 (at least one adult chaperone in each team) to an area outlined on the map to distribute the fliers. These same groups will return to their designated neighborhood to pick up food items left on the doorstep the following Wednesday.
4. This kind of drive does especially well because not only does it boost hunger awareness in the community and increase the amount of donations your drive will receive, but it also raises the profile of your church and youth group throughout the community (maybe even encouraging someone to try out your church the following Sunday)!

Whether you decide to perform one of these kinds of drives, or you create a new idea on your own, holiday drives are definitely the most fun (and festive). Encourage your congregation to get into the celebratory time of year (yes, even July counts – summer always calls for celebration!) by helping those in need and being mindful of their blessings. Your community will thank you, and we promise you'll have a blast doing it!



Other themes for your food drive - Promoter

“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday

Each fall, the ELCA dedicates one Sunday as “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday, a day when all of the nearly 10,000 congregations in the ELCA are invited to do service in their local communities. Talk with your pastor, youth group leader, or other adults in your church about what your congregation has planned for that day. If it works out, this could be a great time to do your food drive! For more information, visit www.ELCA.org/dayofservice.

50-50 offering

Many food pantries would prefer to collect money rather than food from congregations. They often have relationships with local stores, farmers or even restaurants, so they can buy more food with less money than individuals can. This is called “leveraging.” ELCA World Hunger can “leverage” donations, too, using gifts to support hundreds of ministries throughout the U.S. and around the world. If your local pantry is looking for financial donations rather than food, consider doing a “50-50 offering,” where 50 percent of the donations will go to the local food pantry, and the other 50 percent will go to ELCA World Hunger to support pantries in other communities. If you go this route, be sure to clearly indicate where donations are going in your promo materials. To donate to ELCA World Hunger, make your check payable to “ELCA World Hunger” and mail it to ELCA Gift Processing Center P.O. Box 1809 Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.

Noisy offering

If you are looking for another idea to raise money for ELCA World Hunger and your local pantry, try doing a “noisy offering” in your church. Talk with your pastor or youth group leader about this idea first. If they are onboard, all you need to do is set up some large metal bowls near the door of the sanctuary. As people leave, they can throw their coins in the bowls. Remind them to bring their coins in! This works really well with Sunday school offerings, too.

Crank up the competition

If your food drive can last for two or three weeks, try a friendly competition! Pit Sunday school classes against each other, or have the adults and youth face off for the title of Food Drive Champ. Place a poster board of the current totals in a place everyone can see and announce who’s in the lead each Sunday during your campaign.



Coordinator

Welcome to the Coordinator team! Your job starts with the planning, like everyone else's, but it really gets going the day before and the day of your food drive. Your job is to make sure that donations are handled correctly, to let your group know how the food drive is going, and to help get the donations to the food pantry.

Key things to do

- > Find an easy location within the church for donation collection at the most convenient time for your congregation. It may help to put an “express” donation box with a lid (in case it is windy) in front of the church or by a sidewalk in the parking lot in case some congregation members cannot make the designated drop off time.
- > Place all boxes and bins in the same room, closet or hallway. This way, when it is time to sort food, everything has been kept in the same location. Always keep any plastic bags, bins, or boxes that the food is brought in – this will help you when it is time to take it all to the food pantry.
- > Go through all of the cans and boxes (we recommend setting up a committee of those who are willing to sort donations after every day of the drive) and throw away all expired items.
- > Keep count of how much food is donated or money is collected. Keep a running tally so you can tell the congregation how much was collected after your food drive is done.
- > Get a team together to help deliver the food or money to the food pantry. If you cannot drive, ask an adult with a van to help.

Helpful hints

- > If you collect donations and want to send a portion to ELCA World Hunger to help pantries and other ministries around the world, have the check payable to “ELCA World Hunger” and mail it to ELCA Gift Processing Center P.O. Box 1809 Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.
- > Work closely with the other youth in your group to come up with the best plan for collecting donations. If the Promoter and the rest of the group decide to collect donations around the neighborhood (like in a “Turkey Trot” – ask the Promoter about this), then be sure to get a good team of volunteers together.
- > Keep good records of how much is donated, whether you are collecting money or food. This will make it easy to track your progress.
- > Be careful about expired food. You can definitely expect that some of the food you receive will be expired or near the expiration date. If you aren't sure, throw it out. Food pantries have very strict rules about food safety, and they need to trust you to donate safe, healthy food.
- > Take pictures! Having photos of your progress is a great way to share the story of your food drive with the congregation. You can also send your pictures to ELCA World Hunger (hunger@ELCA.org), so other congregations can see what you did!
- > Be ready to help the food pantry sort the food once you deliver it. Check with your group's Community Contact to see if there were any specific instructions given when they talked with the food pantry. This is a great way to help the pantry; not only are you donating food or money, but you are also donating your time and labor! Many times, that can be as important as the food or money itself.

The food drive is done: Celebrate and reflect!

CONGRATULATIONS! You've run a successful food drive! Now it is time to celebrate and reflect on your group's experiences. Take this time to recognize the success of your drive as well as the tireless work done by others to help pull it off. Publicize the total amount of donations. Make sure that you thank all congregation members for donating and being accommodating during the duration of the drive. These statistics could not have been possible without their help! A thank-you banquet, potluck, or dinner to thank those who helped you make the drive possible is always a nice way to recognize those who have contributed tremendously as well as acknowledge everyone who has helped along the duration of the drive. Contacting local media may be a nice way to let the community know about your congregation's hard work – the food shelf and your youth deserve the recognition!

Below are some discussion questions you can use with your youth group to help reflect on the experience. On the next page, you can find some ideas for next steps!

Discussion questions

1. What were some surprising things you learned about hunger during our food drive?
2. What went really well? What things could be improved for our next food drive?
3. Doing a food drive helps feed people who are hungry. What other things did this food drive accomplish? (Possible answers: meet new people in church, learn more about hunger, provided chance to be leaders in the church, etc.)

Take another look at the “Where would you go?” page:

4. Food drives provide relief to people who are hungry. ELCA World Hunger works by providing relief, but it also works in areas like education (learning about hunger together), advocacy (speaking up for policies and laws that help people in poverty), and sustainable development (helping people in poverty feed themselves by offering job training, education and access to healthcare, for example.) What are some other ways, besides food drives, that our church can help end hunger in our community?
5. Were you prepared for the things you had to do in your role or with your team?
6. What helped everyone work together to make the food drive a success?
7. What personal skills or experiences helped you in your role or on your team?
8. What are our next steps? How can we fight hunger in other ways, with our next activity?
9. How can we keep up our relationship with people in our church and people at the local food pantry or food bank?
10. Check out the “Next steps” page for some ideas!

Thank you for all of your hard work! Together, we can make a difference – in our lives and the lives of our neighbors!



ELCA World Hunger
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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