

Forty Days to Better Understanding

compiled by
Audrey Cary

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 this calendar to make these forty days a holy season.

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

7 Do a YouTube search for hunger and poverty-related videos. Don't be afraid to let the stories and pictures affect you personally.

James 5:1-6

11 Actively 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.

2 Corinthians 9:6-10



15 Put a pair of shoes on an impoverished child by buying a pair of Toms shoes for yourself. Learn about "One Day without Shoes" at www.toms.com

Job 5:8-16

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

Matthew 17:20

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

Romans 12:9-21

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

12 Take the time to pray for some of the 31,000 people that will die of hunger-related causes today.

2 Kings 4:42-45

2 Look through your Bible for verses about feeding the poor. Compare these with references to other prominent issues today.

Micah 6:6-8

5 Read Ron Hall and Denver Moore's *Same Kind of Different as Me*, a true story about the authors' relationship—a homeless man and a wealthy man becoming best friends.

Isaiah 61:1-4

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

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

Jeremiah 22:13-16

16 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

3 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

6 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

10 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

14 Check out Tom Henderson's ShelterBoxes, the temporary homes with the necessities needed after a natural disaster. Consider getting your youth involved in raising money to send ShelterBoxes to people after a disaster occurs.

Acts 4:32-35

17 Organize a group in your church to assemble kits for survivors of the January 12th Haiti earthquakes. (www.churchworldservice.org) will tell you how to assemble them and where to send them.

Psalms 82:1-4

18 Look through your Bible today for the mentions of feasts and famines.

Exodus 16:9-18

22 Look a homeless person in the eye.

Matthew 6:25-34

26 Find out what you can do to help the people of Haiti. Check out the Haiti issue of *Hunger, News & Hope* (Spring 2010, Vol 11 No 1) at www.seedspublishers.org.

Matthew 25:31-41

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

Job 31:16-28

32 Send rice to the hungry by playing a free educational computer game. www.freerice.com

Acts 20:32-35

35 Read the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand.

John 6:1-14

38 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.

Zechariah 7:8-12

19 HIV/AIDS patients tend to love the canned meat Spam, so organize a Spamfest by showing a movie and charging a 2-cans-of-Spam admission fee. Send all the Spam to a local pantry that serves HIV/AIDS patients.

Luke 14:15-24

23 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 8:2-21

27 Give blood today!

Leviticus 23:22

30 Watch the film *A Distressing Disguise*, which is an accessible look into the lives of homeless Americans. www.sandamiano foundation.org

Matthew 8:18-20

33 Drink only 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

36 Next time you go to a favorite fast food restaurant, consider buying the meals of a family in the car behind you.

Isaiah 58:6-12

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?

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

Romans 12:9-21

28 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

31 Pray for those still living in the aftermath of the Chilean earthquake and for those working to repair the damages.

Luke 10:29-37

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

Ezekiel 16:48-49

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

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*

Philippians 4:6-20

21 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 millions of people have every day.

Isaiah 58:6-10

25 Go through the Gospels and find all of the "miracles of abundance," such as the feeding of the multitudes. How many times is that story told? What other miracles of abundance can you find?

John 21:1-14

