

Forty Days to Better Understanding

The folks at Seeds of Hope believe that authentic work towards healing hunger comes from an inner strength, which comes from spiritual disciplines. We also believe that a concerted effort, even by a small number of people, to observe a time of prayer together can make a huge difference in how we all face the problems of hunger and poverty. This forty-day calendar is designed to help you prepare spiritually for the work ahead of us. We challenge you to use the scriptures and suggestions on these two pages to make these forty days a holy season.—with blessings from the Seeds of Hope staff and Council of Stewards

7 Isaiah 1:15-17
When you go grocery shopping, buy extra canned foods, peanut butter, or other staples for your local food pantry. Buy your favorites so that a hungry person can enjoy the foods that you do.

11 Matthew 25: 36, 43
Go to bed hungry and pray for those who have to do this every night.

14 Isaiah 3:13-15
Find out if your local restaurants and grocery stores give their extra food to feeding programs. If they don't, help them organize a food reclamation project.

1 Luke 9:10-17
Get a Bible commentary and look up all of the references to feeding the poor. Compare this with references to other prominent issues today.

4 Luke 1:46-55
Look a homeless person in the eye.

8 Proverbs 14:21
Drink only water for one week. Most people don't have the luxury to choose what to drink. Many people don't even have access to water that's safe to drink.

12 1 Timothy 1:5
Carry an extra apple or sandwich in your lunch or briefcase. Give it to people who ask for money.

15 Luke 14:12-14
Read *Hunger News & Hope*. (You can find it online at www.seedspublishers.org) Share what you have learned with others.

2 Leviticus 23: 22
Order a *Children's Hunger Educational Kit*, for the children in your church or school, from the Presbyterian Hunger Program. It includes excellent resources from the PHP, Heifer Project International, World Food Day, Church World Service, and Bread for the World. (www.pcusa.org)

5 Psalm 41: 3
Go to the World Food Programme web site (www.wfp.org), click on "Hunger Map," and learn about the hunger "hot spots."

9 1 Cor. 4:9-13
Check out an audiobook of *The Street Lawyer* by John Grisham. Listen to it while you walk, drive, or clean house.

16 Job 5:1-16
Learn what you can about fair trade coffee. See if your church is involved in the Equal Exchange interfaith coffee program (see www.equalexchange.com). Write to the Folger's, Maxwell House, and Nestle companies and urge them to give their farmers a decent price for their beans. If you use a local brand, ask the store manager to find out what their buying practices are.

3 Micah 6:8
Check out the film *When Did I See You Hungry?* and other films (about Skid Row, immigrant issues, work with lepers, and other compelling topics) at www.sandamianofoundation.org.

6 Matthew 6: 25-34
Learn about what you can do to help evacuees of Hurricane Katrina. Go to www.CharityNavigator.org.

10 James 5:1-6
Check out a brand new resource from Church World Service and the Presbyterian Hunger program: Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table (www.pcusa.org/hunger/features/justeating.htm.)

13 Jeremiah 22:13-16
Look at the labels on your clothing. Did it come from a sweat shop? (See www.fairtradefederation.org or www.sweatshops.org.)

17 Psalm 82:1-4
Organize a group in your church to assemble relief kits for people in war zones or disaster areas. Either the Mennonite Central Committee (www.mcc.org/respond/kits) and Church World Service (www.churchworldservice.org) will tell you how.

18 Deut. 14:28 -15:11
Discuss this with a church group: The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation says that global climate change has caused one in every six countries in the world to have food shortages this year.

25 Luke 19:9-10
Pray for the people of Niger, where drought and locusts have devastated crops. Find out if your denomination has a connection to this country.

29 1 Cor. 10:23-24
Set up a church-wide "recycling center," a collection point for glass and aluminum that can be reused. Such recycling can save up to 95 percent of the energy needed to make the product from natural sources.

33 2 Kings 4:42-45
Find out if your community has a CROP Walk to raise money for hunger causes. If so, get involved. If not, talk to people about organizing one. For more information, see the CROP Walk page at www.churchworldservice.org

34 1 Timothy 6:17-19
Pray for people who work in relief and development, especially in war-torn places.

38 Matthew 19:16-22
Order a copy of *Hunger for the Word: Lectionary Reflections on Food and Justice* (for Year B) by Larry Hollar—for yourself or for your pastor. If you order now, you will have it to begin using at Advent. You can find it at www.litpress.org.

19 Ezekiel 18:5-9
Form a group to study *What Every Church Member Should Know About Poverty* by Ruby K. Payne and Bill Ehlig.

22 Proverbs 14:31
Go to www.darfurgenocide.org and find out what's happening in southwest Sudan. Write to your Congress representative and Senators about helping to end this tragedy.

26 Isaiah 60: 4-5
Buy a meal, and, instead of eating it yourself, take it to a homeless person.

30 Isaiah 58:6-12
Try to make a budget for four on minimum wage in your community

35 Proverbs 16: 26
Find the chocolate in your pantry and look up the company to see if they are involved in child slave labor. If you can't tell, write to them and ask if they have signed the international Harkin-Engel Protocol, in which companies agreed to regulate the practice of child labor by July 2005.

39 Matthew 25:34-40
Find out who's at risk for hunger in your community. (You can call a local food pantry or shelter, or contact a county agency.)

20 Lamentations 1:11
Join the ONE Campaign (www.one.org) launched by celebrities like Bono to respond to AIDS and poverty. Wear the white bracelet or T-shirt and explain the campaign to anybody who asks about it.

23 Luke 16:19-31
Put one-fourth cup (2 ounces) of rice in a baggie and carry it around with you, reminding you that this is the daily diet of 852 million people.

27 Proverbs 19: 17
Organize a blanket and warm clothing drive in your church. Give the items to a local shelter.

31 Mark 10: 23-27
Volunteer to work at a soup kitchen and then sit down and talk to the guests.

36 Luke 10:29-37
Give one of your favorite garments to a thrift store or clothing program.

40 Lamentations 3:40
Hunger seems like such an insurmountable problem that it is tempting to turn away and simply not think about it. You and I can't do everything, but we can do something. Write down a SHORT list of the things on this calendar that appealed to you, or that you think you might be able to do well and consistently. Place the list somewhere where you'll see it daily. Pledge to do what little you can. Everything—EVERYTHING you do will make a difference.—Katie Cook, editor, *Seeds of Hope*

21 Proverbs 11:2
Consider this: 1.2 billion people live on less than \$1 a day.

24 Galatians 6: 7-10
Find a copy of *Food and Hunger*, the most recent issue of Christian Reflection: read about how history, art, photography, worship, scripture, and theology relate to food and hunger. Call 866-298-2325 or visit www.ChristianEthics.ws for a free copy.

28 Romans 12:9-21
Watch Hotel Rwanda.

32 Amos 8:4-7
The next time you see images of starving children on your television, don't change the channel. Say a prayer for that child and her family, and promise that you'll do something to help hungry people that day.

37 Luke 8: 4-8
Don't eat between meals today.