

ELCA WORLD HUNGER'S 40 DAYS OF GIVING

Educational Series

Over the next six weeks, we will journey together through the season of Lent, reflecting on hunger, hope, and God's love in a world of both abundance and need. Each weekly session is based on a devotion from ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving, a special devotional for your congregation to use as you take up the challenge of responding to hunger through ELCA World Hunger together.

Each weekly session will have: an opening prayer, a Scripture reading, a devotion from a leader in the ELCA that introduces the session's theme, instructions for a group activity, a story from a ministry supported by ELCA World Hunger, questions for discussion and a closing prayer. You are welcome to adapt these sessions to fit your needs, perhaps by adding a hymn or writing your own discussion questions.

Weekly Session Five: A GRAND CAST (Joshua 5:9-12)

Devotion from Bishop Jim Gonia, bishop for the Rocky Mountain Synod of the ELCA.

LEADER'S GUIDE

Instructions for leader:

Welcome the participants and introduce the session's theme: A GRAND CAST. This week we will read a devotion from Bishop Jim Gonia of the ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod.

Invite the group to join in a brief moment of silence before continuing with the opening prayer.

Materials needed:

- Printed cards (see below)



Prayer

Gracious God, you invite all who hunger and thirst to your table, where plates and cups run over with your gifts. Bless us in our hunger, that we may be filled and learn to fill others at the tables in our midst. In the name of Jesus Christ, the bread of life who meets our every need, we pray. Amen.



Read (or invite someone to read) Joshua 5:9-12

⁹The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰While the Israelites were encamped in Gilgal they kept the Passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹²The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

When the Israelites left Egypt, they became refugees crossing lands they didn't know and hoping God would lead them to a place they could call home. During their wandering, God provided manna for them to eat to sustain them on their long journey. When they arrived in Gilgal, the manna ceased, but God continued to provide for them through the crops of the land of Canaan.

Read (or invite someone to read) Bishop Gonia's reflection:

For half my ministry I have served globally, most often in places where people struggle with various degrees of economic poverty, often surviving as subsistence farmers or small merchants. These experiences have helped me realize that, although my external setting might change, I am never far removed or unconnected from people living under the burden of poverty, locally and globally.

For that reason whenever I offer a prayer for a meal, I express thanks for hands that have labored in ways seen and unseen for the sake of taking part in God's bounty. This calls to mind those who have grown and produced food, transported it, provided for the sale of it, cooked, and served it. It includes a grand cast of characters, some of whom are dealing with the impact of poverty in their lives.

How does Bishop Gonia remain connected to "people living under the burden of poverty"?

Who is part of the "grand cast of characters" that takes part in providing Bishop Gonia – and us – with food?

How does God continue to provide for us today?

Ask

Place the cards from pages 5-8 below on a large table, or hand them out to participants. Each of these cards represents one element in the process it takes to provide a hamburger. Instruct them to arrange the cards in order of the steps – from beginning to last – that go into making a hamburger. If you have a large group, you can also divide the participants into two teams, with a set of cards for each group to arrange. When they are finished, the cards should be visible to all participants. You can post them on a wall, or have participants stand and hold them, etc.

Ask

Why was this particular order chosen?

What steps were the hardest to put in order?

What steps involved God in the process?

How far might some parts of the burger have traveled?

Where were humans involved in the process?

What might their experiences be like?

In Bishop Gonia's reflections, he notes the "grand cast" that is part of producing our food. Often, those involved – farm workers, service industry staff – are paid wages and benefits that are not sufficient for them to feed their own families, even as they work to produce food for others.

Read (or invite someone to read) the following story:

Note: This story is a composite of several true stories that represent the challenges workers face without paid sick leave.

When Edward's five-year-old daughter was admitted to a hospital for a high fever, his first call was not to family members but to his employer. As a cashier for a fast-food restaurant, Edward did not have the benefit of paid sick leave. He knew that he had to make a choice between going to work to earn much-needed income and staying with his scared and sick daughter. His employer was sympathetic to Edward's choice to stay with his daughter but told Edward that he could only be absent two days.

His daughter was released from the hospital, but within days, Edward started feeling ill himself. His temperature soared, and the fever made it difficult for him to get out of bed. Without paid sick leave, he began to worry about how he would pay rent after missing so much work. His manager was also less sympathetic as the busy weekend approached. The loss of income from days off was bad enough, but now Edward started to worry about losing his job entirely. On the second day after he became sick, Edward was forced to go back to the restaurant, the twin threats of no income to pay rent and no job to provide an income too serious to ignore, especially with medical bills from the hospital much higher than he could afford on his \$8.50 per hour wages. With a lingering virus, Edward went back to work, where he hoped that by being careful, he wouldn't infect any customers.

Eighty percent of workers in food service in the United States do not have paid sick days. The challenge that this presents for them is compounded by the wages they earn, which are often too low to afford time off from work that is not paid. Studies have found that when workers have paid sick leave, the health of a whole community can be protected. Parents with paid sick leave are 20 percent less likely to send a sick child to school and less likely to put fellow workers and customers at risk for illness.

Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey (LEAMNJ), supported in part by ELCA World Hunger, has joined with other community partners and faith-based organizations to support legislation that would allow workers to earn paid sick leave they could use to stay home when sick or to care for ill family members. "Workers should not have to choose between caring for their health and keeping their paychecks or jobs," Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt of Camden, N.J., has said. "Guaranteeing workers the ability to earn paid sick days would help ensure workers do not have to choose between their health and their economic security."

The campaign for this legislation began in 2014. With the support of ELCA World Hunger, LEAMNJ continues to advocate for the rights of workers like Edward, who must make the choices Assemblywoman Lampitt hopes they can one day avoid.

Sources: NJ.com, NJ Time to Care Coalition



Prayer

Abundant God, we give you thanks for the fruitful earth, which produces what is needed for life. Bless those who work in the fields; grant favorable weather to all engaged in agriculture; and help us to ensure that all people share the fruits of the earth, rejoicing in your goodness; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

21 STEPS to a Burger on a Bun with Lettuce, Tomato, and a Pickle

Seeds and soil	Farm Workers
Cashier	Harvest
Water	Lettuce

21 STEPS to a Burger on a Bun with Lettuce, Tomato, and a Pickle

Wheat	Jars
Mill	Pickles
Flour Bag	Calf

21 STEPS to a Burger on a Bun with Lettuce, Tomato, and a Pickle

Processing Plant	Feedlot
Fertilizer and Pesticide	Tomatoes
Meat Packing Plant	Scientist

21 STEPS to a Burger on a Bun with Lettuce, Tomato, and a Pickle

<p>Truck/Train/ Airplane</p>	<p>Hamburger</p>
<p>Cook</p>	