

No Child Goes Hungry

Workshops for Grades 4-7

Introduction for Leaders

“[No Child Goes Hungry](#)” works to eliminate childhood hunger, one child at a time. No matter what other justice-making work you do, when you focus on one meal for one child, action becomes reality. In this workshop, we will be exploring these words from the Gospel of Matthew:

“When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat.
When I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink.”

We will be helping the group to understand:

- Some children, perhaps even themselves, do not have enough to eat
- The cost of food for a family of four
- Importance of partnering rather than seeing ourselves as the helper
- Recognizing that our UU identity includes treating everyone with dignity and respect and that our UU identity has compassionate service at its core.

Set Up

Comfortable seating at a table and a chalice.

Materials needed include:

- chart paper and markers
- paper, pens, markers
- electronic devices, or newspaper flyers with grocery items to check food costs
- Be ready to share information on food drives, pantries, soup kitchens, or other feeding programs that your congregation participates in or is in your community that is part of a “No Child Goes Hungry” project.

Welcome and Check In

Ask children to check in by sharing their names and a food they have eaten and enjoyed in the last 24 hours.

Introductory Activity

Have children partner up and share foods that they wish they could eat over the next two days. Tell them to include healthy foods, as well as include some favorite foods that might not be on a healthy list.

Bring children back together and ask them to share how much they think it costs to buy groceries for their family for the week. Accept all answers and ask to join their families on a food shopping trip sometime and to pay attention to what items cost and what their entire bill was for the trip. Tell them to think about how important it is to have the money needed for buying food for their family.

Activity

Project Hunger Workshop (Permission granted from Lauren Strauss at First Universalist Congregation in Minneapolis, MN who based the activities on work by Unilever’s Project Sunlight program.)

The goal of this activity is to highlight the difficulties of making a lean budget stretch to meet a family’s nutritional needs.

- On a large piece of paper, make three columns and label them: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner. Have children brainstorm their favorite things to eat for each meal and write their responses up on the page.
- On a fresh large sheet of paper, draw a table like this:

	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		

Work together to come up with a menu for a family of four to eat three balanced meals for two days. Write the meals in the table.

Note: At this point, **do not** talk with them about the cost of the meals they are choosing. Do insist that they create balanced meals (include a protein, fruit or vegetable, grain and dairy product in each meal), but allow them to add “extras” like chips, sodas and desserts if they choose.

On a fresh sheet of paper, work together to make a grocery list including all the items and ingredients that would be needed to make the six meals your group chose. Then, have adults and youth volunteers use their phones (or use grocery flyers) to figure out how much each item on the grocery list would cost. (You can price items on a site like [Walmart](https://www.walmart.com).) It might be a good idea to break up the group and have each small group figure out the prices for one part of the grocery list, to keep things moving along and keep kids interested.

- Add up the total cost of your shopping trip and write it in large numbers on your list.
- Tell the class: According to the USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture), a family of four will need at least \$41.68 to buy two days of groceries to feed their family.
- Ask the class: How could we change our meals to bring our cost down to \$41.68 or less?
- Take suggestions of how to modify your menu to bring your grocery cost down. If they don’t suggest it, you can suggest: “What if we had access to a food pantry and could use food like

those items people bring to donate, without having to pay for it? “Tell them they can incorporate up to four food pantry items into their meals for free.

- Continue working on your plan until you have come up with three balanced meals for two days for \$41.68 or less.

Discussion of Project:

Ask children:

1. What was it like to do this project?
2. How do you feel about the meal plan we came up with? How does it compare to our original plan?
3. What did you notice about the cost of different foods?
4. What kinds of trade-offs might people have to make to balance nutrition and their budget?
5. Out of every 10 kids in America, how many do you think sometimes don't know where their next meal is coming from? (The answer is 2 out of 10. That's about 16 million kids a year, or enough children to fill 18,000 school buses.)
6. What feelings did you have as we worked on our plan? (Point out any feelings you had or noticed in the room to stimulate discussion, including frustration, confusion, disappointment, conflict, relief, optimism, pessimism, etc.) Observe that food insecurity can bring up a lot of emotions for people.
7. Wonder about some of the problems that children might have if they don't have reliable access to healthy foods. (If needed, suggest: weakened immune system and more frequent illness; missing school; dental problems; decreased ability to concentrate on school; slower development; struggles with social relationships; stressed parents/caregivers due to financial struggles.)
8. Share food programs that your congregation partners and contributes to. Look up information on the programs in advance and investigate how these children/youth might get involved.

Small Group Discussions

Invite children/youth to get into small groups to discuss:

- Does your family have special foods at certain times of the year or for certain holidays? Describe them to each other. What do they enjoy about these foods? What do they dislike?
- Who shops for food in your family? Who cooks?
- How might you make sure food pantries and food drives provide both delicious and healthy food? How can you help your food drive at your congregation? (Or support the specific No Child Goes Hungry project your congregation has planned.)

Closing Questions

Today we learned about the cost of food and how difficult it is to get enough food for a family if there is a limited budget. We also learned about treating everyone with dignity and respect.

- How can a food pantry help families who have limited budgets?
- If you have enough food and you have the chance to give some food to a food kitchen or a food pantry, how will you ask your family if you can help?

Extinguishing the Chalice

“As we extinguish this chalice, we take curiosity, kindness and compassion with us out into the world.”

Note: Provide any information from “No Child Goes Hungry” about projects your congregation is sponsoring for ongoing discussion and action from home.