

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. The 2011 40-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 this calendar to make these 40 days a holy season.

—with blessings from the Seeds of Hope staff and Council of Stewards

8 Ask your church for the name of a family who could use some help with groceries. Put together a grocery basket with necessities and goodies, and drop it off on the family's porch with a note of encouragement.

1 John 3:16-18

9 Think about this for an alternative youth retreat: **LIVING ON THE OTHER SIDE**, a poverty experience at World Hunger Relief's Training Farm in Elm Mott, Texas. Go to www.worldhungerrelief.org for information.

Amos 8:4-7

10 Find out if your local restaurants give their extra food to feeding programs. If not, help them organize a food reclamation project. Go to www.foodrescue.net for more information.

Luke 1:46-55

11 Train yourself to think about the electricity you use. Notice how many times you depend on the light turning on when you flip the switch, and remember the people who don't have that luxury.

Job 5:8-16

32 Don't drink anything but water for a week. Many people don't have access to safe drinking water and many have to walk two miles to get water.

Leviticus 25:8-17

33 Go to a grocery store with someone who uses SNAP (Food Stamps), and watch how people respond to him or her.

Ezekiel 16:48-49

34 Try to make a budget for four on minimum wage in your community.

John 6:1-14

35 The amount of money that people in the US and European Union spend on perfume each year would be enough to satisfy the world's food and sanitation needs. Think about what you buy compared to what you need.

John 21:1-14

36 Watch the movie *What Would Jesus Buy?* and then discuss it with your group. (You can get the movie from Netflix or order it from www.revilly.com.)

Job 31:16-28

12 Get some friends together and organize a weekend garage sale; send the proceeds to a nonprofit organization that you and your friends agree upon.

2 Kings 4:42-45

13 Look in the Gospels for the six accounts of Jesus' feeding of the multitudes.

Jeremiah 22:13-16

14 In your food journal, write an entry about your personal definitions of shelter, a meal and comfort. Compare these ideas to those of what a person living in extreme poverty might be.

Luke 19:1-10

15 Find out if your church or denomination uses fair-trade coffee. If they don't, introduce your congregation to the Equal Exchange Interfaith Program. (www.equalexchange.coop/interfaith)

Acts 4:32-35

37 A single toilet flush uses the same amount of water that the average person in a developing nation uses all day for washing, drinking, cooking, and cleaning. Remember not to take your water for granted.

Exodus 17:1-7

38 Watch the movie *First, Last and Deposit* about life on the streets. You can get it on Netflix or from Blockbuster.

Zechariah 7:8-12

16 Take the time to pray for humanitarian aid workers in the Horn of Africa and around the world.

2 Corinthians 9:6-10

17 Find out if your community has a CROP Hunger 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 Hunger Walk page at www.churchworldservice.org.

Deuteronomy 10:12-19

18 Get the children in your church to assemble School kits for children in a refugee camp. Church World Service can tell you how to assemble them and where to send them. (www.churchworldservice.org)

Psalms 82:1-4

19 Find out if your community has a pantry for HIV/AIDS patients. Ask someone to talk to your church or group about people living with HIV/AIDS. Then hold a movie night and ask everybody to bring food for the pantry.

Luke 14:15-24

39 Look back through your food journal. Did you realize that you had more food in a month than some people have in a year?

Isaiah 58:6-12

40 Make yourself a promise that you will never, ever forget that one person CAN make a difference.

Philippians 4:6-20

1 Start a food journal and write down everything you eat for a month. Notice the little things that we take for granted.

Matthew 6:19-24

2 Go to www.seedspublishers.org and look on page 5 of the spring 2011 issue of *Hunger News & Hope* for the story about food deserts.

Micah 6:6-8

3 After you do the research on Day 2, find out if there is an urban gardening group in your area. See what you can do to help.

Romans 12:9-21

4 Organize a blanket and warm clothing drive in your church. Give the items to a local shelter.

Exodus 16:9-18

20 Look a homeless person in the eye.

Matthew 6:25-34

21 For the cost of two mochas a month, you could give food, water, education, and hope to an African. Through the Mocha Club at www.mochaclub.org, you get to choose who your money helps.

2 Corinthians 8:1-21

22 Invite your friends to come with you to volunteer at a soup kitchen or a food pantry today.

Romans 15: 25-27

23 Looking to shed a few pounds? For every pound that you pledge to lose through the Pound for Pound Challenge at www.pfpchallenge.com, Feeding America will donate a pound of groceries to your local food bank.

Esther 9:20-23

24 Learn more about the US Budget Act and how it affects poor people. Look it up in the 2011 summer issue of *Hunger, News & Hope* (at www.seedspublishers.org.)

Matthew 25:31-41

25 Look up the photos of Sudanese people by Tyler Hicks on the *New York Times* website.

Leviticus 23:22

26 Find out how many things that you buy are made in China. Contact the company of the product and ask about the working conditions of their factory workers.

Isaiah 1:12-17

27 Three billion people in the world live on less than \$2 a day. See if you can do it today.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

5 Using a concordance, look through your Bible for verses about feeding the poor. Try counting them.

Isaiah 61:1-4

6 Look at the labels on your clothing. Did it come from a sweat shop? (See www.fairtrade federation.org or www.sweatshops.org.)

Mark 10:17-21

7 Do a YouTube search for videos about poverty in Haiti.

James 5:1-6

28 Write your US legislators about global poverty issues. Get your church to participate in this year's Bread for the World Offering of Letters. Go to www.bread.org/ol to download a kit, or call 800-82-BREAD for a hard copy.

Matthew 22:34-40

29 Organize a hunger banquet for your group. For ideas, go to www.seedspublishers.org and find "How to Hold a Hunger Meal" on page 22 of *Developing a Heart for the Hungry*, the Seeds Hunger Emphasis primer for beginning churches.

Acts 20:32-35

30 Pray for the people of Tohoku, Japan, who are trying to recover from the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

Luke 10:29-37

31 Try to feel real hunger today. We often eat out of routine without actually being hungry, but today before you eat, try to see what it feels like to have an empty stomach, like almost a billion people have every day.

Isaiah 58:6-10

