

# 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** 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.  
*Isaiah 1:12-17*

**11** Find out if the Doctors Without Borders exhibit, A REFUGEE CAMP IN THE HEART OF THE CITY, will be near your city. You can look it up at [www.doctorswithoutborders.org](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org)  
*Matthew 25: 31-46*

**14** 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.  
*Isaiah 3:13-15*

**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  
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.

**8** Proverbs 14:21  
The Red Door Pantry, a food pantry for HIV/AIDS patients in Waco, Texas, has discovered that their recipients love the canned meat Spam. You can organize a SpamFest by showing a Monty Python movie, charging an admission of 2 cans of Spam. Then find a pantry nearby that distributes to HIV/AIDS patients, and give them the Spam you collected.

**12** Carry an extra apple or sandwich in your lunch or briefcase. Give it to people who ask for money.  
*James 1:27*

**15** Find a copy of *National Geographic's* Special Issue on Africa ([www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com))  
*Luke 14:15-24*

**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](http://www.pcusa.org))

**5** Psalm 41: 3  
**Look a homeless person in the eye.**

**9** 1 Cor. 4:9-13  
Look at the labels on your clothing. Did it come from a sweat shop? (See [www.fairtradefederation.org](http://www.fairtradefederation.org) or [www.sweatshops.org](http://www.sweatshops.org).)

**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](http://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** Watch the movie *Blood Diamond* with a group and discuss it, using the curriculum produced by Amnesty International and Global Witness. Download it from [www.blooddiamond.org](http://www.blooddiamond.org)  
*Micah 6:8*

**6** Read the special *Hunger News & Hope* report, "What's in the 2007 US Budget and How Will It Affect the Poor?" Go to [www.seedspublishers.org](http://www.seedspublishers.org) and find Vol 8 No 1, pp 5-8.  
*Matthew 6: 19-24*

**10** Bread for the World's 2006 Offering of Letters addresses the world community's goals to end hunger by the year 2015. Go to [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org) to find out how your church can participate.  
*James 5:1-6*

**B** Jeremiah 22:13-16  
Get a copy of ROOM AT THE INN, the newest Gerard Straub film, about a Philadelphia soup kitchen, where guests are served with dignity and love. From the San Damiano Foundation ([www.sandamianofoundation.org](http://www.sandamianofoundation.org).)

**17** 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](http://www.mcc.org/respond/kits)) and Church World Service ([www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org)) will tell you how.  
*Psalms 82:1-4*

**B** 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** Pray for the people of Zimbabwe, where crop failure, government corruption, and one-thousand-percent inflation are causing a food crisis.  
*Luke 19:1-10*

**29** 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.  
*1 John 3:16-18*

**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](http://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 19:16-23  
*Hunger for the Word: Lectionary Reflections on Food and Justice*, edited by Larry Hollar, is now available for Year C. Order one now for yourself or for your pastor, so you will have it to begin using at Advent. You can find it at [www.litpress.org](http://www.litpress.org).

**19** Contact your denominational missions office and find out if they are planning to send work camps to New Orleans to help with cleanup and rebuilding. See what you can do to help.  
*Ezekiel 16:48-49*

**22** Proverbs 14:31  
Go to [www.darfurgenocide.org](http://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 61:1-4  
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** Esther 9:20-23  
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, and what they have done to end the exploitation of children in cocoa farming.

**39** Leviticus 25:8-17  
Volunteer to work at a soup kitchen and then sit down and talk to the guests.

**20** 1 Samuel 2:1-8  
Join the ONE Campaign ([www.one.org](http://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  
US Americans give 15 cents per day in government assistance to poor countries. We spend 60 cents a day on soft drinks. See if you can do without soft drinks for a week, and give the money you save to your church's hunger fund.

**27** Job 31:16-28  
Go to bed hungry and pray for those who have to do this every night.

**31** Luke 4:14-21  
Check out a curriculum called JUST EATING? PRACTICING OUR FAITH AT THE TABLE, produced by Church World Service, Advocate Health Care, and the Presbyterian Hunger Program. Look on the PHP web site: [www.pcusa.org/hunger](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger).

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

**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** Deuteronomy 10:12-19  
Three billion people in the world live on less than \$2 a day. See if you can do it today.

**24** Galatians 6: 7-10  
Find the issue of *Christian Reflection* on "Food and Hunger." Read about how history, art, photography, worship, scripture, and theology relate to food and hunger. Call 866-298-2325 or visit [www.ChristianEthics.ws](http://www.ChristianEthics.ws) for a free copy.

**28** Romans 12:9-21  
Organize a blanket and warm clothing drive in your church. Give the items to a local shelter.

**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** Matthew 6:25-34  
Don't eat between meals today.